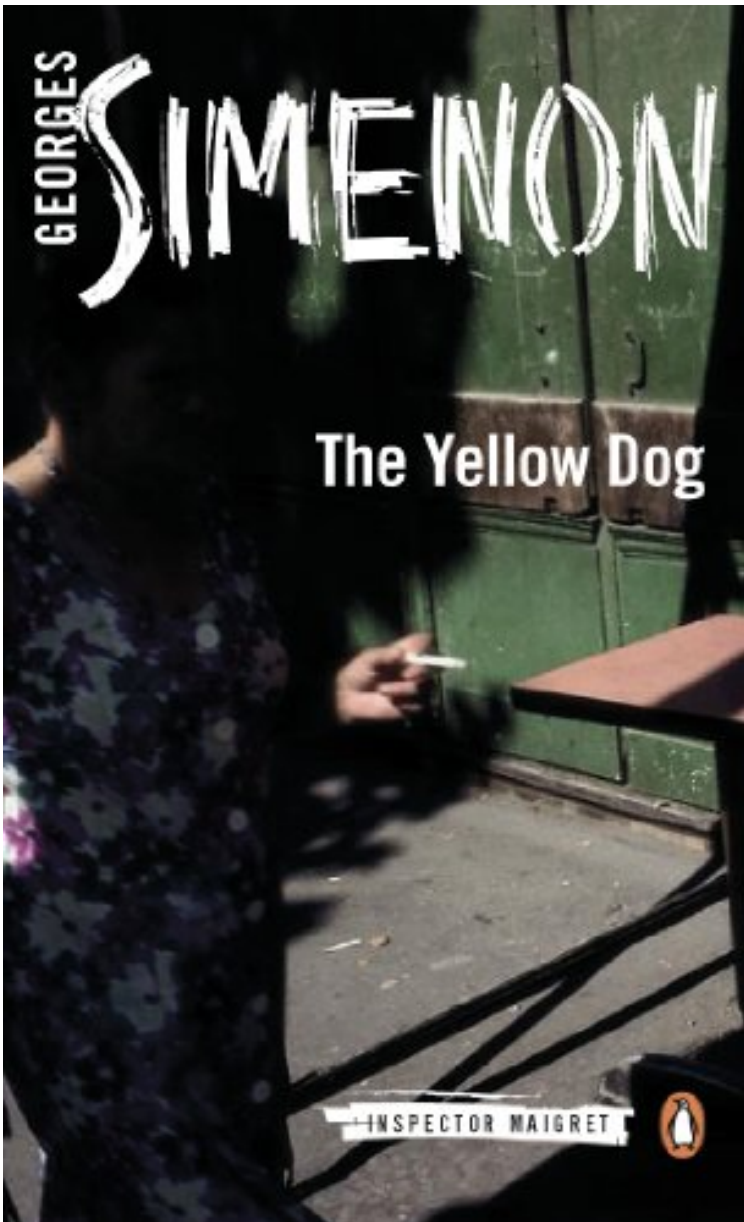


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# The Yellow Dog: Inspector Maigret #5



*Par Georges Simenon*  
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## Description :

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despondent, sickly. In the windswept seaside town of Concarneau, a local wine merchant is shot. In fact, someone is out to kill all the influential men and the entire town is soon sent into a state of panic. For Maigret, the answers lie with the pale, downtrodden waitress Emma, and a strange yellow dog lurking in the shadows... Penguin is publishing the entire series of Maigret novels in new translations. This novel has been published in a previous translation as *A Face for a Clue*. 'Compelling, remorseless, brilliant' John Gray 'One of the greatest writers of the twentieth century . . . Simenon was unequalled at making us look inside, though the ability was masked by his brilliance at absorbing us obsessively in his stories' *Guardian* 'A supreme writer . . . unforgettable vividness' *Independent* *Extrait* 1. *Nobody's Dog* Friday, 7 November. Concarneau is empty. The lighted clock in the Old Town glows above the ramparts; it is five minutes to eleven. The tide is in, and a south-westerly gale is slamming the boats together in the harbour. The wind surges through the streets. Here and there a scrap of paper scuttles swiftly along the ground. There is not a single light on Quai de l'Aiguillon. Everything is closed. Everyone is asleep. Only the three windows of the Admiral Hotel, on the square where it meets the quay, are still lighted. They have no shutters, but through their murky greenish panes the figures inside are just barely visible. Huddled in his booth less than a hundred metres away, the customs guard stares enviously at the people lingering in the caf. Across from him in the harbour is a coaster that had come in for shelter that afternoon. There is no one on deck. Its blocks creak, and a loose jib snaps in the wind. And there is the relentless din of the gale and the rattle of the tower clock as it prepares to toll eleven. The hotel door opens. A man appears, still talking to the people inside. The gale snatches at him, flaps his coat-tails, lifts off his bowler hat. He catches it in time and jams it on his head as he walks away. Even from a distance, it is clear that he is a bit tipsy; he is unsteady on his legs and is humming a tune. The customs guard watches him and grins when the man decides to light a cigar. A comic struggle then develops between the drunk and the wind, which tears at his coat and his hat as it pushes him along the pavement. Ten matches are blown out. The man spots a doorway up two steps, takes cover there and leans forwards. A match flickers, very briefly. The smoker staggers, grabs for the doorknob. Was that noise part of the storm, the customs guard wonders. He can't be sure. He laughs as he sees the fellow lose his balance and reel backwards at an impossible angle. The man lands on the ground at the kerb, his head in the filth of the gutter. The customs guard beats his hands against his sides to warm them and scowls at the jib, irritated by its racket. A minute, two minutes pass. He takes another glance at the drunk, who has not moved. A dog has turned up from somewhere and is sniffing at him. That was when I first got the feeling there was something wrong, the customs guard said later, at the hearing. The comings and goings that followed are harder to establish in strict chronological order. The customs guard approaches the fallen man, not reassured by the presence of the dog, a big snarling yellow animal. There is a street lamp eight or ten metres away. At first he sees nothing unusual. Then he notices a hole in the drunks overcoat and a thick fluid flowing from the hole. He runs to the Admiral Hotel. The caf is nearly empty. Leaning on the till is a waitress. At a marble table, two men, their chairs tilted back, their legs stretched out, are finishing their cigars. Quick! A crime I don't know The customs guard looks down. The yellow dog has followed him in and is lying at the waitress's feet. There is hesitation, a vague feeling of fright in the air. Your friend, the man who just left here Some seconds later, the three of them are leaning over the body, still sprawled at the kerb. A few steps away is the town hall, with the police station. The customs guard, needing to do something, dashes over and then, breathless, runs to a doctor's doorbell. Unable to shake off the sight, he keeps repeating, He staggered backwards like a drunk, and he went three or four steps, like this Five men, then six, seven. Windows opening everywhere. Whispering On his knees in the mud, the doctor declares: A bullet fired point-blank into the belly. He must be operated on right away. Someone phone the hospital! Everyone recognizes the wounded man. It is Monsieur Mostaguen, Concarneau's biggest wine dealer, a good fellow, without an enemy in the world. The two uniformed policemen one of them has come out without his cap don't know where to begin the investigation. Someone is talking: Monsieur Le Pommeret, whose manner and voice show him to be someone important. He and I were playing cards at the Admiral caf, with Servires and Dr Michoux. The doctor left first, half an hour ago. And then Mostaguen is afraid of his wife; he left on the stroke of eleven A tragicomedy: everyone is listening to Monsieur Le Pommeret; they have forgotten about the wounded man. Suddenly he opens his eyes, tries to get up, and, in a voice so surprised, so gentle, so feeble that the waitress bursts into nervous laughter, he whispers, What happened? But a spasm of pain racks him. His lips twist. The muscles of his face tighten as the doctor prepares his syringe for a shot. The yellow dog circles among the many legs. Puzzled, someone asks, You know this animal? I've never seen him before. Probably off some boat. In the charged atmosphere, the dog is troubling. Perhaps it is his colour, a dirty yellow. He's tall and lanky, very thin, and

his huge head calls to mind both a mastiff and a bulldog. Five or six metres away, the policemen are questioning the customs guard, who is the only witness. They look at the doorstep. It is the entrance to a large private house, whose shutters are closed. To the right of the door, a solicitors sign announces the sale of the building at auction on 18 November: Reserve price: 80,000 francs. A policeman fiddles for a long while without managing to force the lock. Finally, the owner of the garage next door cracks it with a screwdriver. The ambulance arrives. Monsieur Mostaguen is lifted on to a stretcher. The onlookers are left with nothing to do but contemplate the empty house. It has stood empty for a year now. A heavy smell of gunpowder and tobacco hangs in the hallway. A torch beam picks out cigarette ashes and muddy tracks on the flagstone floor, indicating that someone had been waiting and watching for a good while behind the door. A man wearing only a coat over his pyjamas says to his wife, Come on! There's nothing more to see. We'll find out the rest from the paper tomorrow. Monsieur Servires is here. Servires, a plump little man in a raincoat, had been with Monsieur Le Pommeret at the Admiral. He is an editor at the Brest Beacon, and, in addition, writes a humorous piece every Sunday. He is taking notes, giving suggestions not to say orders to the two policemen. The doors along the hallway are locked. The one at the rear, which opens on to the garden, is swinging open. The garden is surrounded by a wall no higher than a metre and a half. Beyond the wall is an alley that runs into Quai de l'Aiguillon. The murderer went out that way! proclaims Jean Servires. It was on the following day that Maigret established this rough account of the event. For the past month he had been assigned to Rennes to reorganize its mobile unit. There he had received an agitated phone call from the mayor of Concarneau. And he had come to the town with Leroy, an inspector with whom he had not worked before. The storm never let up. Heavy clouds dropped icy rain over the town. No boats left port, and there was talk of a steamer in distress out past the Glnan Islands. Of course, Maigret installed himself at the Admiral Hotel, the best in town. It was five in the afternoon and just dark when he stepped into the caf, a long, gloomy room with marble tables and sawdust scattered on the dingy floor. The room was made drearier still by the green windowpanes. Several tables were occupied. But a quick survey was enough to tell him which was the one with the regulars, the established customers, whose conversation everyone else tried to overhear. Someone rose from that table a baby-faced man with round eyes and a smile on his lips. Inspector Maigret? My good friend the mayor told me you were coming. I've heard a lot about you. Let me introduce myself: Jean Servires. Well, now you're from Paris, I believe? So am I! I was manager of the Red Cow in Montmartre for some time; I've worked for the Petit Parisien, for Excelsior, for the Dispatch. I was a close friend of one of your chiefs Bertrand, a fine fellow. He retired to the country last year, down in Nivre. And I've done the same thing: I've retired, so to speak, from public life. I help out at the Brest Beacon now, to keep busy. He jumped around, waving his arms. Come, now, let me present our group, the finest band of merry men in Concarneau. This is Le Pommeret: unrepentant skirt-chaser, a man of independent means and vice-consul for Denmark. The man who rose and offered his hand was turned out like a country gentleman: checked riding-breeches, custom-made gaiters without a trace of mud, white piqu stock at his throat. He had a fine silver moustache, smoothly slicked hair, a fair complexion and florid cheeks. Delighted, inspector Jean Servires went on: Dr Michoux, the son of the former deputy. A doctor on paper only, incidentally, since he's never practised. You'll see, he'll eventually sell you some land; he owns the best building plots in Concarneau, and maybe in all of Brittany. A cold hand. A narrow, knifelike face, with a nose bent sideways. Reddish hair already thinning, though the doctor was no more than thirty-five. What will you drink? Presentation de l'diteur The fifth book in the new Penguin Maigret series: Georges Simenon's gripping tale of small town suspicion and revenge, in Linda Asher's timeless translation. There was an exaggerated humility about her. Her cowed eyes, her way of gliding noiselessly about without bumping into things, of quivering nervously at the slightest word, were the very image of a scullery maid accustomed to hardship. And yet he sensed, beneath that image, glints of pride held firmly in check. She was anaemic. Her flat chest was not formed to rouse desire. 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