

"Alias Jimmy Valentine"



Novelized by
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TOOMBS
From the Great
Play
by PAUL
ARMSTRONG

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JIMMY VALENTINE, WARDEN HANDLER AND ROSE LANE.

"I had to see you," returned Avery. "I have just been telling Red—"

"Sure, I heard you hand out that square talk. I suppose you want me to join you in this 'going straight' business, too, eh?"

"I don't think the crooked game is any good. And you are getting old for clever work."

"Think so, eh?" snarled Avery suspiciously.

"He isn't too old to be an 'outside man' with us," put in Red.

"We don't need any outside man any more, Red," decided Valentine.

Avery glared into the speaker's face.

"So you're out now, and you're going to throw Red and me out, eh? All this turning square talk I heard was a stall to get rid of me because I am old, eh?"

"I don't have to stall you, Avery."

The old thief leaned threateningly toward Valentine, shaking his withered fist as violently as the flabby muscles, sapped by years of prison air and prison fare, would permit.

"Like the d—!" he cried, choking in his wrath. "I'm old, that's your dope. Going to throw me for a rookie, eh? Well, I'll show you. When guys start stalling me I'll show them up. From now on I'm a copper, and I'll show you up, Valentine. I'll get you, too—I'll get you good!"

Red Flanagan had won a continent wide reputation as a "smooth worker." He was one of those painstaking, conscientious burglars who followed habitually the laudable practice of looking after details. His employers, among whom had been Jimmy Valentine, "Chicago Whitey" and other leaders in their profession, had in the past shown a flattering willingness to recommend him (not in their own handwriting, to be sure) as a thorough artist, an untiring student and one who one day would probably revolutionize the business of caring for other people's money. In a word, Red was thorough, which means a great deal in his line.

So, true to his reputation, Red, fearing complications because of the pitch to which Avery had unconsciously raised his voice, had stepped behind the portieres to keep watch on the short hallway that led to it. This hallway opened out into the main hall of the hotel, at the far end of which was

a carriage entrance. At the opposite side of the parlor was an exit leading to a dining room, which in turn had an opening directly next to the main entrance of the hotel. Red realized that a casual passerby might become suspicious of Avery's words should they be overheard. Besides, the implacable Doyle was in town. A friend of his, a "runner" for Doc Slater's faro bank, had so informed Red that very morning.

Red suddenly issued a warning hiss. "Duck, Avery! Here comes Doyle!"

The two thieves, having no opportunity to do better, hastily concealed themselves behind the portieres.

Valentine, very much disturbed, made an effort to calm himself. He seated himself beside a convenient table. He picked up a magazine and began to peruse its pages in seemingly unconcerned fashion.

"Hello, Jimmy!"

With these words Detective George Doyle entered the room. Garmented

in the latest cut of fashionable clothing, panama hat and patent leather ties with batwing laces, he appeared the dilettante, the man about town, rather than the tracker of desperate men—the man of leisure, every inch of him, an uninitiated observer would have pardonably judged not only from his attire, but also from his debonair, blasé manner. Any one describing Doyle as the man who broke up the "Five Points" gang and the "Whyo" gang in New York city would have been laughed at for his folly, yet such was his record. His work in scattering the troupes of election and primary day "floaters" and "repeaters" in some of the most disreputable districts was equally meritorious.

And yet Doyle had his other side.



"ONE JOB TO GET A STAKE AND I'LL GO YOU."

He was growing fond of the easy life that came from having a staff of "stool pigeons" to do his work for him.

Jimmy Valentine turned his head slightly to answer Doyle, who, he well knew, came on no errand that would benefit a released prisoner.

"How are you, Doyle?" he replied indifferently.

Doyle's shifting, farseeing eyes, however, caught the nervous twitching of Valentine's fingers as they ran over the edges of the magazine.

"You're perfectly innocent now, I hear," went on Doyle, a sarcastic note coming into his voice.

"Perfectly." Valentine's voice was as even as though conversing with his most intimate friend.

"So you told the governor?" commented the detective.

"Oh, yes!"

"I've seen the governor too."

"He didn't have much to do this morning, did he?" humorously.

"Very pretty, Jimmy. Let me ask you a question. Do you think I would be your friend if I could?"

"Do you think so yourself?"

"Yes, if you were willing to exchange the ordinary courtesies between friends."

"Meaning exactly what?"

"Favors. Now, I'll do the first one." He seated himself opposite the ex-convict.

"Thank you," in gay mood.

"Sarcasm won't win you anything with me, Jimmy. I said I'd do you a favor."

"What is it?" Valentine began to inspect his visitor anxiously.

The detective paused momentarily. Then he said deliberately:

"I'll forget—that—job—you—did—at—Springfield—three—years—ago."

The detective leaned back in his chair, inserted his thumbs in the arm holes of his waistcoat and gazed fixedly at Jimmy Valentine.

The eyes of the man addressed became directed at the cover of the magazine he still held, but only for an instant. He shot a defiant glare at Doyle.

"I was never in Springfield in my life," he said indignantly.

"Which Springfield?" asked Doyle significantly.

"No Springfield."

"You dodge it nicely."

"I don't see how."

"Now, which Springfield did I think you were going to say?"

"I have no idea."

"Good again. Well, I'll tell you," continued Doyle. "I meant Springfield, Mass."

Valentine raised his brows doubtfully, innocently.

"I don't think I was ever in the state of Massachusetts."

"I can prove you were in Springfield, Mass., the night the safe in the savings bank was grabbed."

"Oh, no, you can't."

"Believe me, Jimmy, I can. The witness may be a bit disreputable, but I can prove it."

"You can job me, you mean. You can get fake witnesses?" Valentine asked excitedly.

"I can send you for five at least, my boy."

"But you won't if I do you a favor?"

"You are a very good guesser, James."

"Well?"

"I want Avery."

"Avery?"

"Bill Avery, who finished a nine year stretch a month ago and joined up with your old friend Red Flanagan."

Bill Avery, concealed behind the portieres with Red, gave a violent start as he heard Doyle's words. Red had all he could do to quiet him. The aged thief, however, managed to draw a .38 caliber revolver from a side pocket in his coat—quicker to get at than the hip pocket, and then this arrangement enables a man to stand with a hand carelessly thrust into a pocket and to discharge the pistol through the coat when dire emergency threatens.

"Curse him!" he whispered to Red. "I told him I'd get him if he turned square, and when Doyle goes I'll bore him through the mouth and into his brain."

"Serve him right!" hissed Red. "And two chances for a slick getaway. No guy can go on the square without goin' crooked with his pals."

CHAPTER VIII.

LITTLE knowing of the serious conspiracy that was forming but a few yards away behind the thick velvet curtains, Valentine gave verbal and mental battle to the detective. Already he was beginning to see that the way of the transgressor was hard not only while he was in the legal toils, but also after he became free and supposedly in a position to build a new life if he so desired. But Jimmy Valentine was only at the beginning of a knowledge of the conditions and trials and setbacks he must face, for so long as men make laws and administer them so long will the guilty and the innocent as well suffer and endure, sometimes justly and sometimes unjustly. This also is a law of life.

Valentine went on to insist that he didn't know where Avery was, hadn't seen him since his release from Sing Sing, was glad of it, didn't care where he was and didn't purpose to care. Of all this he was absolutely sure.

"Well," stated Doyle, "he held up a citizen just three days after he got out, and I want him."

"And I'm to tell you where he is and you will send him up for highway robbery?" questioned Valentine.

"The man he stuck up may die."

"And you expect me to hunt him up and deliver him to you?"

"And you are going to. That's the old part of it. And possibly I'll make an eyewitness out of you."

"It would be odd if I sent Avery away for life. It would indeed!"

"Then I'll slough you for that Springfield job," Doyle rose abruptly.

"Then you may as well do it now," said the other defiantly.

(To be Continued)

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