

# "Alias Jimmy Valentine"

Novelized by  
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From the Great  
Play by  
**PAUL ARMSTRONG**

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[CONTINUED.]

Avery threw his head back. "My friend?" he exclaimed in astonishment.

The warden could barely suppress a grin.

"Yes; I think I know where I can get you a pretty good job," went on Doyle engagingly.

"Nobody wants me," said Avery despondently.

"I think I can arrange it."

"A job in a laundry, eh?" snapped the ex-prisoner. "I've been a wash-woman here."

"There are lots of jobs where you don't have to know a trade. Can't Bill sit down, warden?"

"Why, certainly," responded Handler.

Avery, voicing his thanks, seated himself at the warden's table.

Doyle came close to the old man.

"There's one thing you want to do, Bill, above everything else—keep out of bad company," he warned.

Avery hesitated. He glanced from the detective across to the warden.

"I'm getting out of bad company today," he replied briefly.

Doyle started forward.

"Yes, and it's a good thing you are, for you're getting away from Valentine."

"Valentine?"

"Yes," insisted Doyle. "It doesn't do you any good to know a man like that. I suppose you know he killed Ootson so he wouldn't have to divide the swag with him." The other shook his head decisively.

"I don't know anything about it."

The detective now spoke sharply.

"And what's he got against you?"

He sent out word that—the questioner suddenly shifted—"what message did he give you to take out to—"

Avery drew back involuntarily.

"He didn't give me any message," he cried out in positive tones.

Then both the officials noticed that the ex-convict's eyes slowly drooped and became directed to the floor.

"I could do you a good turn—if you trailed along with me," suggested the detective.

The released criminal brushed aside the invitation. He rose stiffly from his chair.

"I'm on to you, Doyle. If you're to be my friend I know that I've got to be a stool pigeon, eh? Well, I'm old, and I don't know where I'm goin' when I leave here. But I'll take the river out there," pointing over his shoulder with his thumb, "for mine before I play that game. I tell you—the old man's voice rose to an indignant pitch—"It's only dy guys like you, Doyle, that's too lazy or too ignorant to do their work themselves that has to have stool pigeons on your staff to do your work for you. Why, you couldn't nab a twelve-year-old 'dip' if you didn't have some poor nerve broken sucker of a 'stool' to go out ahead and make the job easy for you."

Both Doyle and the warden, enraged at the old man, lunged viciously at him to wreak vengeance upon him for his denunciation.

## CHAPTER II.

WITH an agility surprisingly in contrast with his former decrepit attitude, the intended victim seized his chair and raised it threateningly over his head. The two officers halted. Doyle, regaining a calm demeanor, through the excellent self control which had become one of his valuable assets in his business, spoke easily.

"So you don't want a friend, old fellow?"

Avery lowered the chair.

"No," he snorted, "not any friends that are coppers. Thieves are bad enough."

The point of the reply did not escape Doyle.

"Well," he responded angrily, "you have got me for an enemy all the rest of your worthless life. You'd better come to see me once a month for fear I grab you by mistake on suspicion."

"To — with you!" snarled Avery, turning away and facing the warden.

"I've got the regular state allowance for released prisoners comin' to me, ain't it?"

"Yes," answered Handler, "and you take it and get out of here, where there are men who don't live on the mistakes of some one else." He wheeled toward the door and disappeared.

"There's one more we've got to keep track of," commented Doyle.

"He'll be at work in a week," said Handler laconically.

"Yes, and I'll nail him and give him back to you."

"I don't want him," the warden put in hastily. "I just might make it

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MRS. WEBSTER AND MRS. MOORE OF THE GATE OF HOPE SOCIETY.

tough for him if he was sent back. I thought he had come to his senses and would help you against Valentine, but he's just a plain fool."

"And all alike—all blaming us for their fall." The detective seated himself as he spoke. "He can't work now; he's too old. The game as he knew it was the yegg game."

Handler also had resumed his seat, and he leaned over his desk and said significantly: "So you're afraid Valentine will get a new trial, eh? There's some class to Valentine. Have a smoke." The prison master held out a box of perfectos, from which Doyle gratefully extracted a weed.

"Thanks," mumbled the detective.

"This Valentine is the only high class crook I ever knew that I couldn't reach and put away for keeps. There's something of a mystery about him. He'd get away with the Raffles game in high society in a walk. The swell dames would go daffy over his good looks and his tony manners and his pleasing voice. Yet he has trailed along with the toughest gang in the business." Doyle paused, then said, "And yet he says he is innocent, I suppose."

"Yes," put in Handler, leaning comfortably in his chair. "Said so last time I talked with him. This prison is killing him. He doesn't like it. He can't stand it. His nerves will stick out through his skin if they jump much more."

"He's the one fellow I think this life would cure. He's a wonder."

"At safe, you mean," was Handler's sarcastic rejoinder.

Little did the warden and the detective realize as they sat and schemed to bring about the further and complete ruin of Jimmy Valentine that "there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will," and this influence is not denied to those who languish forlorn and hopeless in prison cells.

Little did they know that it might be Jimmy Valentine, No. 1289, who was to teach them that the soul of a man is an unquenchable spark that not even years of oppression and degradation can lastingly dim when the spirit wills that they shall not.

And just now there came a knocking at the warden's door that portended much for No. 1289.

The warden's secretary went to the door opening from the office into a waiting room where visitors were received. He returned to announce, "Some members of the Gate of Hope society, and they have the lieutenant governor and his niece with them."

"The lieutenant governor?" ejaculated Handler. "Fay?"

"Yes."

"What's the Gate of Hope?" asked Doyle.

"A gang of women tryin' to release from prison convicts they believe are innocent," said the warden.

The detective smiled.

At Handler's order Smith summoned the callers, Doyle making his exit.

"The lieutenant governor," pondered Handler. "I wonder if there's any leak about those contracts for supplies."

Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Webster of the society, middle aged women of pleasing appearance, came in, followed by Rose Lane, the lieutenant governor's niece, and that official himself. Miss Lane, a young girl of unmistakable charm and beauty, held close to her uncle's side.

"Mr. Handler," spoke Mrs. Webster, "we come today with a famous humanitarian, Lieutenant Governor Fay," she pronounced, inclining toward that official.

"Governor," said the warden, bowing. The lieutenant governor shook Handler's hand and presented his niece. The party seated themselves, facing the warden.

"We have come here today," said Mrs. Moore, "to again ask that men be not forced to make confessions while imprisoned here that may be used against them when they leave here. We understand that through the pressure that can be brought to bear on the inmates in these institutions they can be made willing to confess to crimes they never committed."

"What do you mean?" queried Han-

dlar.

"Oh, we understand that by depriving prisoners of their proper allowance of food and of small privileges they are allowed, and by bullying conduct on the part of the men in charge of them the inmates can be led to make false confessions involving themselves or others. This information is used against the men after they are released as well as against men who are at large whom the police desire to incriminate."

"No one is ever forced to confess anything here, madam," protested Handler.

"But I know—"

"Pardon me, Mrs. Moore," interrupted the lieutenant governor, rising. "I do not think that in your zeal you realize what you are saying." He addressed the warden. "It seems, however, that these well meaning ladies have evidence that a certain man here did confess some offense to a—"

"To a stool," commented Handler. "Am I responsible for the detectives who have men working inside the prison for them?"

"By a 'stool' you mean—"

"A stool pigeon, a decoy. They win the confidence of prisoners and tell what they learn to the detectives."

Mrs. Moore here went on to state that in Sing Sing and in all prisons were confined many innocent men and that in any event released men should be encouraged to live honestly, should be given a chance. They ought not to be pursued and hounded into being spies by detectives anxious to make a record for securing convictions regardless of the truth of the testimony. One reason the woman advanced for her stand was that a man who became a spy or decoy must associate continually with men and women of questionable character, thus rendering it impossible to secure or much less remain in honest employment.

"Bosh!" exclaimed Handler as she ceased. "These folks we get don't want to live straight, won't live straight, can't live straight when they get on the outside. First, they're all lazy; second, most of them are insane."

"What would you call a man," continued the warden, "who does some-

breath when the man came back. He

could pay drew a check for \$50,000 and handed it to Blinky. To oblige the warden Blinky, aided by a knife and pen and ink, in five minutes had "raised" it to the amount of \$50,000. The lieutenant governor pronounced it perfect. "I know where I could pass it, too," laughed Blinky as he was led away.

"I had him on the books once, and he couldn't resist raising the prison checks," chuckled Handler. "I could bring in fellows like that all day." He picked up an object from his desk. "Do you see this lock? A German inventor waiting outside has spent fourteen years in perfecting that. He claims it cannot be opened without the key. The prison board has accepted it for use here if the claims made for it are true. We have a man here paralyzed on one side, a sneak thief. I have sent for him. He may not open it, but he will try, for he cannot resist the criminal mania that controls him. Smith," to his secretary, "get the Dutchman; also the gentleman known as 'Dick the Rat.'"

When the decrepit form of "Dick the Rat" was brought in, together with the patient inventor Blickendolfsbach, he was given the lock, three minutes and a hairpin. Ten seconds before his allotted time expired he threw the lock, opened, on the warden's desk, and with his repulsive, seamy face contorted into what he considered was a smile he inclined his head to one side. From his throat came inarticulate squeals of glee—exactly the squeals of a rat.

Only the watchfulness of Smith saved the "Rat" from the violent, despairing onslaught of the German, who screamed: "I'll kill him! He ruin me! Und mit a hairpin, mein Gott!"

"You're not the first man to be ruled by a hairpin," laughed the warden. "Don't tell your wife."

Smith sent the inventor to the railroad station in charge of a guard and consigned the grinning Blinky to the cell that had long been his home. On returning to the office the secretary said: "I've brought Valentine along too. I thought you might want him to open the safe."

A disturbed expression came into the prison master's face. He glanced quickly at Fay and his niece, then talked in an undertone with his aid. He was interrupted by Mrs. Webster.

"The two you have shown us do not entirely prove your argument, Mr. Warden," she said doubtfully. "They are the very lowest types in the prison. You argue a general premise from two individual cases. We do not maintain that such apparent criminals as we have seen should be liberated, but—she turned to Fay—"there are gentlemen here, governor, men of quite a different type than these, whom one never sees."

"Warden," said the lieutenant governor, "I fear the ladies have more interest in the more romantic types of criminals—poets, for instance."

Mrs. Moore rose indignantly. "I shall make note of that frivolous speech in my report," she snapped.

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"We sat and talked for a few minutes," she finally went on. "He told me that there were reasons why he could not let me know who he was and that he could never see me again, though I wanted him to meet my family to receive their thanks for what he had done. He was very nervous, but he had amazing strength for one of his build, as his handling of that ruffian showed. When he shook hands with me I noticed that his hands were very white and smooth and sensitive."

The warden was now leaning over his desk, intent on the girl's words.

"I noticed that he had the habit of frequently pressing one hand nervously into the other, and—"

"He was tall, and he had blond hair," interjected the warden.

The girl gazed at Handler in open mouthed astonishment.

## CHAPTER III.

WARDEN HANDLER, regretting that he had given his visitors an indication that he believed he had recognized

Rose Lane's deliverer, answered the questions of the girl and the lieutenant governor by stating: "The man is as bad as the burglar he threw out of the car window—even worse. He's in this prison at this moment, I firmly believe, according to the description we've just heard."

"Oh, impossible!" exclaimed Miss Lane, her face coloring. "He was a gentleman, a thorough gentleman, and too young to be a hardened criminal." Her face became shadowed with concern.

The warden was vastly amused at this remark, which the young girl rendered with the finality of unquestioned authority.

"Too young?" he laughed. "Age doesn't cut any figure in crime the way you mean. It's some of these young fellows that will take a chance at anything. You see, they're ambitious. They're anxious to rise in their business."

The warden paused and glanced from the girl to the observing lieutenant governor, then to the two members of the Gate of Hope. He commented on the fact that his visitors had disagreed with him on various points and informed them that he had determined to offer them a few object lessons, lessons with living models. "I'll show you," he said, "that these crooks we've got here will play their trade at all times, whether they profit or not; that, in short, criminality is a mania with them and that there's no use in trying to better them." His first exhibit, brought in by the secretary, was the celebrated forger "Blinky" Davis. At the warden's request Lieutenant Gov-

thing the law forbids, does it whenever the opportunity offers without a chance of gain? What do you call a man who does a thing for the love of it?"

"An artist," answered Mrs. Webster.

"Artist! Then I've got a lot of them," laughed Handler sarcastically. "Well, to me they are insane."

To Rose Lane the adventure was extremely interesting. Finally succeeding in gaining her uncle's consent to her accompanying him on a visit to the great prison, she was now seeing a little section of the darker side of life which appealed strongly to her imaginative nature. Her cheeks flushed with the excitement of the occasion, this voyage into this famous tomb of living dead men.

As the warden finished she exclaimed, "I once had an experience with a burglar, and—"

"Did he take your jewels?" asked Mrs. Moore sympathetically.

"No. I was in the parlor car in daylight. I was the only person in the car, and this man walked up and accosted me. I reached for the bell for the porter. He struck my wrist. Then he sat on the arm of my chair. He wanted to talk to me, he said. I scarcely knew what to do when a younger man, evidently a gentleman, walked in from the smoking compartment and, taking the man by the arm, led him away."

"How do you know the man was a burglar?" asked the lieutenant governor.

"Listen. I had no more than got my



"HE WAS TALL AND HAD BLOND HAIR."

threw his arms about my shoulders and again sat on the chair arm. When I reached for the bell he struck my arm. I screamed. The gentleman who had taken him away before ran into the car, and they fought. I was petrified with fright. The gentleman was much the smaller, and it seemed he would surely be killed when suddenly by some trick he sent the man crashing through the Pullman window. I read in the paper the next day that a famous burglar was found with his skull fractured near the tracks."

A strange light came into Handler's eyes. Was it possible, he thought, that so strange a coincidence—

"Did that occur in this state?" he asked quickly.

"Yes," between Buffalo and Rochester two years ago in June."

The warden compressed his lips firmly.

"Was the dead burglar's name Cotton?" he interrogated earnestly.

"Yes; that's what the papers said. Did you know him?"

"Had him here for five years once Odd, but we heard he was killed trying to get on a moving train. And, by the way, his particular pal is now in this prison doing ten—safe breaking. His name is Valentine. The story you tell is a brand new one on us."

"And you never saw again the gentleman who rescued you?" queried Mrs. Moore of Miss Lane.

"Never." Into the young girl's face came an expression of mingled sweetness and regret. The woman's question seemed to revive in her the memories of a voice and face and a manner and a personality which somehow she had never been quite able to forget.

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baneful penalty on him with more success than usual in the case of men who entered the institution in good health. Vaguely conscious that there were visitors present, No. 1289 stood before the warden with his eyes directed toward the floor. His shoulders were square, he was of good height, with a figure which yet bore indications that he had been athletic in his free days. When he had entered the room the lieutenant governor had noticed that the convict walked with a free, manly stride, having no semblance to the shuffling prison slouch of his fellow inmates.

"Permit me," Handler addressed his visitors, with an elaborate gesture,

ly the prison air was working its