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opening extract from

The Adventures of Tintin: Volume Three

written by

Hergé

published by

Egmont Children's Books

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Basque	ELKAR
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Bernese	EMMENTALER DRUCK
Breton	AN HERE
Catalan	CASTERMAN
Chinese	CASTERMAN/CHINA CHILDREN'S PUBLISHING
Corsican	CASTERMAN
Danish	CARLSEN
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English	EGMONT UK LIMITED/LITTLE, BROWN & CO
Esperanto	ESPERANTIX/CASTERMAN
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First published in this edition 2007 by Egmont UK Limited
239 Kensington High Street, London W8 6SA

ISBN 978 1 4052 2896 1

Printed in Spain
3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2



The loss was discovered this morning by a museum attendant. It is believed the thief must have hidden in the gallery overnight and slipped out when the staff arrived for work. No evidence of a break-in has been found . . .

Come on Snowy! To the Museum of Ethnography!

The Director? I'm afraid he's engaged: the police are here . . .

Now, to recapitulate . . . You say the attendant locked the doors last night at 17.12 hours; he noticed nothing unusual. He came on duty this morning at seven. At 07.14 he observed that exhibit No. 3562 was missing and immediately raised the alarm. Right? . . . Now this attendant: is he reliable?

Absolutely! Above suspicion! He's been with us for over twelve years and never given the least cause for complaint.

Besides, the fetish has no intrinsic value. In my judgement, it would only be of interest to a collector . . .

Great snakes! The Thompsons!

Why, it's our friend Tintin!

Have you any leads?

Well, the Arumbaya fetish has no in . . . er . . . no instinctive value . . . The solution is quite simple: it was removed by a collector.

To be precise: it was collect . . . ed by a remover.

Some hours later . . .

This is the book. I'm sure it has something about the Arumbayas.

A. F. WALKER

TRAVELS IN THE AMERICAS

LONDON 1873

Aha! This is interesting . . . Listen, Snowy. "Today we met our first Arumbayas. Long, black, oily hair framed their coffee-coloured faces. They were armed with long blow-pipes which they employ to shoot darts poisoned with curare . . ." You hear that, Snowy?

He decided to stay there. The sur generosity and gave us a plentiful

ARUMBAYA armed with a blow-pipe

. . . Curare! . . . the terrible vegetable poison which paralyses one's breathing! . . . Oh! "Arumbaya fetish" . . . But . . . but . . . it's the very one that's been stolen!

I therefore made an accurate sketch as they urged me to g

ARUMBAYA FETISH

We were very well treated. Later we

Odd coincidence, don't you think, Snowy? . . . Snowy isn't interested . . . he's gone to sleep . . . I think I'll follow suit.

The next morning . . .

Help! It's bewitched!

Hello! . . . Hello? . . . Hello!? . . . Is that you, sir?

Yes, who is that? . . . Oh, it's you, Fred . . . What? The fetish? . . . My goodness me! I'll come at once . . .

Extraordinary! There was the fetish this morning, back in its usual place, with this letter propped up beside it . . . What do you think?

Hmmm!

Hmm?

In my opinion, gentlemen, the fetish is bewitched!

Dear Director,

I bet a friend I could pinch something from your museum.

I won my bet, so here's your fetish back.

Please forgive my foolishness, and any trouble I have caused.

Sincerely,

X

!

No. 3562 ARUMBAYA FETISH The Arumbaya tribe live along the banks of the River Gasiflor in the Republic of San Theodoros.

My mind is made up: this letter is anonymous. Nobody knows who wrote it!

To be precise: I agree. An anonymous letter nobody wrote!

According to the police the case is closed . . . But that isn't my view . . .

Why doesn't he give up?

I do beg your pardon, sir!

Wake up, Tintin! Look where you're going!

So, am I the only one to know the fetish they put back is a fake?

Here's the proof, Walker, the explorer, says he made an "accurate sketch". And according to the drawing . . .

. . . the right ear of the fetish is slightly damaged: there's a little bit missing.

ARUMBAYA FETISH

But on the reinstated fetish the right ear is intact. So it must be a copy . . . Now, who would be interested in acquiring the real one? A collector? Quite possibly . . . Anyway, let's see what the press has to say about it.

Oh dear, here we go again . . . Sherlock Holmes on the trail!

!...

FATAL OVERSIGHT

A strong smell of gas alerted residents this morning at 21 London Road. They sent for the police who effected an entry to the room occupied by artist Jacob Balthasar. Officers discovered the sculptor lying on his bed; he was found to be dead. It appears that the victim had forgotten to turn off the tap on his gas-ring. By some chance his parrot survived the fumes.

Mr. Balthasar's work attracted the attention of art-critics, who particularly praised his series of wooden statuettes, his special technique being strongly reminiscent of primitive sculpture.

Going round and round like that, he makes me giddy!

THE BLACK ISLAND

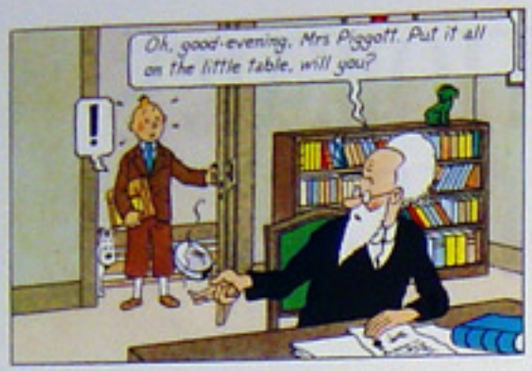


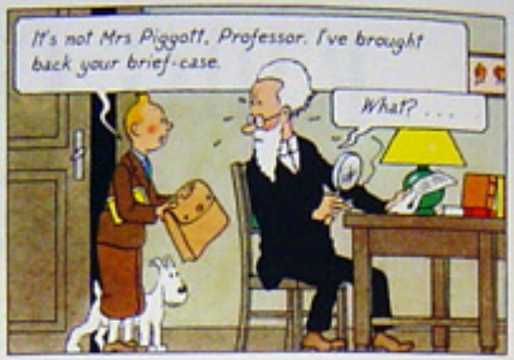

Next morning...
Well, doctor?
He was lucky. The bullet only grazed a rib. He'll be up and about in a couple of days.
Excuse me, nurse.
Can we see Tintin, please?
You can go in.
Look here: are you absolutely sure the plane had no registration marks?
Quite certain.
It all looks very fishy to me.
To be precise: the whole thing looks like me, very fishy.
Telephone, please, for Mr Thomson or Mr Thompson.
Hello? ... Yes ... Interpol? ... Yes sir, Thompson, with a p, as in psychology ... From Scotland Yard? ... Eastdown? Last night? ... Yes sir, I understand. We'll leave at once.
We're going back to England. An unregistered plane crashed last night near a place called Eastdown, in Sussex. Goodbye.
Goodbye, and watch your step!
Thanks!
CRASH
?
Why can't you look where you're going?
To be precise: speak for yourself.
Eastdown ... If only ... It can't be helped, I simply must go. Never mind doctor's orders!
Goodbye, nurse. Many thanks!
Ach! The silly fools! Who d'you think they shot at last night? Tintin himself!
Pity they didn't finish him off while they were about it.
Look!!
KÖLN
BRUSSELLS
LONDON


?
Why have we stopped?
KÖLN
Let's look in the corridor.
?
There's a door open, and someone's getting out. Come on, Snowy!
There he goes!
What d'you think you're doing?
Eek!
Let me go! A man just jumped off the train. We must follow him!
You can't fool me.
Everybody stay where you are!
?
!
No one is to leave the train.
He's coming round.
Tintin! Aren't you in bed?
There he is! I'd know him anywhere. He knocked me out!
Me??

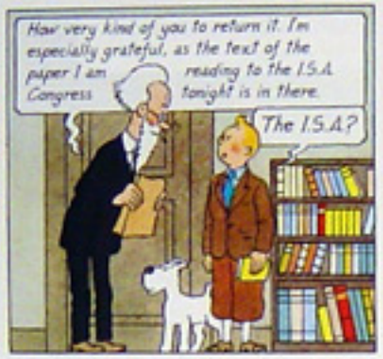
KING OTTOKAR'S SCEPTRE



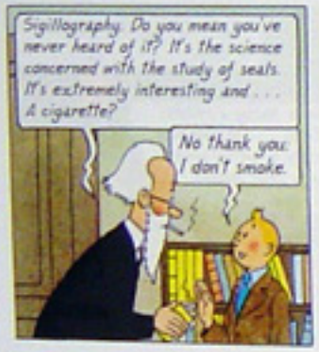

Oh, good-evening, Mrs Piggott. Put it all on the little table, will you?
!


It's not Mrs Piggott, Professor. I've brought back your brief-case.
What? . . .


My brief-case?
Ssh! Someone's just come to see him . . .


How very kind of you to return it. I'm especially grateful, as the text of the paper I am reading to the I.S.A. Congress tonight is in there.
The I.S.A.?


I.S.A.: International Sigillographical Association.
Sigi . . . what?


Sigillography. Do you mean you've never heard of it? It's the science concerned with the study of seals. It's extremely interesting and . . . A cigarette?
No thank you. I don't smoke.


Yes, sigillography is an absorbing study. One look at my collection will convince you.

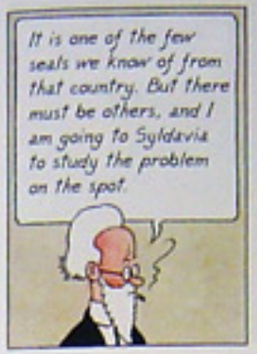

?
WOOAH


Oh, good gracious! I'm so sorry! I have a dreadful habit of dropping my cigarette ends about!


This is one of the rarest items in my collection: the seal of Charlemagne. Here is the seal of Edward the Confessor, and next to it one which belonged to Grudenigo, Doge of Venice. And here's another fine specimen: an intaglio ring from the Saxon period.

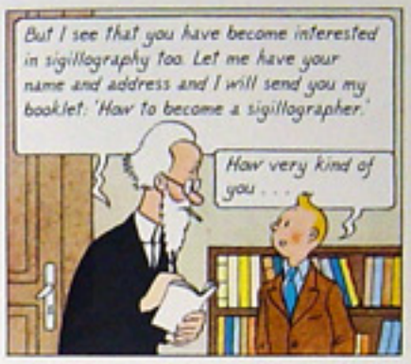

. . . And this is a very unusual seal, which I found quite by chance in Prague. It is the seal of Ottokar IV, King of Syldavia . . .
Oh?. .




It is one of the few seals we know of from that country. But there must be others, and I am going to Syldavia to study the problem on the spot.

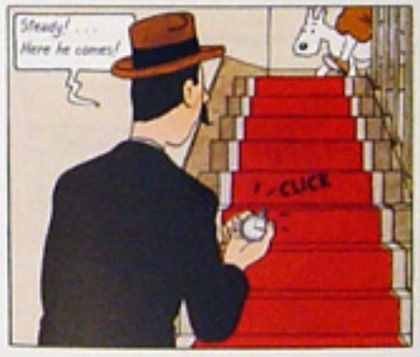

The Syldavian Ambassador, an old friend of mine, has promised to give me letters of introduction. I hope I shall be allowed to go through the historic national archives. A cigarette? . . .
No, thank you . . . And when are you leaving?


As soon as I have found a secretary. At least, rather more than a secretary; I really need someone to take care of all the details of my journey, like hotels, passports, luggage and so on.


But I see that you have become interested in sigillography too. Let me have your name and address and I will send you my booklet: 'How to become a sigillographer.'
How very kind of you . . .


He's going . . . Quick, meet him on the stairs . . .




Steady! . . . Here he comes!
CLICK




That's a funny place to put a watch right . . .


Got it! . . . Wonderful, the way a miniature camera can be hidden in a watch . . .
Here!


We'll develop the picture right away.


!?
Is it OK?

