

The YELLOW STREAK By Valentine Williams

Through an error The Bee last Sunday published the third installment of "The Yellow Streak," which contains many details important to the development of the plot. For the benefit of many readers interested in the story the second installment is published here, with the third installment reprinted on the opposite page.

HORACE TREVERT ran down the corridor to reach the library door. He flung to reach the library door. He knocked sharply, then turned the handle. The door was locked. "Hartley!" he cried, and rapped again. "Hartley! Open the door! It's me, Horace!" Again he knocked and rattled the handle. Not a sound came from the locked room. There was an instant's silence. Horace and the doctor exchanged an interrogatory look. From behind the closed door came the steady ticking of a clock. The silence was so absolute that both men heard it.

Then the door at the end of the corridor was flung open and Bude appeared. He was running at a quick, ambling trot, his heavy tread shaking the passage. "O, sir," he cried, "whatever is it? What has happened?" Horace spoke quickly, incisively. "Something's happened to Mr. Parrish. Bude," he said, "the door's locked and he doesn't answer. We'll have to break the door down."

Bude shook his head. "It's solid oak, sir," he began. Then he raised his hand. "Pardon me, gentlemen," he said, as though an idea had struck him. "If we were to go out by the garden door here, we might get in through the window. We could break the glass if needs be!" "That's it!" exclaimed Horace. "Come on, doctor!"

He dashed down the corridor towards the little passage. The doctor laid a hand on Bude's arm. "One of us had better stay here," he said, with a meaningful glance at the closed door. The butler raised an astonished face to his. "Go with Sir Horace, Bude," said the doctor. "I'll stay."

Outside in the gardens of Harkings it was a raw, damp evening, pitch black now, with little gusts of wind which shook the naked bushes of the rosary. The garden door led by a couple of shallow steps on to a gravel path which ran all along the back of the house. The path extended right up to the wall of the house. On the other side it flanked the rosary.

The glass door was banging to and fro in the night wind as Bude, his coat collar turned up, hurried into the darkness. The library, which formed the corner of the new wing, had two windows, the one immediately above the gravel path looking out over the rose garden, the other round the corner of the house giving on the same path. Beyond which ran a high hedge of clipped box surrounding the so-called Pleasure Ground, a plot of smooth grass with a sun dial in the center.

A glow of light came from the library window, and in its radiance Bude saw silhouetted the tall, well-knit figure of young Trevert. As the butler came up, the boy raised something in his hand and there was a crash of broken glass.

The curtains were drawn, but with the breaking of the window they began to flap about. With the iron grating he had picked up from the drain below the window young Trevert smashed the rest of the glass away, then thrust an arm through the empty window frame, fumbling for the window catch. "The catch is not fastened," he whispered, and with a resolute thrust he pushed the window up. The curtains leaped up wildly, revealing a glimpse of the pleasant, book-lined room. Both men from the darkness without saw Parrish's desk, littered with his papers, and his habitual chair, beyond it, pushed back, empty.

From the face his gaze traveled to the body. He then remained could not repress an involuntary start, albeit he saw what he had half expected to see. The fleshy right hand of Hartley Parrish grasped convulsively an automatic pistol. His clenching index finger was crooked about the trigger and the barrel was pressed into the yielding pile of the carpet. His other hand with clawing fingers was flung out away from the body on the other side. One leg was stretched out to its fullest extent and the foot just touched the hem of the gray window curtains. The other leg was slightly drawn up.

The doctor raised the lamp from the desk and, dropping on one knee, placed it on the ground beside the body. With gentle fingers he manipulated the eyes, opened the man's serge coat and waistcoat which Parrish was wearing. As he unbuttoned the waistcoat he laid bare a dark red stain on the breast of the fine silk shirt. He opened shirt and undershirt, bent an ear to the still form, and then, with a little helpless gesture, rose to his feet.

"Dead?" queried Trevert. Romain nodded shortly. "Shot through the heart," he said. "He looked so . . . so limp," the boy said, shrinking back a little. "I thought he was dead. But I never thought old Hartley would have done a thing like that. . . ." The doctor pursed up his lips as if to speak, but he remained silent for a moment. Then he said:

"Horace, the police must be informed. We can do that on the telephone. This room must be left just as it is until they come. I can do nothing more for poor Hartley. And we shall have to tell the others. I'd better do that myself. I wonder where Greve is? I haven't seen him all the afternoon. As a barrister he should be able to advise us about the technicalities: the police and all that. . . ."

Rapid footsteps reverberated down the corridor. Robin Greve appeared at the door. The fat and frightened face of Bude appeared over his shoulder. "Good God, doctor," he cried, "what's this Bude tells me?" The doctor cleared his throat. "Our poor friend is dead, Greve," he said. "But how?" "How?" Greve stood opposite the doctor in the center of the library. He had switched on the light at the door as he had come in, and the room was flooded with soft light thrown by concealed lamps set round the cornice of the ceiling.

"Look!" responded the doctor by way of answer, and stepped aside to let the young man come up to the desk. "He has a pistol in his hand!" Robin Greve took a step forward and stopped dead. He gazed for an instant with out speaking on the dead face of his host and rival. "Suicide!" It was an affirmation rather than a question, and the little doctor took it up. He was not a young man and the shock and excitement were beginning to tell on his nerves.

"I am not a police surgeon," he said with some asperity; "in fact, I may say I have not seen a dead body since my hospital days. I—I know nothing about these things. This is a matter for the police. They must be summoned at once. Where's Bude?" Robin Greve turned quickly. "Get on to the police station at Steveniah at once, Bude," he ordered. "Do you know the inspector?"

"Yes, sir," the butler answered in a hollow voice. His hands were trembling violently and he seemed to control himself with difficulty. "Mr. Humphries, sir?" "Well, ring him up and tell him that Mr. Parrish is dead. . . . Hullo, what do all these people want?" There was a commotion at the door. Fresh faces were framed in the doorway. Outside there was the sound of a woman whispering. A tall, dark young man in a tall coat came in quickly. He stopped short when he saw the solemn faces of the group at the desk. It was Parrish's man, Jay.

He stepped forward to the desk and in a frightened sort of way peered at the body as it lay on the floor. "O, sir!" he said breathlessly, addressing Greve, "whatever has happened to Mr. Parrish? It can't be true. . . ." Greve put his hand on the young man's shoulder. "I'm sorry to say it is true, Jay," he answered. "He was very good to us all," the valet replied in a broken voice. He remained by the desk staring at the body in a dazed fashion.

"Who is that crying outside?" Greve demanded. "This is no place for women." "It's Mrs. Heever, the housekeeper," Bude answered. "Who else must go back to her room. . . . Send all those servants away. Jay, will you see to it? And take care that Lady Margaret and Miss Trevert don't come in here either." "Sir Horace is with them, sir, in the lounge," said Jay, and went out. "I'll go to them. I think I'd better," exclaimed the doctor. "I shall be in the lounge when they want me. A dreadful affair! Dreadful!" The little doctor bustled out, leaving Greve and the butler alone in the room with the mortal remains of Hartley Parrish lying where he had fallen on the soft gray carpet.



Despite her effort to remain calm, the girl's voice shook a little. She made a little helpless gesture of her hands.

In this was a little heap of papers and letters. Robin glanced through them. There were two or three prospectuses, a notice of a golf match, a couple of notes from West End tradesmen inclosing receipts, and an acknowledgment from the bank. There was only one personal letter—a business communication from a Rotterdam firm. Robin glanced at the letter. It was typewritten on paper of a dark slate-blue shade. It was headed "ELIAS VAN DER SEYCK & CO. GENERAL IMPORTERS, ROTTERDAM" and dealt with steel shipments.

Robin dropped the letter back into the tray and turned to survey the room. It was in perfect order. The room smelt smoky. Now he remembered he had noticed it as he came in. He stood an instant gazing thoughtfully at the blazing and leaping fire. He threw a quick glance at the window where the curtains tossed fitfully in the breeze coming through the broken pane. Suddenly he stepped quickly across the room and, lifting the reading lamp from the table, bore it over to the window, which he scrutinized narrowly by its light. Then he dropped on one knee beside the dead body, placing the lamp on the floor beside him.

He lifted the dead man's left hand and narrowly examined the nails. Without touching the right hand which clasped the revolver, he studied its nails, too. He rose and took the gold mounted reading glass from the desk and scrutinized the nails of both hands through the glass.

Then he rose to his feet again and, having replaced lamp and reading glass on the desk, stood there thoughtfully, his brown hands clasped before him. His eyes wandered from the desk to the window and from the window to the door. Then he noticed on the carpet between the desk and the window a little ball of slate-blue paper. He bent down and picked it up. He had begun to unroll it when the library door was flung open. Robin thrust the scrap of paper in his pocket and turned to face the door.

The library door opened. A large, square built, florid man in the braided uniform of a police inspector stood on the threshold of the room. Beside him was Bude, who, with an air of dignified and respectful meanness, suitably blended, waved him into the room. "The-ahem—the body is in here, Mr. Humphries, sir!" He nodded shortly to Greve and with a tread that shook the room strode across to where Hartley Parrish was lying dead. In the meantime a harassed looking man with a short gray beard, wearing a shabby frock coat, had slipped into the room behind the inspector. He approached Greve, bent over him and peered through his gold spectacles. "The butler said . . ."

"No, my name is Greve," answered Robin. "I am staying in the house. This is Dr. Romain." He motioned to the door. Dr. Romain came bustling into the room. "Glad to see you here so promptly, inspector," he said. "A shocking business, very. Is this the doctor? I am Dr. Romain." Dr. Redstone bowed with alacrity. "A great privilege, sir," he said staidly. "I have followed your work. . . ."

"Thank you, sir; much obliged, I'm sure. Now—" he thrust a hand into his tunic and produced a large leather bound notebook—"do you know anything as would throw a light on this business?" Greve shook his head. "He seemed perfectly cheerful at lunch. He left the dining room directly after he had taken his coffee."

"Where did he go?" "He came here to work. He told us at lunch that he was going to shut himself up in the library for the whole afternoon, as he had a lot of work to get through."

The inspector made a note or two in his book. Then he paused, thoughtfully tapping the end of his pencil against his teeth. "It was Miss Trevert, you say, who found the body?" "No," Greve replied. "Her brother, Sir Horace Trevert. It was Miss Trevert who heard the shot fired."

"The door was locked, I think?" "On the inside. But here is Sir Horace Trevert. He will tell you how he got through the window and discovered the body."

"Horace Trevert gave a brief account of his entry into the library. Again the inspector scribbled in his note book. "One or two more questions, gentlemen, please," he said, "and then I should wish to see Miss Trevert. Firstly, who saw Mr. Hartley last, and at what time?" Horace Trevert looked at Greve.

"It would be when he left us after lunch, wouldn't it?" he said. "Certainly, certainly," Dr. Romain broke in. "Come on," said Humphries sternly. "You left us all together in the dining room—you, Horace, and Robin and Lady Margaret and Mary. . . . Miss Trevert and her mother, you know," he added by way of explanation to the inspector.

"And he went straight to the library?" "That was not at what time?" "About two thirty, sir." "Then you were the last person to see him before . . . that is unless . . ."

The butler hesitated, casting a quick glance round his audience. "What do you mean?" rapped out the inspector, looking up from his note book. "Did anybody else see Mr. Parrish in spite of his orders?" "Bude was silent. He was looking at Greve. "Come on," said Humphries sternly. "You heard my question? What makes you think anybody else had access to Mr. Parrish before the shot was heard?"

Bude made a little resigned gesture of the hands. "Well, sir, I thought . . . I made sure that Mr. Greve . . ."

There was a moment's tense silence. "Well," snapped Humphries. "I was going to say I made certain that Mr. Greve was going to Mr. Parrish in the library to tell him tea was ready. Mr. Greve passed me in the hall and went down the library corridor just after I had served the tea. All eyes turned to Robin. "It's perfectly true," he said. "I went out into the garden for a mouthful of fresh air just before tea. I left the house by the side door, off the corridor here. I didn't go to the library, though. It is an underground thing in this house that no one ever disturbs Mr. Parrish when he—"

Humphries turned to Horace Trevert. "What time was it when Miss Trevert heard the shot?" "Horace puckered up his brow. "Well," he said, "I don't quite know. We were having tea. It wasn't much after five—I should say about a quarter past."

"Then the shot that Miss Trevert heard would have been fired just about the time that you, sir—he turned to Robin—"were coming in from your stroll?" "Somewhere about that time, I should say," Robin answered rather thoughtfully. "Did you hear it?" queried the inspector. "No," said Robin. "But surely you must have been at or near the side door at the time, as you were coming in."

"I came in by the front door," said Robin. "On the other side of the house. . . ." Very carefully the inspector closed his note book, thrust it in its place along the back, fastened the elastic about the book, and turned to Horace Trevert. "And now, sir, if I might speak to Miss Trevert alone for a minute."

"I say, though," expostulated Horace, "my sister's awfully upset, you know. Is it absolutely necessary?" "Aye, sir, it is!" said the inspector. "But there's no need for me to see her in here. Perhaps in some other room."

"The drawing room is next to this," the butler put in. "They'd be nice and quiet in there, Sir Horace." The inspector acquiesced. Dr. Redstone drew him aside for a whispered colloquy. The inspector came back to Robin and Horace.

"The doctor would like to have the body taken upstairs to Mr. Parrish's room," he said. "He wishes to make a more detailed examination if Dr. Romain would help him. If one of you gentlemen could give orders about this. . . . I have two officers outside who would lend a hand. And this room must then be shut and locked. Sergeant Harris!" he called.

"Sir!" A stout sergeant appeared at the library door. "As soon as the body has been removed, you will lock the room and bring the key to me. And you will return here and see that no one attempts to get into the room. Understand?" "Yes, sir!" "Inspector!"

Robin Greve called Inspector Humphries as the latter was preparing to follow Bude to the drawing room. "Mr. Parrish seems to have written a note for Miss Trevert," he said, pointing at the desk. "And if that envelope you will find Mr. Parrish's will. I discovered it there on the desk just before you arrived."

"Again the inspector shot one of his swift glances at the young man. He went over to the desk, shook the document and letter from their envelope, glanced at them, and replaced them. "I don't rightly know that this concerns me, gentlemen," he said slowly. "I think I'll just take charge of it. And I'll give Miss Trevert her letter."

Taking the two envelopes, he tramped heavily out of the room. The phrases he had been laboriously preparing—"This has been a bad shock for you, ma'am," "You will forgive me, I'm sure, ma'am, for calling upon you at a moment such as this"—died away on his lips as Mary Trevert said: "Ask me any questions you wish, inspector. I will tell you everything I can." "That's very good of you, ma'am, I'm sure," answered the inspector, unstrapping his note book. "And I'll try and not detain you long. Now then, tell me what you know of this sad affair."

after you had knocked? Not while you were knocking?" "No, I knocked and waited, expecting Mr. Parrish to answer. Instead of his answer, there came this shot. . . ."

"I see. And after the shot was fired there was a crash?" "A sort of thud—like something heavy falling down."

"And you heard no groan or cry?" "The girl knit her brows for a moment. "I—I—was frightened by the shot. I—I—don't seem able to remember what happened afterwards. Let me think. . . . let me think. . . ."

"There, there," said the inspector paternally. "Don't upset yourself like this. Just try and think what happened after you heard the shot fired." Mary Trevert shuddered, one slim white hand pressed against her cheek. "I do remember now," she said. "There was a cry. It was more like a sharp exclamation. . . ."

"And then you heard this crash?" "Yes. . . ." The girl had somewhat regained her self-possession. She dabbed her eyes with her handkerchief quickly, as though ashamed of her weakness. "Now," said Humphries, clearing his throat, as though to indicate that the conversation had changed. "You and Lady Margaret Trevert knew Mr. Parrish pretty well, I believe, Miss Trevert. Have you any idea why he should have done this thing?"

Mary Trevert shook her dark head rather wearily. "It is inconceivable to me. . . . to all of us," she answered. "Do you happen to know whether Mr. Parrish had any business worries?" "He always had a great deal of business on hand and he had a great deal to do lately over some big deal."

"What was it, do you know?" "He was raising fresh capital for Horne's—that is the big engineering firm he controls." "Do you know if he was pleased with the way things were shaping?" "Oh, yes. He told me last night that everything would be finished this week. He seemed quite satisfied."

The inspector paused to make a note. Then he thrust a hand into the side pocket of his tunic and produced Hartley Parrish's letter. "This," he said, eying the girl as he handed her the letter, "may throw some light on the affair!" Open-eyed, a little surprised, she took the plain white envelope from his hand and gazed an instant without speaking on the bold, sprawling address: "Miss Mary Trevert."

"Open it, please," said the inspector gently. The girl tore open the envelope. Humphries saw her eyes fill, watched the emotion grip her and shake her in her self-control so that she could not speak when her reading done, she gave him back the letter. Without asking her permission he took the sheet of fine, expensive paper with its neat engraved heading and postal directions and read Hartley Parrish's last message. "My dear," it ran. "I signed my will at Barty's office yesterday and he sent it back to me today. Just this line to let you know you are properly provided for should anything happen to me. I wanted to fix things so that you and Lady Margaret would not have to worry any more. I just had to write. I guess you understand why. H."

There was a long and impressive silence while the inspector deliberately read the note. Then he looked interrogatively at the girl. "We were engaged, inspector," she said. "We were to have been married very soon." A deep flush crept slowly over Mr. Humphries' florid face and spread into the roots of his tawny fair hair. "But what does he mean by 'having me write'?" he asked. The girl replied hastily, her eyes on the ground. "Mr. Parrish was under the impression that I should have a letter from him. That is what he means. . . ."

"You knew he had provided for you in his will?" "He told me several times that he intended to leave me everything. You see, he has no relatives. . . ."

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