

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



**A Retrieved Reformation (Part 2)** by O. Henry

One afternoon, Jimmy Valentine and his suit-case got off the train in Elmore, a little town in Arkansas. As Jimmy walked down the street toward the hotel, a young lady passed him at the corner and entered a door over which was the sign, "*The Elmore Bank*."

Jimmy Valentine looked into the lady's eyes, forgot what he was, and became a new man altogether. The young lady blushed slightly. Young men as handsome and stylish as Jimmy did not appear often in Elmore.

Jimmy stopped a little boy and began asking him questions about the town. Finally, the lady came out of the bank, and Jimmy asked the boy her name.

"She's Annabel Adams," said the boy. "Her father owns that bank".

Jimmy went to the hotel, gave his name as Ralph D. Spencer, and got a room. He told the hotel clerk, that he had come to Elmore to start a business. He was thinking of opening a shoe store. Was there already a good shoe store in town?

No, there was no shop that sold just shoes; the town needed one. The clerk hoped Mr. Spencer would decide to stay in Elmore. It was a pleasant place to live, and the people were friendly.

Mr. Spencer said that he would stay for a few days and check out the town. No, he didn't need the clerk to take his bag up to his room. He would carry it himself. It was very heavy.

Jimmy Valentine, now known as Mr. Ralph Spencer, remained in Elmore. He opened a shoe store and prospered. He made friends, and—what was more important—he became acquainted with the lovely Miss Annabel Adams.

By the end of a year, the situation of Mr. Ralph Spencer was this: He had won the respect of the community, his shoe-store was flourishing, and he and Annabel were engaged to be married in two weeks.

One day, shortly before the wedding, Jimmy sat down in his room and wrote this letter, which he sent to one of his oldest friends:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Dear Pal,*

*I'd like you to meet me in Little Rock this coming Wednesday. I want to give you my tools. I know you'll be glad to have them; you couldn't buy them for a thousand dollars. I finished with the old business a year ago. I own a nice little shop. I'm living a better life, and I'm going to marry the best girl on earth two weeks from now. It's the only way—I wouldn't ever again touch another man's money. After I marry, I'm going to go further west, where I'll never see anyone who knew me in my old life. I tell you, she's a wonderful girl. She know nothing about my past. She trusts me.*

*Your Old Friend— Jimmy*

On the Monday night after Jimmy wrote this letter, Detective Ben Price got off the train in Elmore. He took a quiet walk around the town and found out all he wanted to know. From the drug-store across the street from *Spencer's Shoe Store*, he got a good look at Ralph D. Spencer.

"Going to marry the banker's daughter, are you, Jimmy?" said Ben to himself softly. "Well, I don't know!"

*To be continued . . .*