

# The Long Walk

by RV Staff Writer E.T.

Jimmy loves ice cream, but his parents have a new rule. Will he be willing to do what it takes to get a cone of his favorite flavor?

-----

Jimmy loved ice cream. It was his favorite dessert. He wanted to eat ice cream all the time. His parents let him have a small dish each night after dinner, if he ate all of his vegetables. At home, Jimmy usually had chocolate or vanilla. His mother scooped it out of the carton and into his bowl.

Jimmy liked eating ice cream at home, but he really loved going to the ice cream stand to get an ice cream cone. There were so many different flavors to try! Jimmy always did his best to try a new kind of ice cream each time.

When Jimmy turned eight, he had a checkup at the doctor's office. Dr. Katz said that ice cream wasn't a very healthy snack. "It's fine to have a little ice cream once in a while, but not every night," she said.

After the doctor's visit, Jimmy and his mom drove home. "Can I still have ice cream for dessert tonight?" Jimmy asked.

"I don't think so, honey," Mom said. "We should all try to be healthier."

That night at supper, Jimmy ate all his vegetables. But there was no ice cream for dessert. Instead, Mom came up with a new rule. "If we want to eat ice cream, we'll have to earn it by walking to the ice cream stand," she said.

Jimmy was willing to give it a try, so they decided to take their walk on Saturday afternoon. According to the map, the ice cream stand was a mile away.

---

Saturday was a hot and sunny day. Jimmy began to feel sweaty. The sun was so bright that he had to squint his eyes. He kept his eyelids almost all the way closed, with just a small slit to peek out of.

"I'm hot," said Jimmy. "How much farther is it?"

Mom checked the map on her phone. "We're not even halfway yet. Do you want to turn around?"

Jimmy *did* want to turn around, but he also wanted ice cream. Walking was the only way to get it.

Jimmy and Mom crossed several streets. They passed his school and the playground with the tire swings. Soon they were in a part of town that Jimmy didn't recognize.

The sun beat down so strongly that even Mom was sweating. Jimmy's legs felt heavy. He wanted to sit down, but there were no benches in sight. There were a few trees, but they didn't do much to shade the sidewalk.

Jimmy kicked a pebble and watched it bounce into the storm drain. "Mom?" he asked. He was about to quit. He looked up to tell Mom he was ready to turn around.

But when he did, he could see the purple flag at the top of the ice cream stand. They were almost there!

Jimmy started to walk faster. He could almost taste the cool, creamy ice cream already. It was a long walk, but it was definitely worth the trip.

## Questions

1. Why can't Jimmy have ice cream for dessert at home any more?
2. According to the story, what does the word "squint" mean?
3. What are some of the problems Jimmy has on the walk?
4. What is your favorite ice cream flavor?