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opening extract from

The Adventures of Tintin: Volume Six

written by

Hergé

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TRANSLATED BY LESLIE LONSDALE-COOPER AND MICHAEL TURNER

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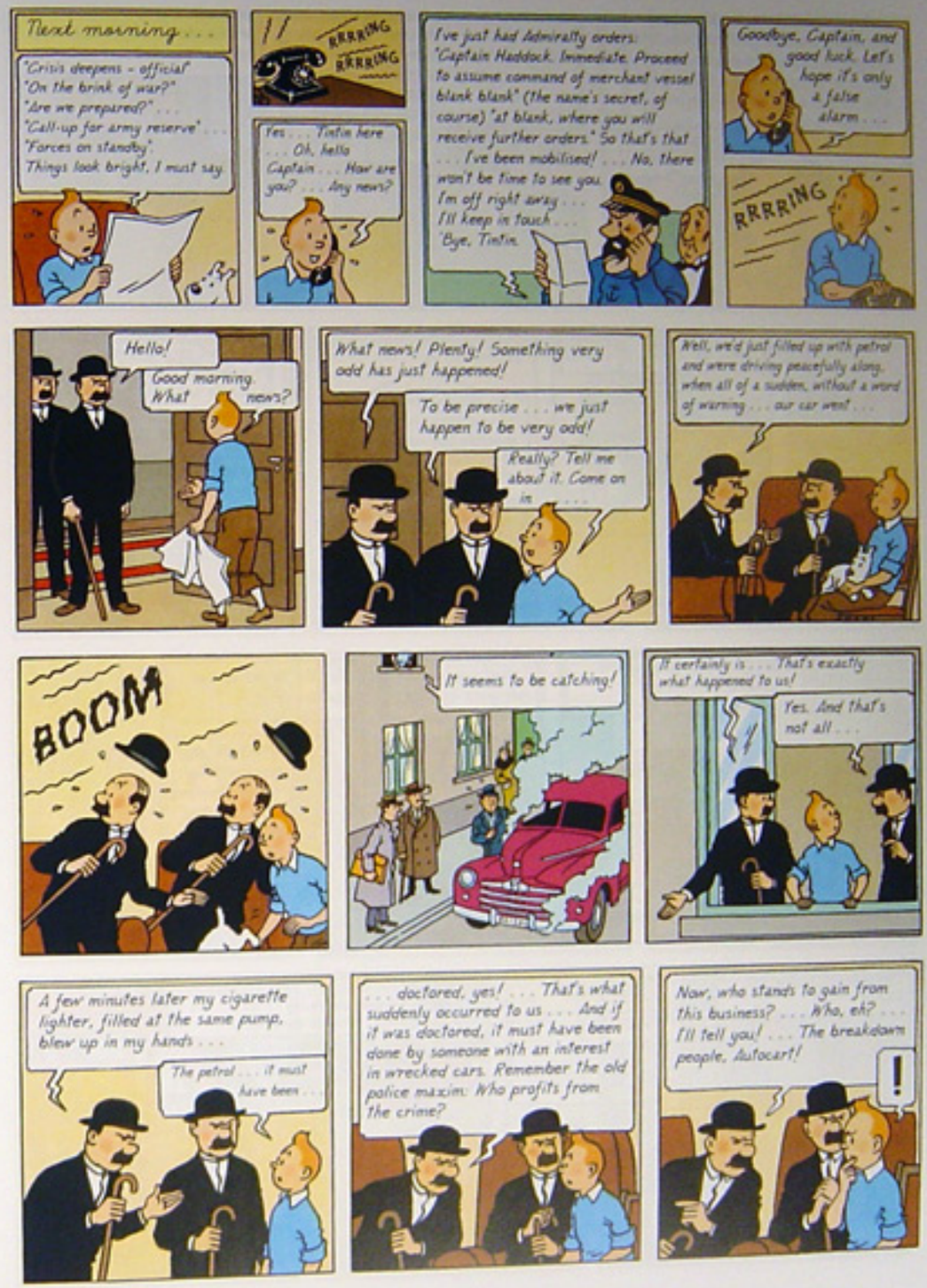
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LAND OF BLACK GOLD

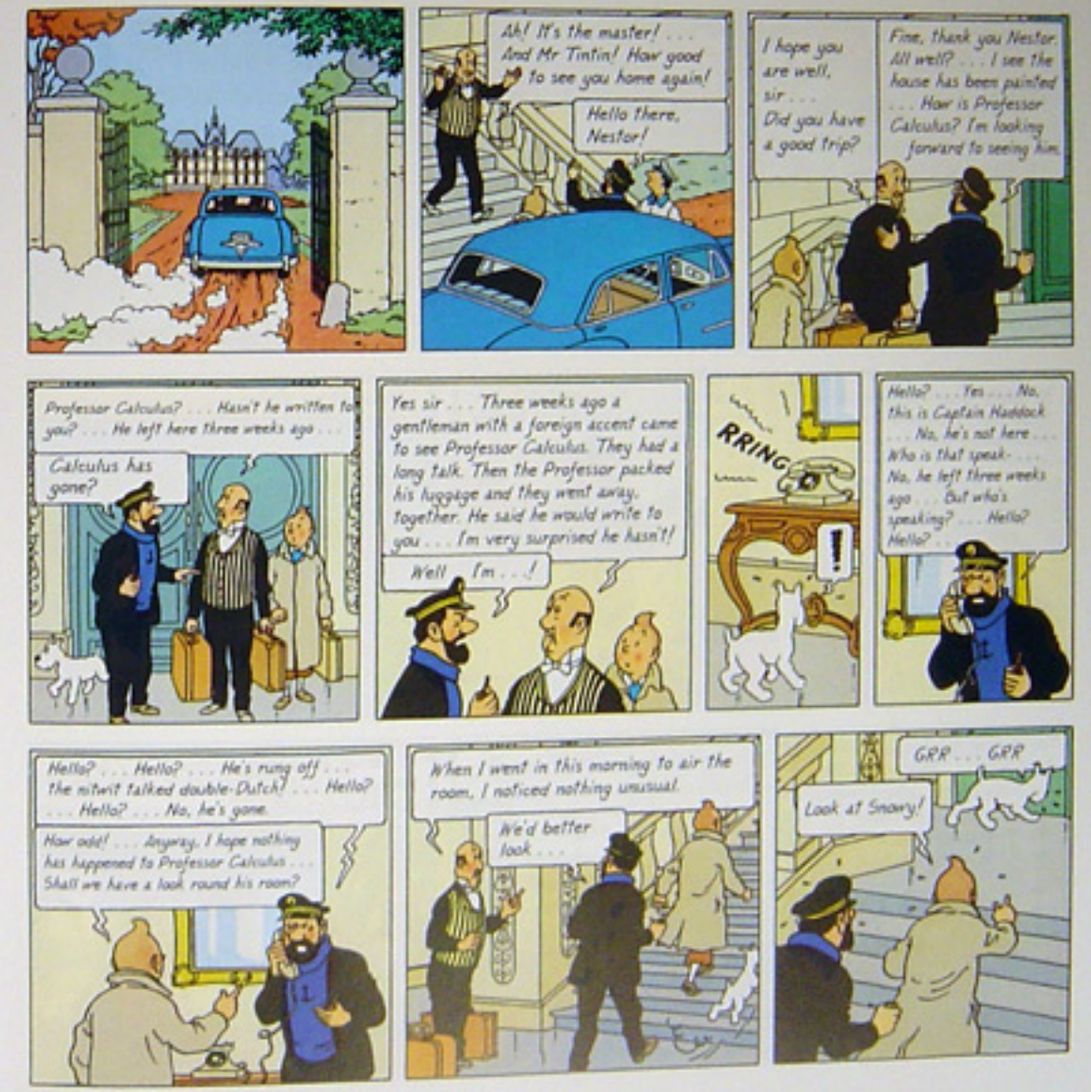
الذهب الأسود




?
?
Now I understand why they call it an internal combustion engine!
This is no time for cheap jokes! We need a breakdown gang . . .
Precisely . . . But where from?
Hmmm . . . yes
Saved! . . . Look! . . . There's a telephone box.
SEND FOR Autocart
Hello . . . Autocart to the rescue! . . . Yes . . . Yes . . . the BG493 . . . 8 miles . . . Yes . . . Mr Thompson.
Well? . . .
A breakdown truck will be here in half an hour.
Let's have a cigarette while we wait . . .
Thanks.
CLICK
BOOM
?
?


Next morning . . .
"Crisis deepens – official"
"On the brink of war?"
"Are we prepared?" . . .
"Call-up for army reserve" . . .
"Forces on standby"
Things look bright, I must say.
RRRRING
RRRRING
Yes . . . Tintin here . . . Oh, hello Captain . . . How are you? . . . Any news?
I've just had Admiralty orders. "Captain Haddock. Immediate. Proceed to assume command of merchant vessel blank blank" (the name's secret, of course) "at blank, where you will receive further orders." So that's that . . . I've been mobilised! . . . No, there won't be time to see you. I'm off right away . . . I'll keep in touch . . . 'Bye, Tintin.
Goodbye, Captain, and good luck. Let's hope it's only a false alarm . . .
RRRRING
Hello!
Good morning. What news?
What news? Plenty! Something very odd has just happened!
To be precise . . . we just happen to be very odd!
Really? Tell me about it. Come on in . . . .
Well, we'd just filled up with petrol and were driving peacefully along, when all of a sudden, without a word of warning . . . our car went . . .
BOOM
It seems to be catching!
It certainly is . . . That's exactly what happened to us!
Yes. And that's not all . . .
A few minutes later my cigarette lighter, filled at the same pump, blew up in my hands . . .
The petrol . . . it must have been . . .
. . . doctored, yes! . . . That's what suddenly occurred to us . . . And if it was doctored, it must have been done by someone with an interest in wrecked cars. Remember the old police maxim: Who profits from the crime?
Now, who stands to gain from this business? . . . Who, eh? . . . I'll tell you! . . . The breakdown people, Autocart!
!

DESTINATION MOON



Careful!

GRRR

!

?

Snowy! . . . Here, Snowy!

ZZZ...

DING DING DING

?

No, there's nothing unusual in his room . . . What is it, Nestor?

A telegram for you, sir.

For me? Already? Who knows I'm home?

B POST OFFICE OVERSEAS TELEGRAM

CAPTAIN HADDOCK MARLINSPIKE HALL MARLINSHIRE

KLOW 31 20 1128

AM IN SYLDAVIA STOP COME AND JOIN ME STOP BRING TINTIN STOP PLEASE WIRE DATE OF ARRIVAL THIS ADDRESS STOP KLAZORDIE 86 KLOW REGARDS

CALCULUS

In Syldavia! . . . Calculus is in Syldavia! . . . What's the crazy fellow doing there?

It's very odd. He asks us to join him . . . Shall we go?

Of course! . . . No need to take the bags upstairs, Nestor. We're leaving at once.

Two days later . . .

You've read this brochure on Syldavia? . . . What a country! . . . They export mineral-water, the poisoners! . . . I say, you're very preoccupied. Is something wrong?

Why did he promise to write, and then not do so?

He wired us: it comes to the same thing.

I'm not so sure. What proof have we that he sent the telegram? . . . Then, remember that mysterious telephone call? . . . Perhaps someone wanted to get us out of the house . . .

Blistering barnacles, it's true! . . . I hadn't thought of that! . . . He's quite a character, our friend Calculus!

?

Your whisky, sir . . .

Ah, that's very kind.

Stop, woman! Don't do that!

?

What are you doing? . . . Not one drop of that disgusting mineral-water in my whisky!

Two hours later . . .

Klaw, ladies and gentlemen. Please fasten safety belts.

I wonder if Calculus is here to meet us . . .

SKYDAIR

No, I don't see him anywhere . . . He must have received our telegram by now. Well, we shall see. Here we are at the Customs. Anything to declare, Captain?

Me? . . . Nothing at all!

And this? . . . Spirits! . . . There's a heavy import duty, sir. Only mineral-water here in Syldavia . . .

875 Khors import duty! Bunch of pirates! In our money that'd be . . .

Strange . . . I don't see Calculus . . .

All passports, please.

You Captain Haddock? . . . And him Tintin?

Yes.

Your friend . . . er . . . not able to come . . . he send car . . . You please come with me . . .

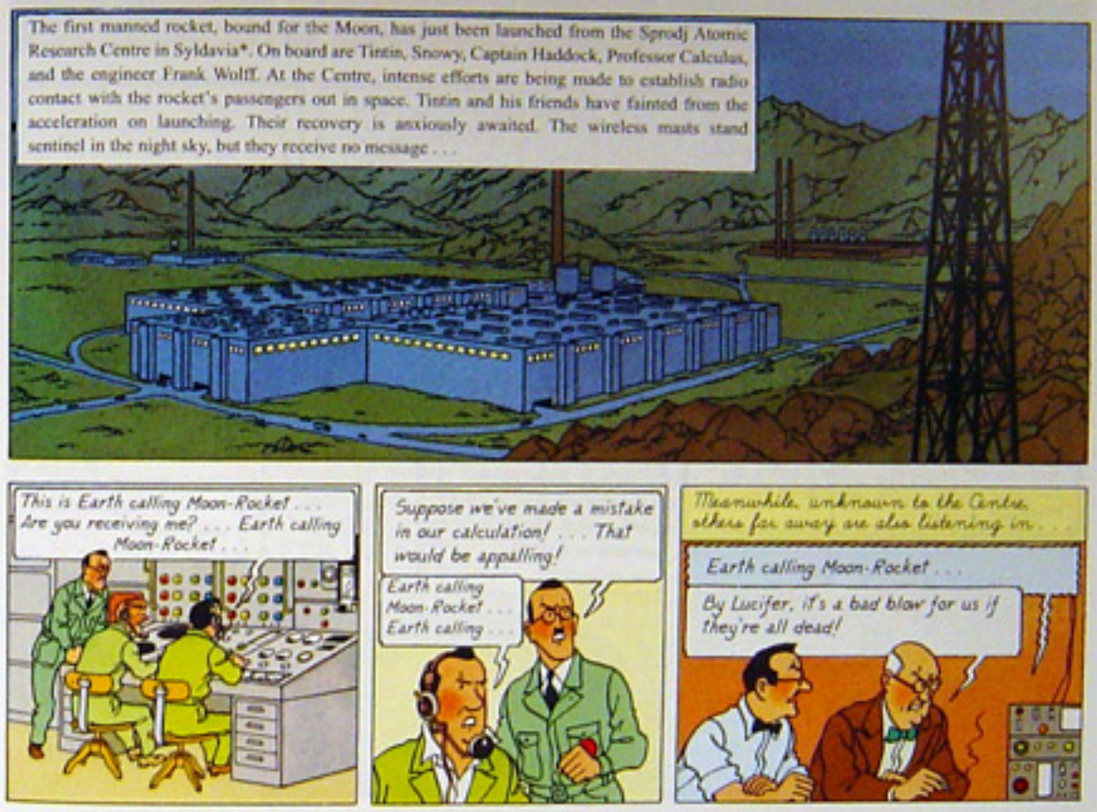
Oh, Calculus has sent a car for us. That's kind of him . . . Good: we'll follow you.

Wait . . . What about our luggage?

Already in the car, sir.

Take a good look at those two . . . They're joining the Mammoth. You see, Zepo have picked them up already . . .

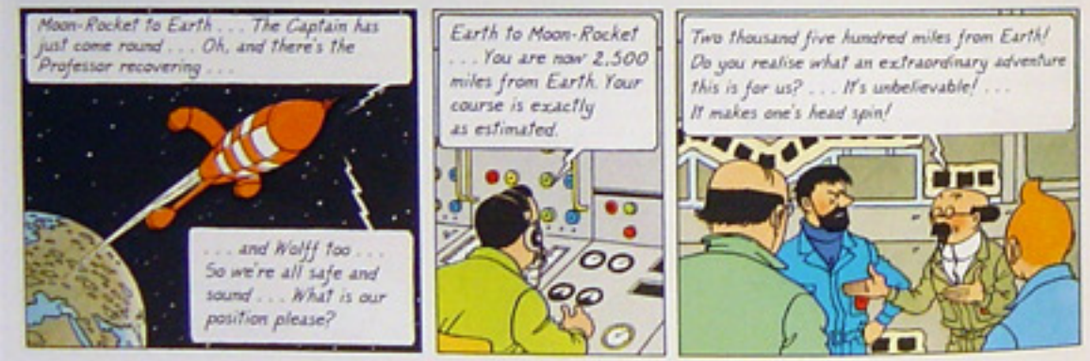
EXPLORERS ON THE MOON



* See Destination Moon


Earth calling Moon-Rocket . . . Are you receiving me? . . . Earth calling Moon-Rocket . . .
?
Moon-Rocket, are you receiving me?
WOOAH! WOOAH!
The dog! It's their dog answering!
Tintin! . . . Tintin! . . . Wake up!
Ah, he's heard me.


Snowy! . . . D'you want to . . . Why, what's happened to me? Oh yes . . . the launching, and that frightful crushing sensation . . . I was well and truly knocked out.
Earth calling Moon-Rocket . . . Are you receiving me?
Earth! It's Earth calling us!
Moon-Rocket calling Earth . . . This is Tintin here. I've just come round . . . I'll go and see how the others are.
I'm very well, thanks! But you aren't seriously trying to make me believe we're on the way to the Moon, are you?


Moon-Rocket to Earth . . . The Captain has just come round . . . Oh, and there's the Professor recovering . . .
. . . and Wolff too . . . So we're all safe and sound . . . What is our position please?
Earth to Moon-Rocket . . . You are now 2,500 miles from Earth. Your course is exactly as estimated.
Two thousand five hundred miles from Earth! Do you realise what an extraordinary adventure this is for us? . . . It's unbelievable! . . . It makes one's head spin!


Well, my head's not spinning, anyway! This whole thing is nothing but hocus-pocus and jiggery-pokery! You're just acting the . . . I mean . . . You're trying to pull my leg again!
So you doubt my word, eh? Well, you come up with me.
Golly! . . . Look over there!


Oh, so here you all are. . . . Whatever happened? . . . An earthquake?
Where in heaven's name have you sprung from?
From the hold. We decided to inspect the rocket before it goes. What's the time?
The time? . . . It's two o'clock in the morning!
Good . . . and the launching is set for 1.34? So we're plenty of time.


Plenty of time! . . . My poor friends, the rocket left the Earth half an hour ago. We are on our way to the Moon!
Ha! ha! ha! That's a good one! Always ready for a laugh, Professor!
To be precise. Ha! ha! ha!
Earth to Moon-Rocket . . . You are now 5,000 miles from the Earth. Your velocity is 6.9 miles per second.
This . . . this is a joke, isn't it? . . . You're just trying to frighten us? The launching really was fixed for 1.34?
1.34 a.m., yes! . . . Not 1.34 p.m.!


1.34 a.m.? . . . Not 1.34 p.m.? . . . Great Scotland Yard! We thought it was 1.34 in the afternoon!
Moon-Rocket to Earth. We have sensational news: the two Thompsons are on board. They decided to spend the night in the rocket, thinking the launching was at 1.34 in the afternoon.
But this creates a grave problem! We assessed our oxygen supplies for four people; now we have six on board, not counting Snowy. Will our oxygen last out?
You hear that, you brontosaurus? All this because at your age you don't know the difference between 1.34 a.m. and 1.34 p.m.!


Anyway, I must go up and take over the controls from the automatic pilot.
Blistering barnacles! When I think that I was forbidden to smoke one single little pipe, on the pretext of saving oxygen - the very same oxygen you two come here and gulp down! . . . And stop snivelling like that, you're making carbon dioxide! . . . Thundering typhoons, goodness knows why I don't chuck you overboard, without any more ado!
I say! Come and look! Come and look!
?
!