

Making Choices - Taking Chances

Student/Class Goal

Students realize that options and choices are available to them, but often do not fully understand that taking chances and setting goals is the method to becoming successful.

Outcome *(lesson objective)*

Students will practice poetry reading strategies by previewing, reading aloud, visualizing, clarifying words and evaluating theme or making inferences.

Time Frame

Two class periods

Standard *Read with Understanding*

NRS EFL 6

Purpose	Benchmarks	Word Knowledge	Benchmarks	Comprehension	Benchmarks
Purpose for reading		Decoding skills		Strategy use	6.11
Select text		Word parts		Text structural elements	
		Context clues	6.5	Genres	
		Reference materials		Literary analysis	
		Word relationships	6.7	Drawing conclusions	6.15
		Content vocabulary		Making connections	6.16
		Figurative language	6.9		
		Fluency	6.10		

Materials

Copies of poems and short story
If by Rudyard Kipling
The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost
Desiderata by Max Ehrmann
We Real Cool by Gwendolyn Brooks
Making a Fist by Naomi Shihab Nye
Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night by Dylan
A Retrieved Reformation by O Henry
Poetry Reading Strategies Handout
Vocabulary Word Map Handout
Poetry Inference Graphic Organizer

Learner Prior Knowledge

Students will need experience with visualization as poetry relies heavily on figurative language, symbols and imagery.

Instructional Activities

Step 1 – To prompt discussion about making choices and taking chances in our lives, distribute these questions to small groups of students:

- What characteristics define an adult man or woman?
- How do we take stock of ourselves?
- Do adults ever find it necessary to take risks? Have you found it necessary to take a chance in your life?
- What reasons might there be to take a risk?

Lead discussion in the large group around the need to recognize the value of people and their contributions. We should recognize that we have our own value and worth and expect to make contributions that will be important in the lives of our family and friends. How do we do that? Do we take care of our families and push ourselves to work to our potential?

Step 2 – Teacher will model the poetry reading strategies by using a think-aloud strategy with *If* by Rudyard Kipling. This will help students read poetry more effectively and better appreciate the message the author is sharing.

Preview the poem by reading the title and making observations. You will learn quite a few things just by looking at the poem. The title may give you some image or association to start with. Looking at the poem's shape, you can see whether the lines are continuous or broken into groups (called *stanzas*), or how long the lines are, and so how dense, on a physical level, the poem is. You can also see whether it looks like the last poem you read by the same poet or even a poem by another poet. All of these are good qualities to notice, and they may lead you to a better understanding of the poem in the end.

- Look over *If* by Kipling and talk about the 4 stanzas and that many of the sentences start with the word 'if'. Discuss how the title makes you ponder or wonder about something unknown. Consider the punctuation and how lines end with no punctuation, commas, semi-colons, colons, explanation points; but no periods.

Read aloud to hear the language rhyme, rhythm and overall sound. To begin, read the poem aloud. Read it more than once. Listen to your voice, to the sounds the words make. Do you notice any special effects? Do any of the words rhyme? Is there a cluster of sounds that seem the same or similar? Is there a section of the poem that seems to have a rhythm that's distinct from the rest of the poem? Don't worry about why the poem might use these effects. The first step is to hear what's going on. If you find your own voice distracting, have a friend read the poem to you.

- Read the second stanza, paying attention to no commas at end of lines and how this affects the rhythm. Point out the rhyming words, can you hear the rhyme when reading aloud?

Visualize images by finding strong verbs and comparisons. Ask the students what does the quotation "there are pictures in poems and poems in pictures" mean. Visualizing is when the author paints a picture in your head.

- Describe "Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken, And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:" as you see this in your mind.

Clarify words and phrases. One way to strengthen vocabulary development is to use a Vocabulary Word Map that has the student find the definition of the word, synonyms, antonyms, a picture of the word, and how to use the word in a sentence.

- Create a vocabulary word map using the word "sinew." Place it in the center of a map you have drawn on the board or overhead.

Then give the definition (Noun: A piece of tough fibrous tissue uniting muscle to bone or bone to bone; a source of strength or power; the chief supporting force or mainstay); synonym (tendon or ligament, energy, force, power, strength, vigor); antonym (powerless, weakness); use in a sentence ("Good company and good discourse are the very sinews of virtue" or "He became quicker of movement than the other dogs, swifter of foot, craftier, deadlier, more lithe, more lean with iron-like muscle and sinew, more enduring, more cruel, more ferocious, and more intelligent." from *White Fang* by Jack London); draw a picture (see graphic).



- Students can find an unfamiliar word (knave, imposter) and complete a *Vocabulary Word Map*. Share their maps with the group.

Evaluate theme by discussing what message the poem is trying to send or help you understand. Explain to students that when you make an inference, you are "reading between the lines" or figuring out something that the author does not tell you specifically. You will have to use the clues in the poem to figure out the whole meaning or specific information. In order to make an inference, you pay close attention to the details in the poem to make a logical assumption or prediction about information. An inference is a logical judgment based on a writer's words as well as your own knowledge and experience. A poet usually tried to say a great deal with little words. So, making inferences in poetry can sometimes be a difficult task. Although inferences are something most of us make every day, many students struggle when asked to do it as a class assignment.

- Demonstrate filling out the *Poetry Inference Graphic Organizer* with your inference from *If*.

Poem title	Details or statements from poem	What I know from reading or experience	Inference
<i>If</i> by Kipling	Keep your head when all about you are losing theirs; can trust yourself when all men doubt you.	Believing in myself is possible, I have done this in the past and I can do it in the future.	These are virtues that you can possess.

- Students can find an inference (dreams become your master, make thoughts your aim) and complete the first line of the *Poetry Inference Graphic Organizer*. Share their inference with the group.

Step 3 – Kipling seems to be talking about keeping a balance in one’s life. He sums up his advice in stanza 4, “I all men count with you but none too much” and “If you can fill the unforgiving minute with 60 seconds’ worth of distance run.” Put that advice in your own words. Choose a challenge from Kipling’s *If* poem and write a paragraph reacting to that challenge. Is it good advice? Do you believe it is a good tenet to incorporate in your philosophy of life? Would you advise others to follow that advice?

Step 4 – Give students the *Poetry Reading Strategies* Handout and distribute poems to students, letting them choose any poem they would like to read using the strategies that were just modeled. Students can work in pairs to complete the 5 strategies. If students struggle, choose another poem to do together as a group before they work jointly. Students that are ready can work independently after their initial pairing.

Teacher Note You might want to use [Poetry by Themes](#) to find additional poems around this theme or go to [Beginnings](#), where you can find poems by Ohio writers who have written many excellent examples about making choices.

Step 5 – Lower level students can write a paragraph describing how taking reasonable risks are necessary in peoples’ lives as evidenced in the poems; while higher level students can use several poems to write a compare and contrast essay based on common themes found in each.

Assessment/Evidence *(based on outcome)*

Vocabulary Word Map Handout
Poetry Inference Graphic Organizer
Paragraph or essay
Discussion and teacher observation

Teacher Reflection/Lesson Evaluation

This lesson has not yet been field tested.

Next Steps

Students can write their own poem about making choices or taking chances in their life.

Technology Integration

Vocabulary Word Maps http://literacy.kent.edu/eureka/strategies/vocab_wordmaps.pdf
Poetry by Themes <http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/themes.do>
Beginnings <http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/Pubs/beginnings.html>

Purposeful/Transparent

Students want to be successful, but often fail to realize that taking risks is part of the process. By reading poetry and writing about themes, students will gain insights into what others consider success.

Contextual

By using poetry on the topic of making choices and taking chances, students are able to infer the poet’s themes and make inferences for their own lives.

Building Expertise

Students will have had experience with figurative language and are gaining practice in making inferences and increasing their vocabulary.

IF...

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
' Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,
if neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!

by Rudyard Kipling

http://www.kipling.org.uk/poems_if.htm

Poetry Reading Strategies

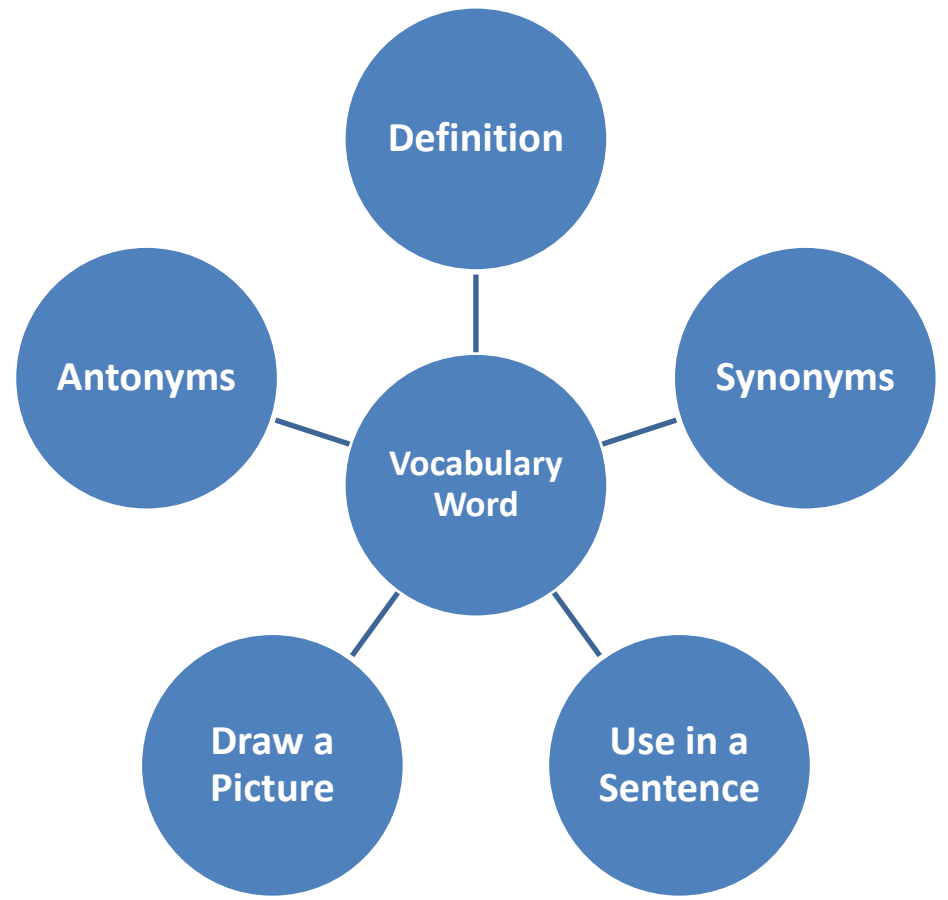
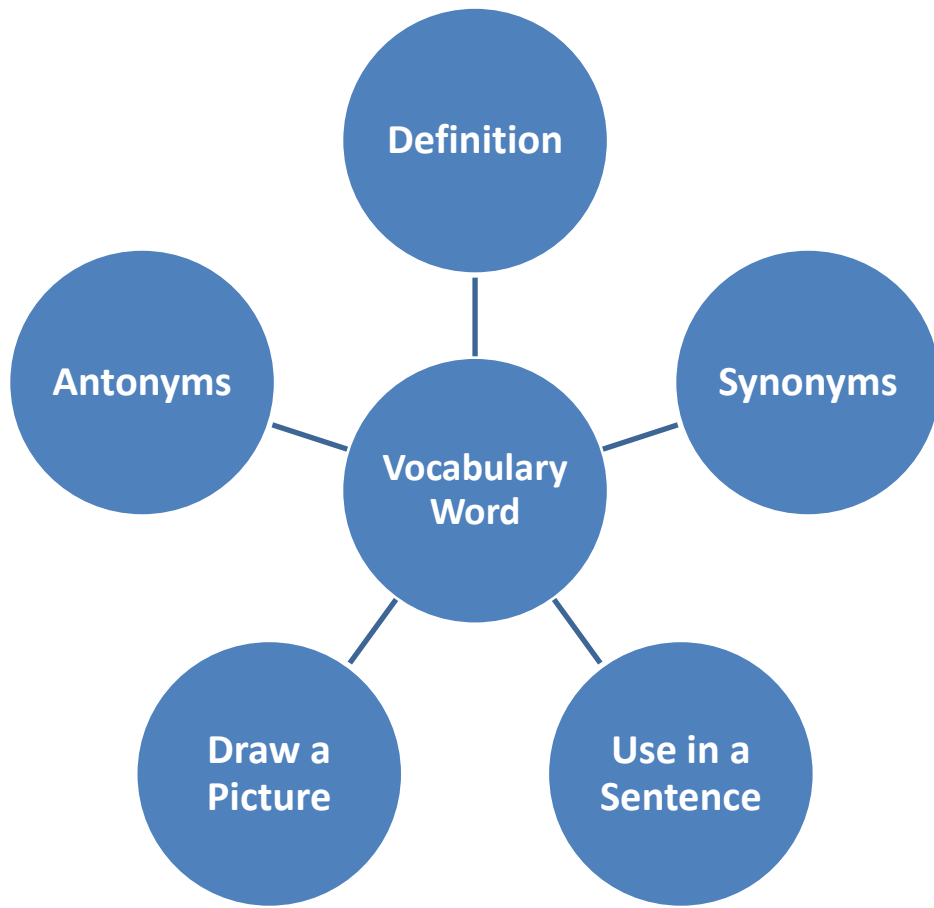
Preview the poem by reading the title and paying attention to the poem's form: shape on the page, stanzas, number of lines and ending punctuation.

Read poem aloud several times to hear rhyme, rhythm, and the overall sound of the poem. This makes it easier to understand the poem.

Visualize the images by paying close attention to strong verbs, and comparisons in poem. Do the images remind you of anything? Let the comparisons paint a picture in your head.

Clarify words and phrases by allowing yourself to find the meaning of words or phrases that stand out, are repeated, or you do not understand the meaning. Use dictionary, context clues, teacher or peer.

Evaluate the poem's theme by asking what message is the poet trying to send or help you understand? Does it relate to your life in any way?



Vocabulary Word Maps

Poetry Inference Graphic Organizer

Directions Think about what the poet is trying to help you understand. Does it connect to anything in your life?

Poem title	Details or statements from poem	What I know from reading or experience	Inference
<i>If</i> by Kipling			

Feel free to draw or illustrate your inferences on the back.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I marked the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

by Robert Frost

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-road-not-take>

Desiderata

Go placidly amid the noise and the haste,
and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible, without surrender,
be on good terms with all persons.
Speak your truth quietly and clearly;
and listen to others,
even to the dull and the ignorant;
they too have their story.
Avoid loud and aggressive persons;
they are vexatious to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others,
you may become vain or bitter,
for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.
Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.
Keep interested in your own career, however humble;
it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs,
for the world is full of trickery.
But let this not blind you to what virtue there is;
many persons strive for high ideals,
and everywhere life is full of heroism.
Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection.
Neither be cynical about love,
for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment,
it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years,
gracefully surrendering the things of youth.
Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.
But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings.
Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline,
be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe
no less than the trees and the stars;
you have a right to be here.
And whether or not it is clear to you,
no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God,
whatever you conceive Him to be.
And whatever your labors and aspirations,
in the noisy confusion of life,
keep peace in your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams,
it is still a beautiful world.
Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

by Max Ehrmann
<http://www.fleurdelis.com/desiderata.htm>

We Real Cool

THE POOL PLAYERS.
SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL.

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

by Gwendolyn Brooks

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/we-real-cool/>

Making a Fist

For the first time, on the road north of Tampico,
I felt the life sliding out of me,
a drum in the desert, harder and harder to hear.
I was seven, I lay in the car
watching palm trees swirl a sickening pattern past the glass.
My stomach was a melon split wide inside my skin.

"How do you know if you are going to die?"
I begged my mother.
We had been traveling for days.
With strange confidence she answered,
"When you can no longer make a fist."

Years later I smile to think of that journey,
the borders we must cross separately,
stamped with our unanswerable woes.
I who did not die, who am still living,
still lying in the backseat behind all my questions,
clenching and opening one small hand.

by Naomi Shihab Nye

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/making-a-fist/>

Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on that sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

By Dylan Thomas

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/do-not-go-gentle-into-that-good-night/>

Title: A Retrieved Reformation

Author: O Henry

<http://www.readbookonline.net/readOnLine/1891/>

A guard came to the prison shoe-shop, where Jimmy Valentine was assiduously stitching uppers, and escorted him to the front office. There the warden handed Jimmy his pardon, which had been signed that morning by the governor. Jimmy took it in a tired kind of way. He had served nearly ten months of a four year sentence. He had expected to stay only about three months, at the longest. When a man with as many friends on the outside as Jimmy Valentine had is received in the "stir" it is hardly worth while to cut his hair.

"Now, Valentine," said the warden, "you'll go out in the morning. Brace up, and make a man of yourself. You're not a bad fellow at heart. Stop cracking safes, and live straight."

"Me?" said Jimmy, in surprise. "Why, I never cracked a safe in my life."

"Oh, no," laughed the warden. "Of course not. Let's see, now. How was it you happened to get sent up on that Springfield job? Was it because you wouldn't prove an alibi for fear of compromising somebody in extremely high-toned society? Or was it simply a case of a mean old jury that had it in for you? It's always one or the other with you innocent victims."

"Me?" said Jimmy, still blankly virtuous. "Why, warden, I never was in Springfield in my life!"

"Take him back, Cronin!" said the warden, "and fix him up with outgoing clothes. Unlock him at seven in the morning, and let him come to the bull-pen. Better think over my advice, Valentine."

At a quarter past seven on the next morning Jimmy stood in the warden's outer office. He had on a suit of the villainously fitting, ready-made clothes and a pair of the stiff, squeaky shoes that the state furnishes to its discharged compulsory guests.

The clerk handed him a railroad ticket and the five-dollar bill with which the law expected him to rehabilitate himself into good citizenship and prosperity. The warden gave him a cigar, and shook hands. Valentine, 9762, was chronicled on the books, "Pardoned by Governor," and Mr. James Valentine walked out into the sunshine.

Disregarding the song of the birds, the waving green trees, and the smell of the flowers, Jimmy headed straight for a restaurant. There he tasted the first sweet joys of liberty in the shape of a broiled chicken and a bottle of white wine--followed by a cigar a grade better than the one the warden had given him. From there he proceeded leisurely to the depot. He tossed a quarter into the hat of a blind man sitting by the door, and boarded his train. Three hours set him down in a little town near the state line. He went to the cafe of one Mike Dolan and shook hands with Mike, who was alone behind the bar.

"Sorry we couldn't make it sooner, Jimmy, me boy," said Mike. "But we had that protest from Springfield to buck against, and the governor nearly balked. Feeling all right?"

"Fine," said Jimmy. "Got my key?"

He got his key and went upstairs, unlocking the door of a room at the rear. Everything was just as he had left it. There on the floor was still Ben Price's collar-button that had been torn from that eminent detective's shirt-band when they had overpowered Jimmy to arrest him.

Pulling out from the wall a folding-bed, Jimmy slid back a panel in the wall and dragged out a dust-covered suit-case. He opened this and gazed fondly at the finest set of burglar's tools in the East. It was a complete set, made of specially tempered steel, the latest designs in drills, punches, braces and bits, jimmies, clamps, and augers, with two or three novelties, invented by Jimmy himself, in which he took pride. Over nine hundred dollars they had cost him to have made at ----, a place where they make such things for the profession.

In half an hour Jimmy went down stairs and through the cafe. He was now dressed in tasteful and well-fitting clothes, and carried his dusted and cleaned suit-case in his hand.

"Got anything on?" asked Mike Dolan, genially.

"Me?" said Jimmy, in a puzzled tone. "I don't understand. I'm representing the New York Amalgamated Short Snap Biscuit Cracker and Frazzled Wheat Company."

This statement delighted Mike to such an extent that Jimmy had to take a seltzer-and-milk on the spot. He never touched "hard" drinks.

A week after the release of Valentine, 9762, there was a neat job of safe-burglary done in Richmond, Indiana, with no clue to the author. A scant eight hundred dollars was all that was secured. Two weeks after that a patented, improved, burglar-proof safe in Logansport was opened like a cheese to the tune of fifteen hundred dollars, currency; securities and silver untouched. That began to interest the rogue- catchers. Then an old-fashioned bank-safe in Jefferson City became active and threw out of its crater an eruption of bank-notes amounting to five thousand dollars. The losses were now high enough to bring the matter up into Ben Price's class of work. By comparing notes, a remarkable similarity in the methods of the burglaries was noticed. Ben Price investigated the scenes of the robberies, and was heard to remark:

"That's Dandy Jim Valentine's autograph. He's resumed business. Look at that combination knob--jerked out as easy as pulling up a radish in wet weather. He's got the only clamps that can do it. And look how clean those tumblers were punched out! Jimmy never has to drill but one hole. Yes, I guess I want Mr. Valentine. He'll do his bit next time without any short-time or clemency foolishness."

Ben Price knew Jimmy's habits. He had learned them while working on the Springfield case. Long jumps, quick get-aways, no confederates, and a taste for good society--these ways had helped Mr. Valentine to become noted as a successful dodger of retribution. It was given out that Ben Price had taken up the trail of the elusive cracksman, and other people with burglar-proof safes felt more at ease.

One afternoon Jimmy Valentine and his suit-case climbed out of the mail-hack in Elmore, a little town five miles off the railroad down in the black-jack country of Arkansas. Jimmy, looking like an athletic young senior just home from college, went down the board side-walk toward the hotel.

A young lady crossed the street, passed him at the corner and entered a door over which was the sign, "The Elmore Bank." Jimmy Valentine looked into her eyes, forgot what he was, and became another man. She lowered her eyes and coloured slightly. Young men of Jimmy's style and looks were scarce in Elmore.

Jimmy collared a boy that was loafing on the steps of the bank as if he were one of the stockholders, and began to ask him questions about the town, feeding him dimes at intervals. By and by the young lady came out, looking royally unconscious of the young man with the suit- case, and went her way.

"Isn' that young lady Polly Simpson?" asked Jimmy, with specious guile.

"Naw," said the boy. "She's Annabel Adams. Her pa owns this bank. Why'd you come to Elmore for? Is that a gold watch-chain? I'm going to get a bulldog. Got any more dimes?"

Jimmy went to the Planters' Hotel, registered as Ralph D. Spencer, and engaged a room. He leaned on the desk and declared his platform to the clerk. He said he had come to Elmore to look for a location to go into business. How was the shoe business, now, in the town? He had thought of the shoe business. Was there an opening?

The clerk was impressed by the clothes and manner of Jimmy. He, himself, was something of a pattern of fashion to the thinly gilded youth of Elmore, but he now perceived his shortcomings. While trying to figure out Jimmy's manner of tying his four-in-hand he cordially gave information.

Yes, there ought to be a good opening in the shoe line. There wasn't an exclusive shoe-store in the place. The dry-goods and general stores handled them. Business in all lines was fairly good. Hoped Mr. Spencer would decide to locate in Elmore. He would find it a pleasant town to live in, and the people very sociable.

Mr. Spencer thought he would stop over in the town a few days and look over the situation. No, the clerk needn't call the boy. He would carry up his suit-case, himself; it was rather heavy.

Mr. Ralph Spencer, the phoenix that arose from Jimmy Valentine's ashes --ashes left by the flame of a sudden and alterative attack of love-- remained in Elmore, and prospered. He opened a shoe-store and secured a good run of trade.

Socially he was also a success, and made many friends. And he accomplished the wish of his heart. He met Miss Annabel Adams, and became more and more captivated by her charms.

At 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. Mr. Adams, the typical, plodding, country banker, approved of Spencer. Annabel's pride in him almost equalled her affection. He was as much at home in the family of Mr. Adams and that of Annabel's married sister as if he were already a member.

One day Jimmy sat down in his room and wrote this letter, which he mailed to the safe address of one of his old friends in St. Louis:

Dear Old Pal:

I want you to be at Sullivan's place, in Little Rock, next Wednesday night, at nine o'clock. I want you to wind up some little matters for me. And, also, I want to make you a present of my kit of tools. I know you'll be glad to get them--you couldn't duplicate the lot for a thousand dollars. Say, Billy, I've quit the old business--a year ago. I've got a nice store. I'm making an honest living, and I'm going to marry the finest girl on earth two weeks from now. It's the only life, Billy--the straight one. I wouldn't touch a dollar of another man's money now for a million. After I get married I'm going to sell out and go West, where there won't be so much danger of having old scores brought up against me. I tell you, Billy, she's an angel. She believes in me; and I wouldn't do another crooked thing for the whole world. Be sure to be at Sully's, for I must see you. I'll bring along the tools with me.

Your old friend,

Jimmy.

On the Monday night after Jimmy wrote this letter, Ben Price jogged unobtrusively into Elmore in a livery buggy. He lounged about town in his quiet way until he found out what 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!"

The next morning Jimmy took breakfast at the Adamses. He was going to Little Rock that day to order his wedding-suit and buy something nice for Annabel. That would be the first time he had left town since he came to Elmore. It had been more than a year now since those last professional "jobs," and he thought he could safely venture out.

After breakfast quite a family party went downtown together--Mr. Adams, Annabel, Jimmy, and Annabel's married sister with her two little girls, aged five and nine. They came by the hotel where Jimmy still boarded, and he ran up to his room and brought along his suit-case. Then they went on to the bank. There stood Jimmy's horse and buggy and Dolph Gibson, who was going to drive him over to the railroad station.

All went inside the high, carved oak railings into the banking-room-- Jimmy included, for Mr. Adams's future son-in-law was welcome anywhere. The clerks were pleased to be greeted by the good-looking, agreeable young man who was going to marry Miss Annabel. Jimmy set his suit-case down. Annabel, whose heart was bubbling with happiness and lively youth, put on Jimmy's hat, and picked up the suit-case. "Wouldn't I make a nice drummer?" said Annabel. "My! Ralph, how heavy it is? Feels like it was full of gold bricks."

"Lot of nickel-plated shoe-horns in there," said Jimmy, coolly, "that I'm going to return. Thought I'd save express charges by taking them up. I'm getting awfully economical."

The Elmore Bank had just put in a new safe and vault. Mr. Adams was very proud of it, and insisted on an inspection by every one. The vault was a small one, but it had a new, patented door. It fastened with three solid steel bolts thrown simultaneously with a single handle, and had a time-lock. Mr. Adams beamingly explained its workings to Mr. Spencer, who showed a courteous but not too intelligent interest. The two children, May and Agatha, were delighted by the shining metal and funny clock and knobs.

While they were thus engaged Ben Price sauntered in and leaned on his elbow, looking casually inside between the railings. He told the teller that he didn't want anything; he was just waiting for a man he knew.

Suddenly there was a scream or two from the women, and a commotion. Unperceived by the elders, May, the nine-year-old girl, in a spirit of play, had shut Agatha in the vault. She had then shot the bolts and turned the knob of the combination as she had seen Mr. Adams do.

The old banker sprang to the handle and tugged at it for a moment. "The door can't be opened," he groaned. "The clock hasn't been wound nor the combination set."

Agatha's mother screamed again, hysterically.

"Hush!" said Mr. Adams, raising his trembling hand. "All be quite for a moment. Agatha!" he called as loudly as he could. "Listen to me." During the following silence they could just hear the faint sound of the child wildly shrieking in the dark vault in a panic of terror.

"My precious darling!" wailed the mother. "She will die of fright! Open the door! Oh, break it open! Can't you men do something?"

"There isn't a man nearer than Little Rock who can open that door," said Mr. Adams, in a shaky voice. "My God! Spencer, what shall we do? That child--she can't stand it long in there. There isn't enough air, and, besides, she'll go into convulsions from fright."

Agatha's mother, frantic now, beat the door of the vault with her hands. Somebody wildly suggested dynamite. Annabel turned to Jimmy, her large eyes full of anguish, but not yet despairing. To a woman nothing seems quite impossible to the powers of the man she worships.

"Can't you do something, Ralph--/try/, won't you?"

He looked at her with a queer, soft smile on his lips and in his keen eyes.

"Annabel," he said, "give me that rose you are wearing, will you?"

Hardly believing that she heard him aright, she unpinned the bud from the bosom of her dress, and placed it in his hand. Jimmy stuffed it into his vest-pocket, threw off his coat and pulled up his shirt- sleeves. With that act Ralph D. Spencer passed away and Jimmy Valentine took his place.

"Get away from the door, all of you," he commanded, shortly.

He set his suit-case on the table, and opened it out flat. From that time on he seemed to be unconscious of the presence of any one else. He laid out the shining, queer implements swiftly and orderly, whistling softly to himself as he always did when at work. In a deep silence and immovable, the others watched him as if under a spell.

In a minute Jimmy's pet drill was biting smoothly into the steel door. In ten minutes--breaking his own burglarious record--he threw back the bolts and opened the door.

Agatha, almost collapsed, but safe, was gathered into her mother's arms.

Jimmy Valentine put on his coat, and walked outside the railings towards the front door. As he went he thought he heard a far-away voice that he once knew call "Ralph!" But he never hesitated.

At the door a big man stood somewhat in his way.

"Hello, Ben!" said Jimmy, still with his strange smile. "Got around at last, have you? Well, let's go. I don't know that it makes much difference, now."

And then Ben Price acted rather strangely.

"Guess you're mistaken, Mr. Spencer," he said. "Don't believe I recognize you. Your buggy's waiting for you, ain't it?"

And Ben Price turned and strolled down the street.

-THE END-

O Henry's short story: A Retrieved Reformation