

The YELLOW STREAK By Valentine Williams

SYNOPSIS

Murder Parrish, who is found dead in the library of his country place, Markings, with his father in his hand, Robin Greve, who had left Mary Trevert, Parrish's fiancée, in anger when she admitted her infidelity, is suspected of some connection with the mysterious murder. He finds a mysterious blue paper inside Parrish's body and advances the theory Parrish was murdered. Bruce Wright, a former employer, tells Greve of Parrish's career in South Africa; of Victor Marbran, a possible enemy of certain blue letters that Parrish carried; of a Maxine element that disappeared from Parrish's automobile; Detective Mauderston, who has been hunting Robin, declines peace and asks help. He reveals that Victor, Parrish's secretary, has tried to place Robin in a bad light before Mary, and that an allowance is still being sent out for Miss de Malpas, a French woman in Parrish's life, although she is dead. Robin declares Parrish probably was slain by blackmailers after he had found one shot from the colored automatic. Mary visits Ernest Dulinghorne, owner of a red coupe, with one of the blue letters. He sends her to William Schulz of Rotterdam, that the source of the letters, Elias van der Spuyk & Co., may be hunted down. Jeekes denies knowledge of any blue letters, but later sends a mysterious telegram to Rotterdam, whether Robin flies by airplane. Robin is on his way to Elias van der Spuyk & Co. when he is summoned to meet Jeekes. Mary receives a bogus message and goes to William Schulz's country place, where a yellow-faced man of the name of Victor drugs her. Robin sees Jeekes in converse with Victor and steps into the motor car with him. On a lonely country road they push him into the ditch.



"Hands up, Mr. Smarty! Quick, d'you hear? Put 'em up, damn you!" called out M. Jeekes in a voice that rang like a pistol shot.

ELEVENTH INSTALLMENT

He was furious with himself for the subject way in which he had been fooled. The man Victor had given Jeekes his orders in Dutch and had purposely picked the soft spot on the roadside and slowed down the car in order that the unwelcome intruder might be ejected as safely as possible. And to think that Robin had blantly allowed Jeekes to open the door and throw him out on the road!

He was round the second bend now. The sun was shining with quite respectable warmth and the steamy air made him desperately hot. The perspiration rolled off his face. But he never slackened his gait. Robin knew these Continental roads and their habit of running straight. He reckoned confidently on presently coming upon a long stretch where he might discern the car.

He was not deceived. After the second bend the chassée, just as he had anticipated, straightened out and ran clear away between an ever narrowing double line of poplars to become a Dutch blob on the horizon. But of the car nothing was to be seen.

For the second time Robin pulled up. He took serious counsel with himself. He estimated that he could see for about three miles along the road. Less than three minutes had elapsed since his misadventure, and therefore he was confident that the car should yet be in sight, unless it had left the road, for it could not have warmed up to a speeding exceeding sixty miles an hour in the time. There was no sign of the car on the road; consequently it must have left it. Robin had passed no side roads between the scene of the accident and the second bend; therefore, he argued, he had the car before him still. He would go on.

When he started off for the third time it was at a brisk walking pace. As he went he kept a sharp lookout to right and left of the road for any trace of the car. It never occurred to him that to follow on foot a swift car bound for an unknown destination was the maddest kind of wild goose chase. He was profoundly uneasy about Mary, but at the same time immeasurably angered by the trick played upon him—angered not so much against Jeekes as against the yellow-faced man whom he recognized as his instructor. He had no thought for anything else.

The first Dutch landscape stretched away on either side of the road. A windmill or two, the inevitable irrigation canals with their little sluices, and an occasional tree alone broke the monotony of the scene. But away to the right Robin noticed a clump of trees which, he surmised, might conceivably include a house.

As he walked he scrutinized the roadway for any track of a car. But on the hard brick road wheels left no mark. The first side road he came to was likewise paved in brick. In grave perplexity Robin came to a halt.

Then his eye fell upon a paddock. It lay on the edge of the footpath bordering the chassée, about five yards beyond the turning. The soft mud which skirted it showed the punched out pattern of a studded tire. The car had not taken this side road at any rate. It had probably pulled over on to the footpath to pass the manure cart which Robin had met. He pushed on again valiantly.

at observation behind the laurels Robin observed that a tall window beside the green door commanded the view across the courtyard. He therefore retraced his steps by the way he had come. When he was past the corner of the house he returned to the drive, and, keeping close to the bushes, walked quietly into the courtyard. There, lunging the wall, he crept round past the closed doors of the garage until he found himself beside the tall window adjoining the green door.

The window was open a few inches at the top. From within the sound of voices reached him. Jeekes was speaking. Robin recognized his rather grating voice at once. " . . . no more violence," he was saying; "first Greve and now the girl. I don't like your methods, Victor . . ."

Very cautiously Robin dropped on one knee and stuffed forward in this position until his eyes were on a level with the window sill. He found himself looking into a narrow room, well lighted by a second window at the further end. It was apparently an office, for there was a high desk running down the center and a large safe occupied a prominent place against the wall.

Jeekes and the man Victor stood chatting at the desk. The yellow faced man was grinning sarcastically. "Parrish don't like your methods, I'll be bound," he retorted. "Don't you worry about the little lady, Jeekes! Bless your heart, I won't hurt her unless . . ."

The loud throbbing of a car at the front of the house made Robin duck his head hastily. The car, he guessed, might be round at the garage any moment and it would not do for him to be discovered. He got clear of the window, rose to his feet, and slipped round the house by the way he had come. Then he crossed the drive and regained the shelter of the laurels. Crawling along until he came level with the porch, he peeped through.

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Something struck him half-way. The young man had waited composedly for his coming, but as his assailant advanced and shot out his left hand there was a sharp crack and the yellow-faced man, reeling, dropped face downwards on the carpet without a sound. In his fall his foot caught a small table on which a vase of chrysanthemums stood and the whole thing went over with a loud crash. He made a spasmodic effort to rise, heeled himself on to his knees, swayed again, and then collapsed full length on the floor, where he lay motionless.

The sound of the fall seemed to awaken the girl. She stirred uneasily once or twice. "What . . . what is it?" she muttered and was still again.

Bending down, the young man gathered her up in his arms and bore her out through the door with the blue curtains through a plainly furnished set of office with high desks and stools and out by a side door into a paved yard. There an open car was standing. The fresh air seemed to revive the girl further. As the young man held her on the seat she struggled up into a sitting position and passed her hand across her forehead.

"What is the matter with me?" she said in a dazed voice. "I feel so ill!" Then catching sight of the young man as he peered into her face she exclaimed: "Robin!"

"Thank God, you're all right, Mary," said Robin. "We've not got a moment to lose. We must get away from here quick!"

was at his throat and had borne him to the ground. The pistol was knocked skittily from his hand and fell clattering on the flags. Robin pounced down on it. Then for the first time he smiled, a sunny smile that lit up his blue eyes.

"Brave, Mary!" he said. "That was an ideal New Year, Jeekes," he ordered, "crank up that car. And be quick about it! We want to be off!"

The little secretary was a lamentable sight. He was bleeding from a cut on the forehead, his clothes were covered with dust, and his glasses had been broken in his fall. Peering helplessly about him, he walked to the bonnet of the car and sullenly grasped the handle. The smile had left Robin's face and Mary noticed that he looked several times anxiously at the office door.

And then suddenly the engine bit. Handling the pistol to the girl, Robin warned her to keep the secretary covered and, leaping into the driving seat, turned the car into the avenue which curved round the house.

Mr. Jeekes made no further show of fight. He remained standing in the center of the courtyard, a ludicrous, rather pathetic figure. As the three of the car gritted on the gravel of the drive, the office door was flung open and the yellow faced man ran out, brandishing a big revolver.

left Mary and the car in charge of the boy and went to the office and asked to see the manager. He had decided upon the story he must tell.

"Miss Trevert," he said when the manager, a blonde and suave swain, had presented himself, "has been to the dentist and has been rather upset by the gas. Would you get one of the maids to help her up to her room and in the meantime telephone for a doctor. If there is an English doctor in Rotterdam, I should prefer to have him."

The manager clicked in sympathy. He dispatched a lady typist and a chambermaid to help Mary out of the car.

"For a doctor," he said, "it is fortunate. We have an English doctor staying in so hotel now—a sheep's doctor. He is in all lounge. Ref you come here?"

The "sheep's doctor" proved to be a doctor off one of the big liners, a clean shaven, red faced, hearty sort of person who readily volunteered his services. As Robin was about to follow him into the lift the manager stopped him.

"Zero was a shentelman call to see Miss Trevert," he said, "two or three times 'e been 'ere . . . a Sherman shentelman. 'E leave 'er a note . . . will you take it?"

Greatly puzzled, Robin Greve balanced in his hands the letter which the manager produced from a pigeonhole. Then he tore open the envelope.

"Dear Miss Trevert," he read, "I was extremely sorry to miss you this morning. Directly I received your message I called at your hotel, but, though I have been back twice, I have not found you in. Circumstances have arisen which make it imperative that I should see you as soon as possible. This is most urgent. I will come back at four o'clock, as I cannot get away before. Do not leave the hotel on any pretext until you have seen me and Dulinghorne's letter as identification. You are in grave danger."

The note was signed "W. Schulz."

Fatherland by William Hobensollern. In his ill cut suit of cheap looking blue serge which he wore with a pea green tie, Robin thought he looked altogether a typical specimen of the German of the noncommissioned officer class.

"You ask for me?" he said in deep guttural accents, looking at Robin. "I am Herr Schulz!"

The German's manner was cold and formal and Robin felt a little dashed.

"My name is Greve," he began rather hurriedly. "I understand you received a visit today from a young English lady, a Miss Trevert."

The German let his eyes travel slowly from Robin to the doctor and back again. He did not offer them a chair and all three remained standing.

"Ye—es and what if I did?" Robin felt his temper rising.

"You wrote a note to Miss Trevert at her hotel warning her that she was in danger. I want to know why you warned her. What led you to suppose that she was threatened?"

Herr Schulz made a little gesture of the hands.

"Was I not right to warn her?" "Indeed you were," Robin asserted with conviction. "She was spirited away and drugged. . . ."

Continued Next Sunday. (Copyright 1921 by The Chicago Tribune.)