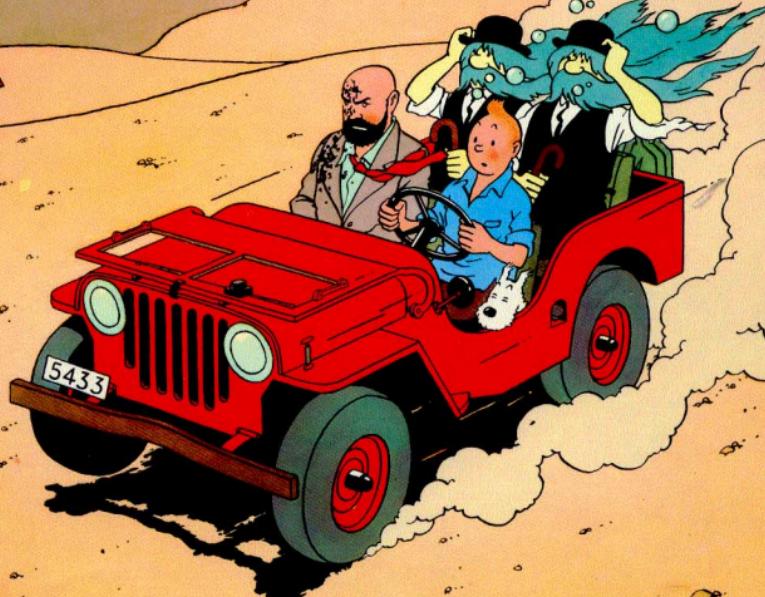


- HERGE -
THE ADVENTURES OF

TINTIN

LAND OF BLACK GOLD

الذهب الأسود

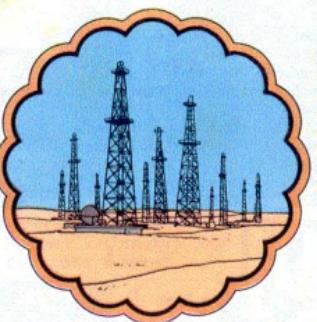


HERGÉ

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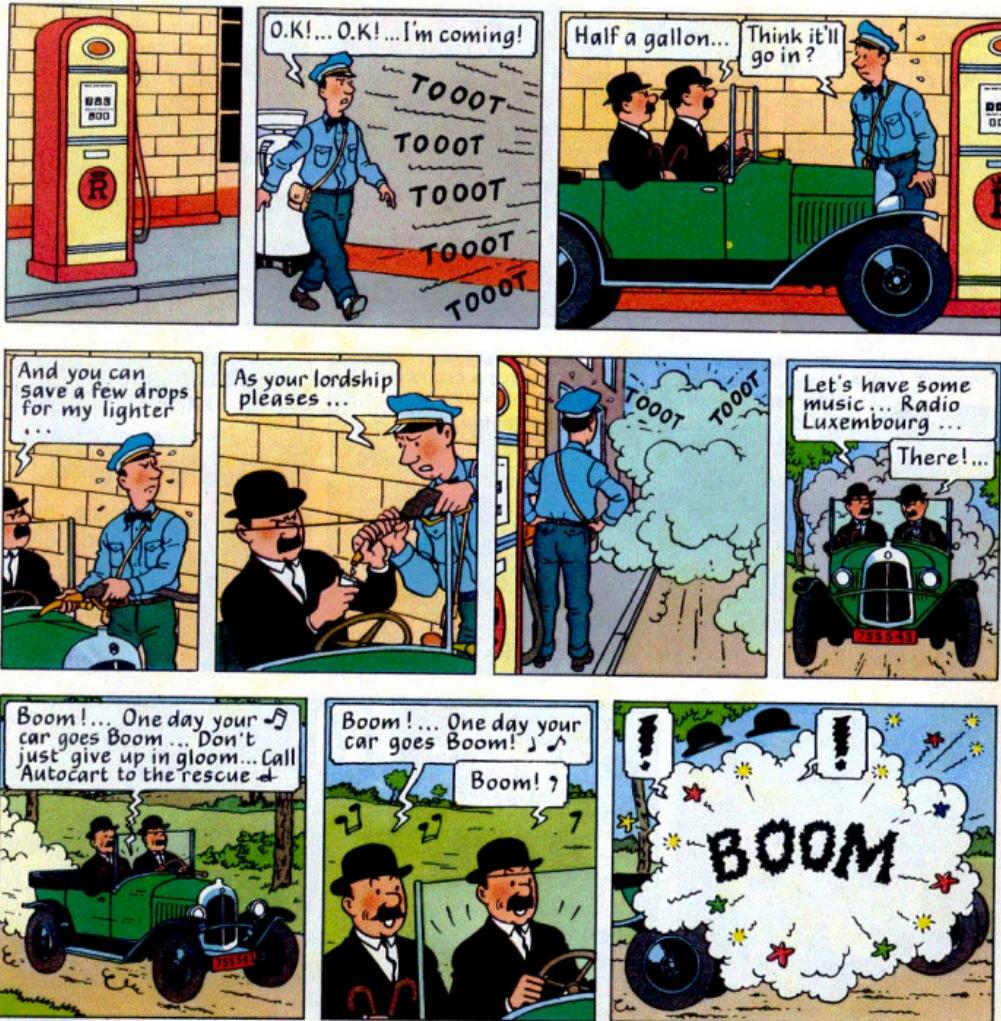


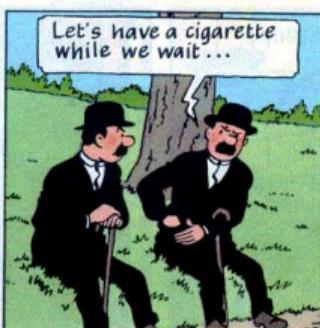
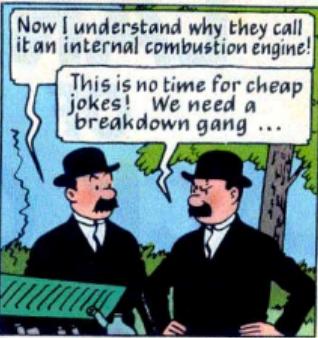
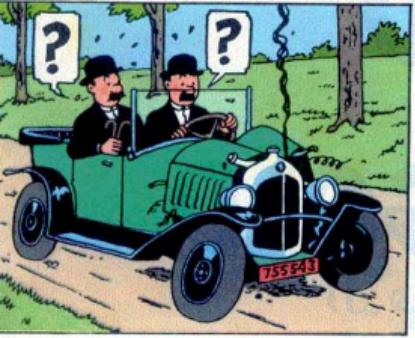
METHUEN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

LONDON

LAND OF BLACK GOLD

الْأَسْرَارُ
الْمُهَبَّ



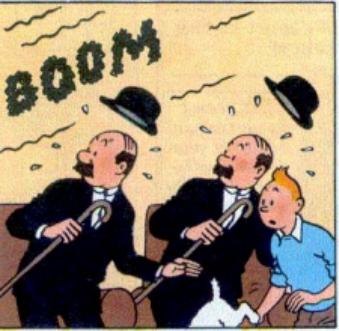
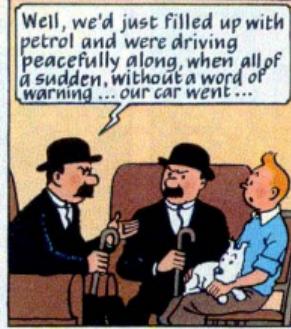
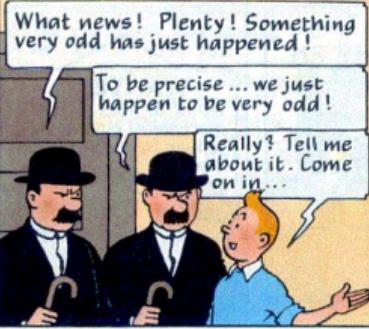
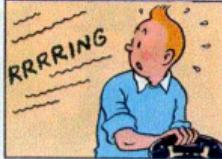


Next morning ...

"Crisis deepens - official"
"On the brink of war?"
"Are we prepared?"
"Call-up for army re-serve" ... "Forces on standby". Things look bright, I must say.



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.



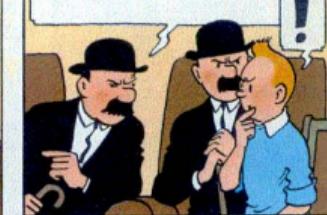
A few minutes later my cigarette lighter, filled at the same pump, blew up in my hands ...



...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!



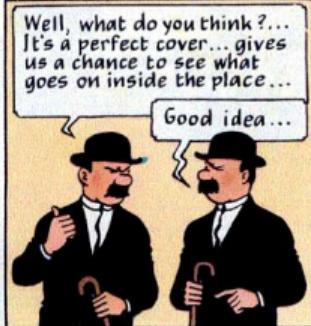
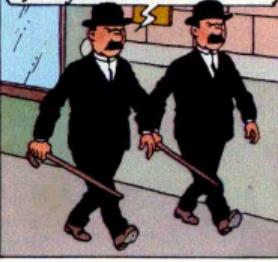
No doubt about it: Autocart doctors the petrol. When the engine blows up, you send for a breakdown truck. And who do you call? The people who do the most advertising: Autocart!



No buts! It's a certainty!... We're taking up the case, and by this time next week we'll have enough evidence to arrest the entire board of directors.



For a start, we'll take a snoop around the Autocart garage...



Next day...



Would you like to comment, sir, on the situation created by the deterioration in petrol quality ...

Catastrophic!
The situation is catastrophic ...

Look! In two months, consumption has dropped by 65% ... And it's falling every day ... This very morning ...

... the airline companies decided to suspend all services because of the dangers of fuel explosions in the air ... Oil shares have slumped to half their value ... the bottom's dropping out of the market ... It's a disaster! ... A catastrophe!

Even worse! What about the international situation? ... Supposing war comes ... breaks out tomorrow? ... Imagine what'll happen ... Ships ... planes ... tanks ... The armed forces, completely immobilised! ... The mind boggles! ... Disaster!

What do you think has caused this sudden change in the petrol?

That's the question we'd all like to answer! Nothing has changed at the oilfields, or in the refineries, so it has to be sabotage ...

We took samples at the wells, from storage depots, aboard the tankers, in the refineries, and we had them analysed ... Nothing! Absolutely nothing! Then we decided to treat the petrol itself, to prevent it exploding. Our top scientists are working night and day on the problem ... to find some way of ...



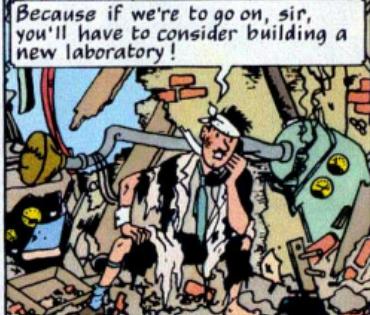
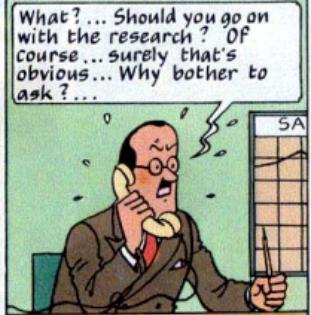
Another car blowing up! ... Where was I? Oh yes ... My senior research officer says they are on the verge of success in our labs ... I'm expecting a call from him any moment now to say they've found the solution ...

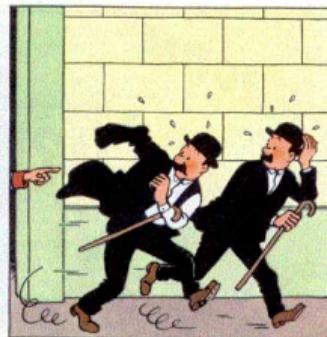
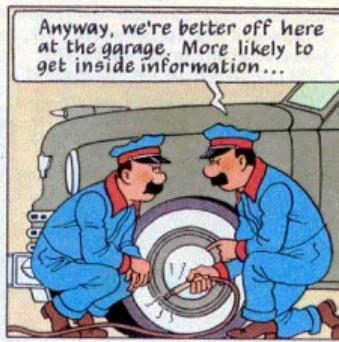
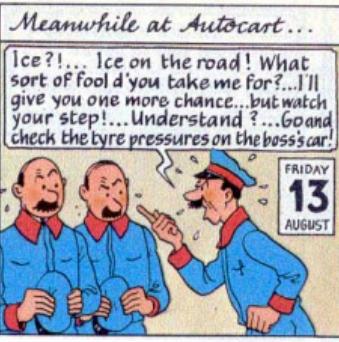
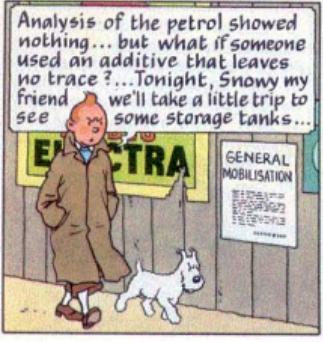


Yes? ... Well, you've got it? ... An answer? ... What? ... Nothing at all? ... Nothing? ... I see ... Well, it's a pity ... You'll just have to keep at it ...

What? ... Should you go on with the research? Of course ... Surely that's obvious ... Why bother to ask? ...

Because if we're to go on, sir, you'll have to consider building a new laboratory!

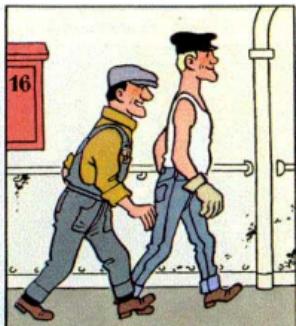
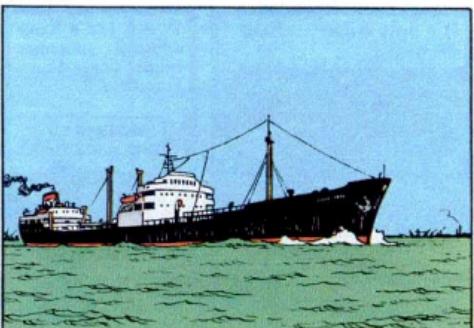








... and the next time you open your big mouths, you'll address me as 'captain ... Under-stand'?



Maybe just a coincidence... Still, can't be too careful...



Police?
Special Branch, yes... But... er ... how did you know?



It's my job to know everything... Allow me to introduce myself: Jock McPhee of Naval Intelligence, on a top-secret mission... Thomson and Thompson of Special Branch... also deadly secret...



I'd like you to do something for me... take care of some secret documents... Someone's on to me and may try to steal them... OK?



That's fixed that!... Now I can relax...



Just wait till we reach Khemikhal... you and your master!



No... I'll fix you right now, my friend!



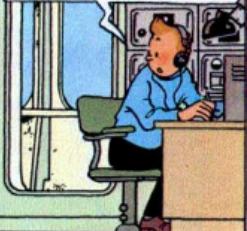
...massive troop movements are also reported... The Prime Minister told the House today that the world situation is grave, but the government has taken all steps necessary to meet an emergency...



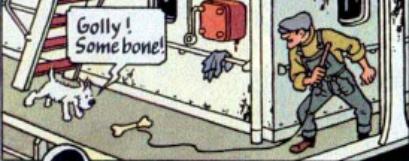
The news goes from bad to worse... One single spark could set the world ablaze...

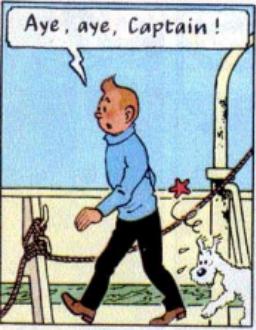
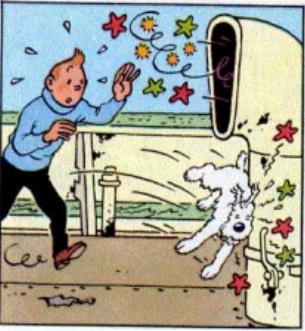
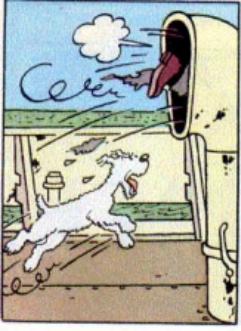


Hello, where's Snowy? ... I've heard enough for today... Snowy!... Snowy! ... Oh, he's gone out...

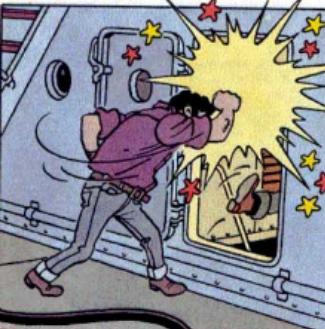


Golly! Some bone!





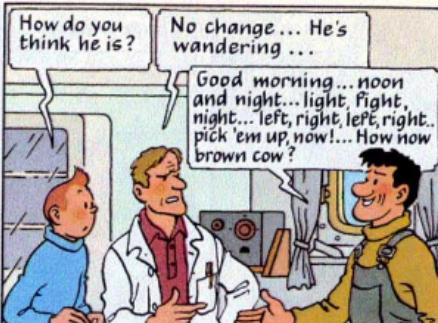
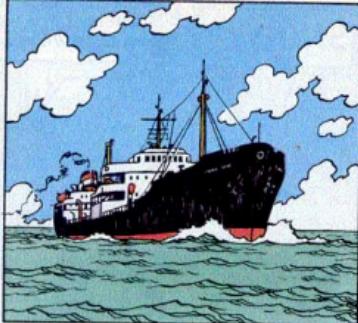




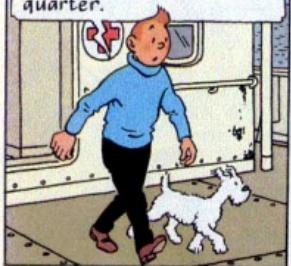


Next morning ...

Ah, the storm's blown it-self out...



No hope of learning anything useful from that quarter.



Several days later...

There's Khemikhal

Yes, and there's a launch putting out, with police aboard, I bet.



They've tightened up security... Only natural with the international crisis, and the tension in Khemed...



Military police: we have orders to search the ship.



Military police: this is a cabin search!

Go ahead.

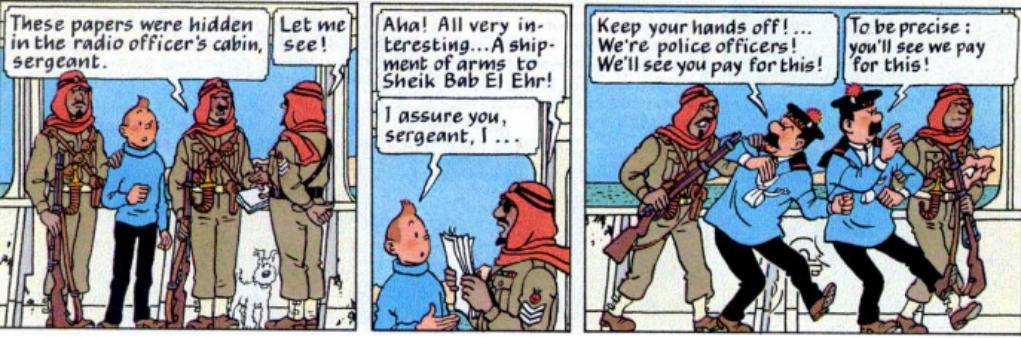


Military police: open your bags!



Aha! As we were told: behind the coat-hooks!





That evening ...

I have come from Khemikhal, noble master. There I received news: the emir's soldiers have arrested a young foreigner.

Well ?



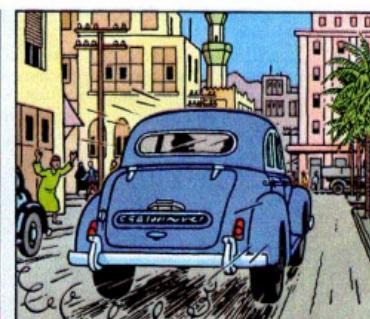
One of the guards works for us. He said he'd found papers on the prisoner... papers referring to an important shipment of arms for you.

The young man shall escape and be brought here to me !



Next morning ...

Come with me. You're going to the special security gaol. The secret police want you for questioning.



Meanwhile ...

We've checked your papers. They're in order. You can go.

Thank you. What about Tintin?

Your friend? ...
He was seized
on his way here
by Bab El Ehr's
men.

Now we've got to find them ... And
that's a thankless job. They made
the snatch, and vanished without
trace. Still, there's a £5000 reward
for anyone who leads us to the
sheik's hideout.



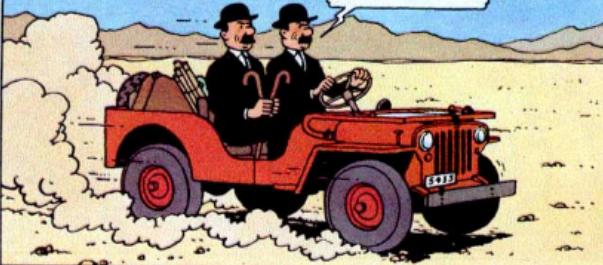
Five thousand pounds! You needn't say that again! ... By this time next week we'll bring you Bab El Ehr trussed like a turkey!

Very good! May Allah go with you!



Next morning ...

Five thousand pounds reward!



Here is the young foreigner brought by your partisans, noble sheik.

Enter!



Greetings, and welcome, young stranger... Heaven will bless you for embracing our great cause... Now, when do the guns arrive?

What guns?



What guns? Our guns, our shipment of arms... You've brought news of their delivery: isn't that so?

Me? ... Not me, most noble sheik! ...



You lied to me, son of a mangy dog!

Oh, no! most powerful master... It was the guard who told me ... I swear by Allah!



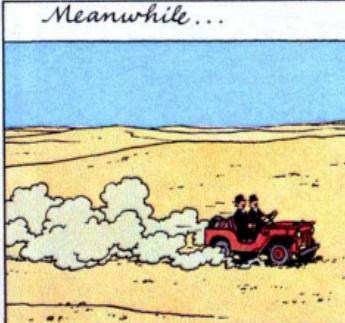
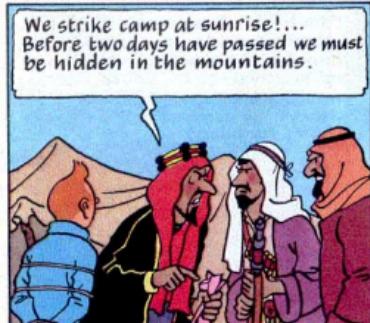
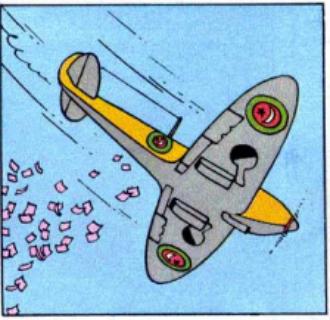
That's quite true, noble sheik. Some papers were found in my cabin... but they didn't belong to me ... And I've no idea who put them there ...



It's a trick... A miserable trick to discover my hideout... I suppose you think I'll let you go?... To run home and betray us to the police, those snivelling lap-dogs of Ben Kalish Ezab? ... Never! You stay here with us. You are my prisoner!

?





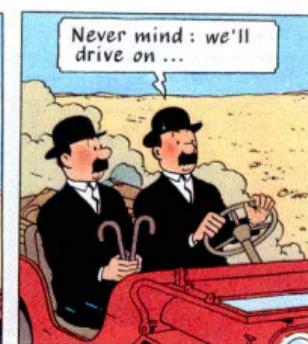
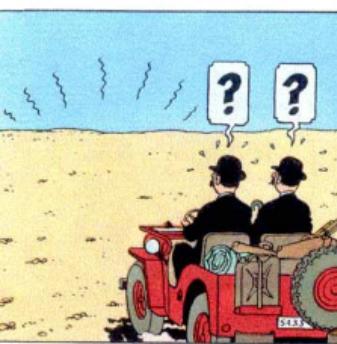
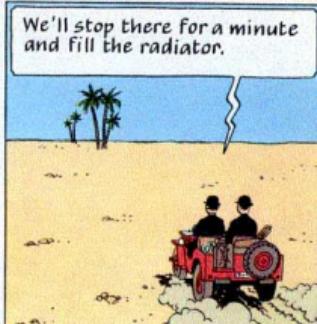
I say... Are you quite sure we're going in the right direction?

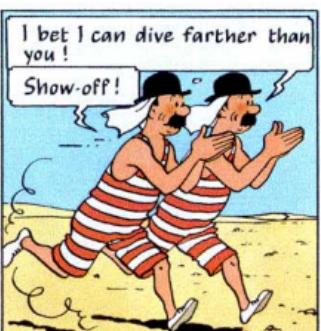
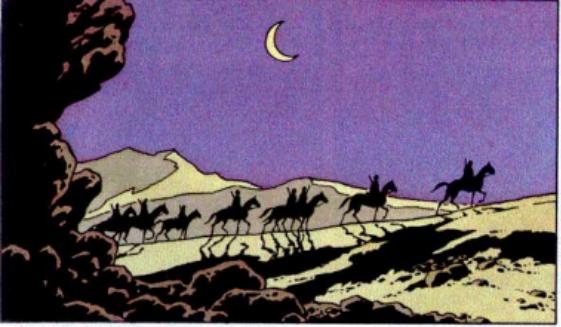
Of course I'm sure.

Anyway, we can't go wrong... They said drive straight on.

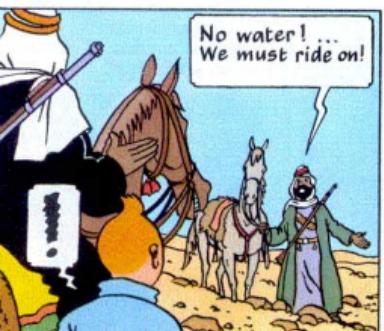
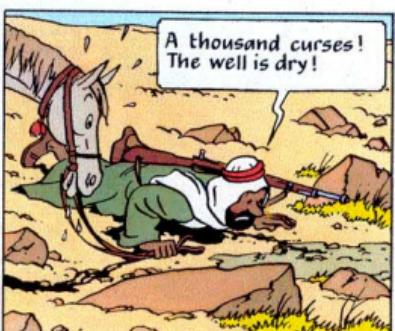
Quite right. And there's the first of our wells.

We'll stop there for a minute and fill the radiator.



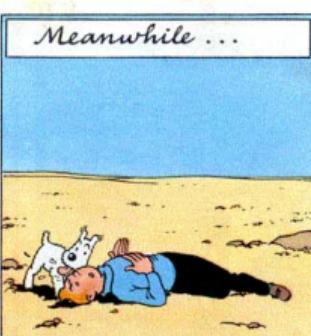
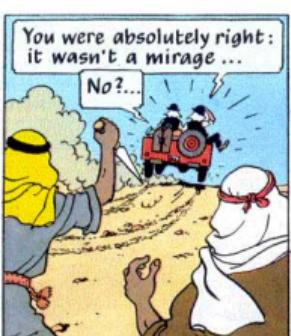
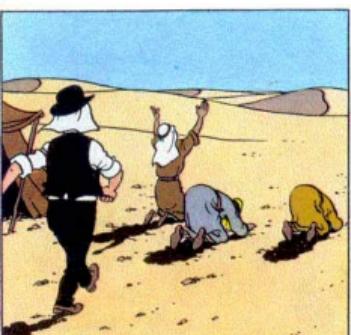
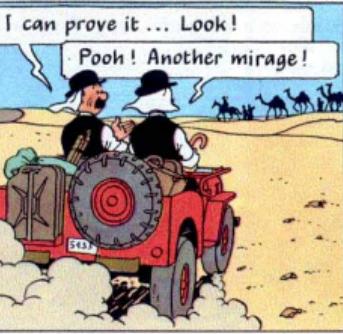


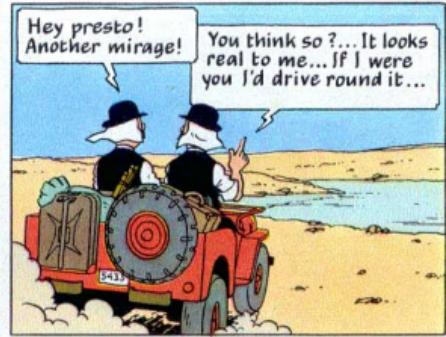
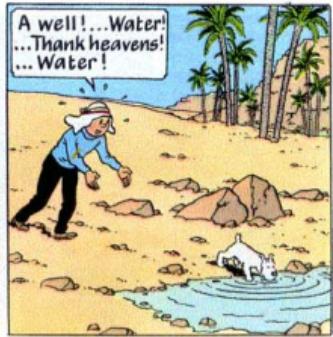
Meanwhile...

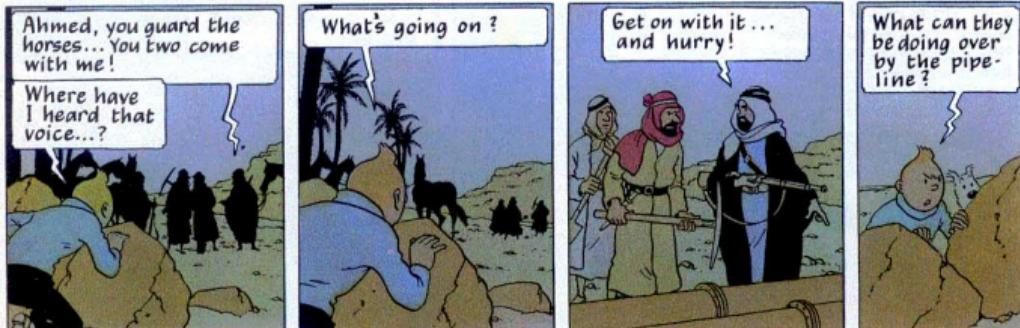
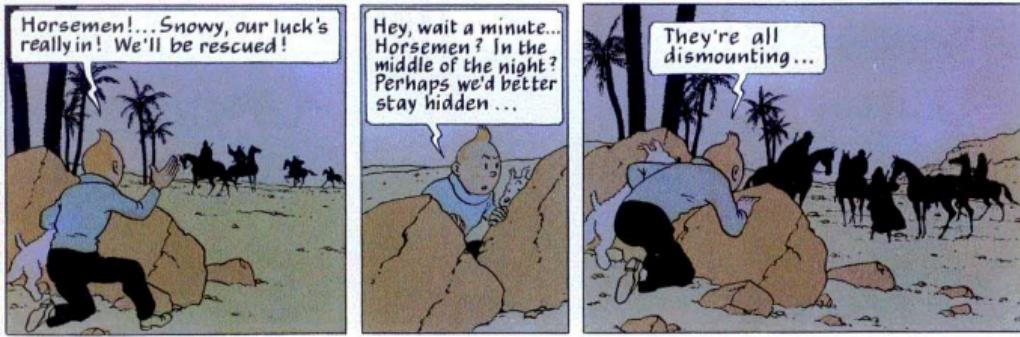


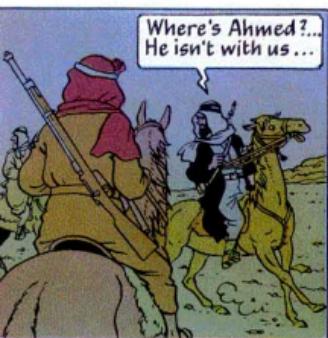
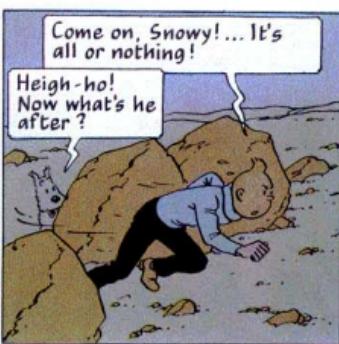
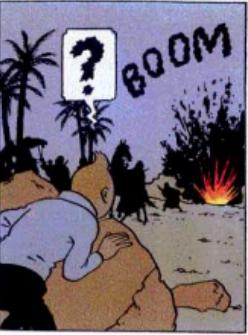
You and your sense of direction! A fat lot of good it's doing us!

I tell you we're all right. This is a main road ...







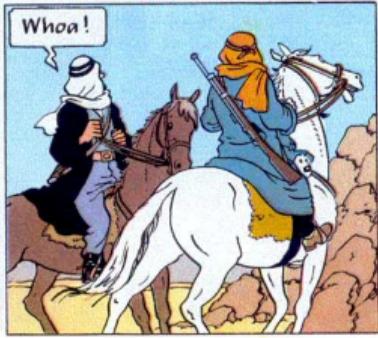
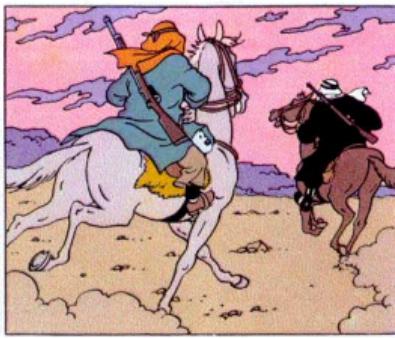
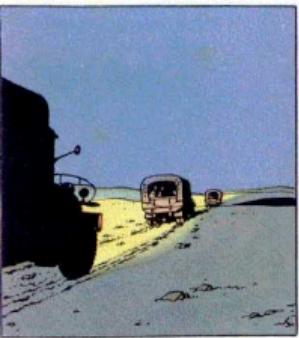




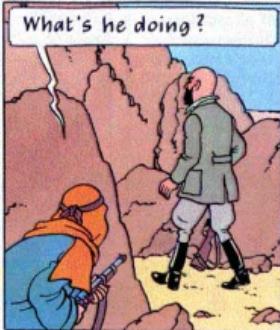
Meanwhile...
Hello... hello...
pumping station
twelve reporting
total loss of pressure
...pipe must be
broken above this
station... Please
send a repair-gang
imme... diately...

I must be mad... This is crazy
... But it's too late now. I've
taken a chance and can't
turn back ...

Hello... Hello... Pumping
station eleven?
... Number one con-
trol here... Close
all valves immedi-
ately... The pipe's frac-
tured between you
and number twelve
... A repair-gang is
on the way



Crumbs! I know who that is! ... It's Doctor Müller! (1)



Poor silly Ahmed! Sometimes a mirror comes in handy to see what goes on behind you!... And I don't like spies!



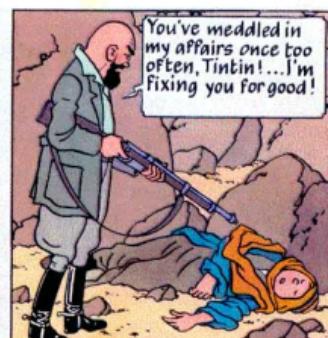
But...it isn't Ahmed... Krutziturken! It's Tintin!



Tintin... What's he doing here? Something must have aroused his suspicions, but what? ... Perhaps I'd better wait till he comes round, then question him... No, that'd be useless... a waste of time...



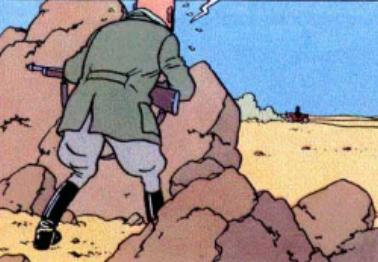
You've meddled in my affairs once too often, Tintin! ... I'm fixing you for good!



Ach! What's that? It sounds like... It can't be... Yes! It's a car...



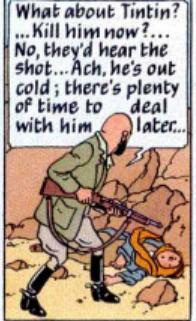
No, a jeep!... Der Teufel! They're after me al-ready!



The horses! If they spot the horses I'm done for!

What about Tintin? ... Kill him now?... No, they'd hear the shot... Ach, he's out cold; there's plenty of time to deal with him later...

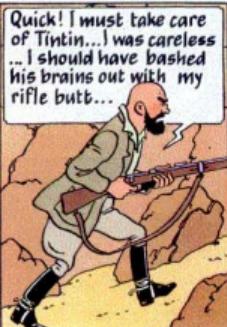
So, they've gone! That was a close thing...



Quick! I must take care of Tintin... I was careless... I should have bashed his brains out with my rifle butt...

Teufel!

Just in time!



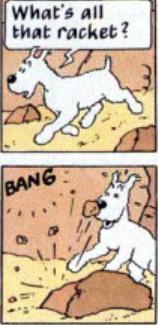
BANG

BANG BANG

What's all that racket?

Now what?... Any more?... No, it's all quiet: he's stopped shooting... Perhaps it's a trick...

Hey, what's that? Galloping horses? He can't have...

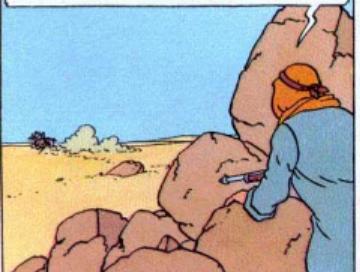


Yes! He's made off with both horses, the thug!

Here I am, back to square one... with a bump on my head as well!

On our way, Snowy... we haven't any choice...

We must follow his tracks!



What's it all about?... What's that gangster Müller doing here?... And why should he want to wreck the pipeline?... When he had me at his mercy, why didn't he kill me?... I just don't have any of the answers.

Hello... I can't be mistaken... Let's take a closer look...

They're wheelmarks, Snowy... This really is a bit of luck!

Let's see... I'd say they were tyres on a jeep... The sand and pebbles were thrown back by the wheels, so it was travelling that way. We'll go in the same direction...



And we'll worry about our friend Müller later.



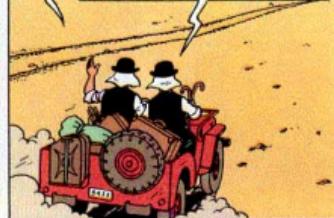
Meanwhile ...

I don't like it, Thomson ... If we don't get somewhere soon ...

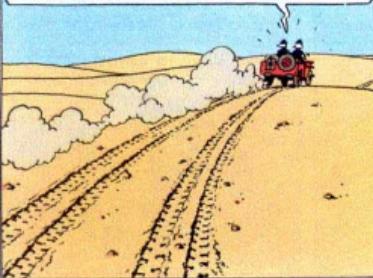


It's all right!... Look!... There! Tracks of a car!

Quite correct! And they aren't a mirage, either!

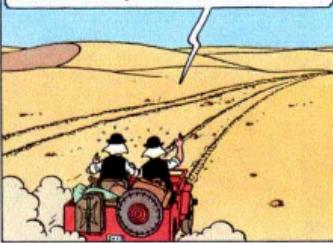


All we do is follow the tracks and we're saved!



An hour later ...

Hooray!... More tracks!... A second car joined the first one...



A real stroke of luck hitting this road.

To be precise: we've really had a stroke!



Another hour later...

There!... A third car joined the other two!... We're on a very busy road ...



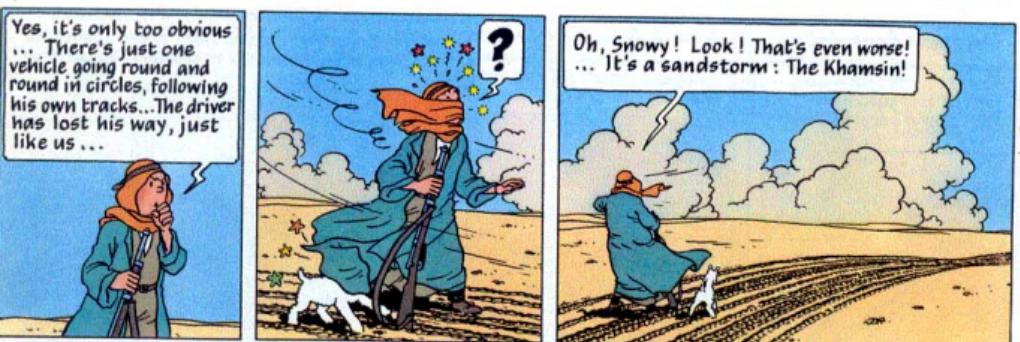
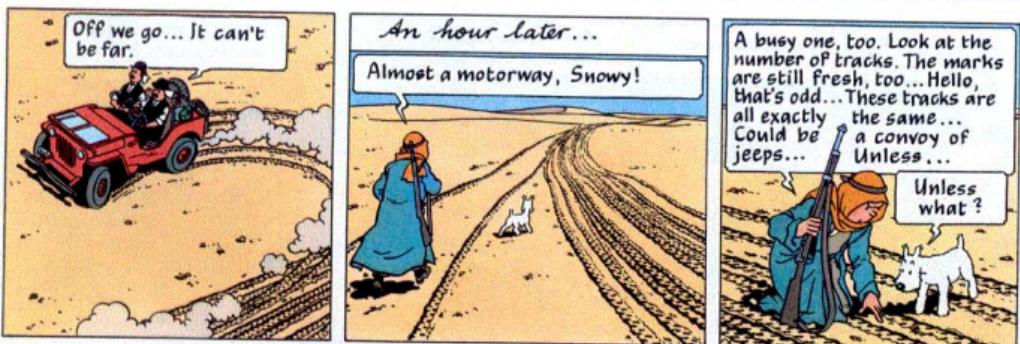
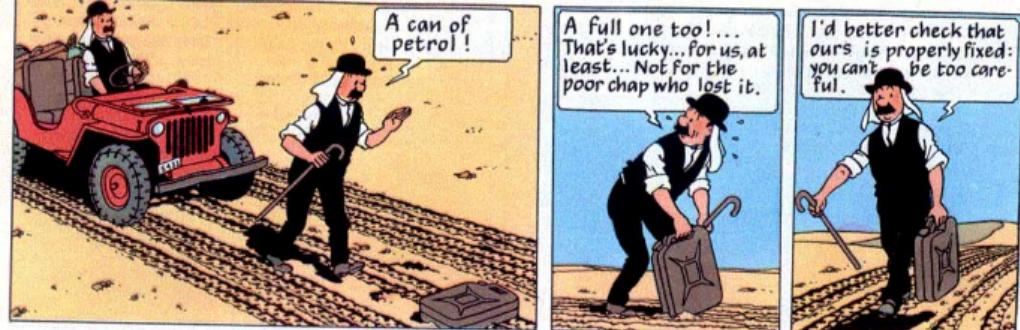
several hours go by ...

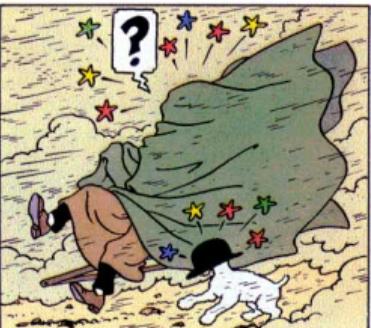
Another one!... That makes the seventh.



We're obviously getting near a big town and ... Hey! Stop!... What's that there, ahead of us?









Good heavens! A bowler belonging to one of the Thompsons!... How can they possibly...? Surely they couldn't...?

Thomson!... Coo-ee!... Thompson!

...Ee...omson...Tin...in...

I say, did you hear anything? ...No?... I thought I heard someone over there, calling our name.

Come along, come along! It's just another mirage. Get in. We must move!



Thomson!! Cooee!... It's me, Tintin!



They've started the engine... They didn't hear me ...

BANG

Hooray! They heard me! They've stopped again.

Nothing!... The tyres this side are quite all right. Funny: I was sure I heard a loud bang.

All well this side... Right: on we go!

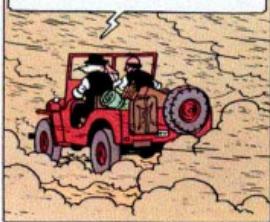


COOEE!... THOMSON!

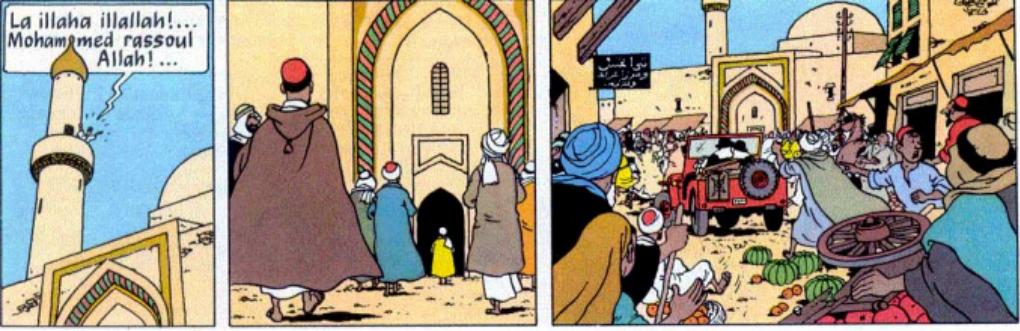
A mirage, my dear fellow... And not for the first time ... I can't think why you're still taken in by them... Come along!

The sound of the engine is fading... Too late... They've gone...

It's all over, Snowy ... We're done for...









What's that gangster doing here?
... I must keep my eyes open!



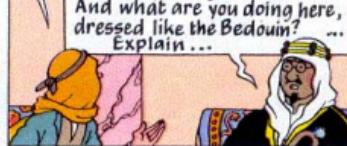
It's like this, your Highness.
Yesterday evening I was in a
jeep driven by two of my friends.
They arrived in the city...

This I know! The two men
of whom you speak will
be flogged: it is richly
deserved!



Most noble emir, I have come to
beg your mercy. For days and
days these two men were wander-
ing in the desert. They lost their
way and were at the end of their
strength. That is why...

I see, I see... It shall be con-
sidered... But tell me, what
were they doing in the desert?
And what are you doing here,
dressed like the Bedouin? ...
Explain ...



Salaam aleikum, most noble emir
Mohammed Ben Kalish Ezab...

Aleukum salaam, young stran-
ger... Welcome to Hasch Abarabi
... Be seated, and tell me
what you wish of us...



Gladly, your Highness... But it
is a long story and I fear to
impose upon you.

No, no, I adore stories.
You may begin. I am
listening.



Two hours go by...

At that moment there was a
burst of flame: they had
fired the pipeline.

Yes, it was one of two raids.
I heard about them yester-
day. There were two more
last night. If only I could
lay my hands on that
mongrel Bab El Ehr!



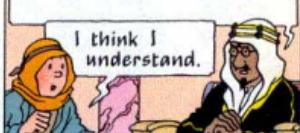
So it's Bab El Ehr who...

Yes, he's trying to depose me, with
the help of Skoil Petroleum. Should
he come to power he would lease the
oil concessions in Khemedite Arabia
to Skoil, and expel Arabex who
operate with my agreement. That's
why Bab El Ehr and his brigands
attack the Arabex installations...



Now, the present contract I
have with Arabex is soon due to
expire. If I wished I could
then sign a new contract,
but with Skoil. That is the
proposal made to me by
Professor Smith who left
here just as you arrived.

I think I
understand.



It's very simple: if I sign a contract with Skoil the attacks will cease immediately. So why do I refuse to sign Professor Smith's contract?

Yes, why? I wonder?

It is strange, I do not know why I am telling you all this... You are a stranger... I have no reason, but I trust you. So... Inch' Allah!... I refuse to sign the contract because I do not like Professor Smith and I do not like his Skoil Petroleum.

Oh?

But I have interrupted your story... You were telling how the saboteurs had blown up the pipeline...

They came running back and remounted their horses. I remained hidden behind the rocks ... Suddenly...

Master!... Master!... Oh! Master!

What is it?... Who dares to disturb us?

Oh, Master! Master!... Your son!...

Well, Ali Ben Mahmud, what new prank is my little lamb playing this time?

Heaven grant that it is indeed a prank! Master, your son has disappeared!

Ha! ha! ha! ha!... Disappeared!... If you knew my son you would laugh as I do. He's the naughtiest young rascal anyone ever saw!... Every day he thinks up some new little wickedness ... But come with me, you'll see for yourself...

He was in the garden, Master...

Yes, yes, Ali Ben Mahmud, calm yourself!

There's the little motor car I gave him last week... on his sixth birthday...

Abdullah!... Abdullah!... Where are you, my treasure?

Abdullah!... Come out now, my little sugar plum!

Abdullah, my baby lamb-kin...

Abdullah!... Abdullah! Where are you hiding?

Abdullah, you little rascal, if you don't come at once Papa will be cross!

Excuse me, Highness, but does your son wear a blue robe?

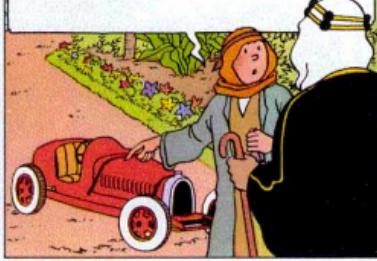
A blue robe?... Abdullah?... No!... Why do you ask?



Here's a piece of blue cloth I just found, caught on a branch... Under the tree are some very deep footmarks... Obviously someone was hiding in the tree, and then jumped to the ground...



There's your son's motor car... It has been shoved to one side, as you can see from the tyre marks...



But I don't understand... What are you trying to say?

I hardly dare tell you, Highness... I fear the worst... Come with me... There will be other clues...



The men who... You're mad!... My son!... Kidnapped?... Why?... Tell me why anyone should kidnap my son?... You're crazy!... You've made all this up!... You're lying!... Yes, you're lying, like all infidels! ...



Where is Mohammed Ben Kalish Ezab?



A horseman brought this letter, Master... Then rode away like the wind, out into the desert.



BY ALLAH!



It's unbelievable!... Here, read this letter...



Excuse me, Highness... it is in Arabic...

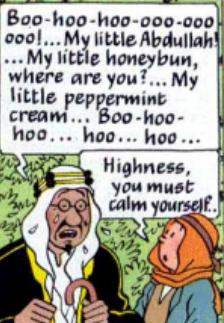


Oh yes, I will translate for you...

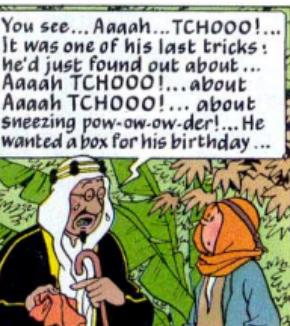
"To Mohammed Ben Kalish Ezab... If you want to see your son again, throw Arabex out of Khemed." It's signed: Bab El Ehr.



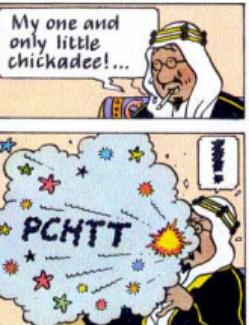
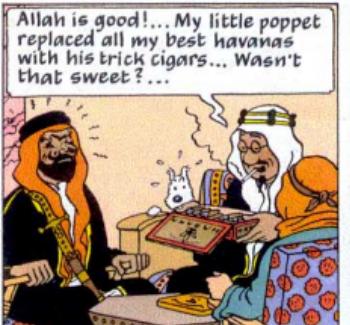
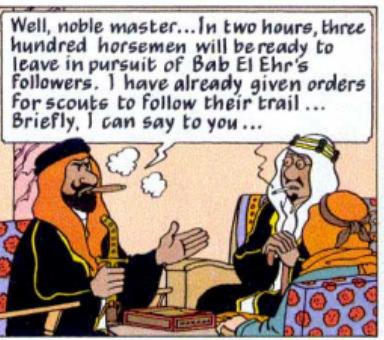
Bab El Ehr! Bab El Ehr! Son of a mangy dog!... Grandson of a scurvy jackal!... Great grandson of a moulting vulture!... My revenge will be terrible!... I will impale you on a spit!... I will roast you over a slow fire!... I will pull out your beard, one hair at a time... And I will stuff it down your throat...



Highness, you must calm yourself.



No, thank you.
I don't smoke.



Two hours later...



There they go...With Allah's help they will succeed... they will snatch my dear duckling from the hands of that monster, Bab El Ehr!



To tell the truth, Highness, that expedition is entirely useless... Useless, for the very good reason that Bab El Ehr didn't kidnap your son. We've got to look elsewhere for him...

What ?! ...Not Bab El Ehr?... But you saw the letter he sent ...



His writing?... Actually, no... But if you knew it wasn't from him, why didn't you say so sooner? ... And another thing: why did you let me send out my horsemen?



Quite simply, to make the real kidnapper believe that his trick has succeeded... Then, unless I'm very much mistaken...

The real kidnapper?
... You know who he is?



I think so, Highness, but I need more proof... And I don't know where he has taken your son... That's the main thing we've got to discover... By the way, have you a recent photograph of Abdullah?... It would be useful if I could have a look at it.



That's his latest portrait...



Poor little cherub... The sittings were real torture for him ...



Actually, the artist went insane ...



Ah, let's see ... Is this one of those infernal cigarettes? ... No, it's a real one...



Papa begs your pardon, lambkin, for such a wicked suspicion!



Another of his confounded tricks! ... Now where did he get that?

Well, he's certainly quite unmistakable! ... Now I must start my search, Highness ... Could you fit me out with some different clothes? ... And I'd like some information on Doctor Müll... I mean Professor Smith.

Professor Smith? ... You think he can help you find my son? ...

Perhaps...

He's an archaeologist, digging for remains of the ancient civilisations that once flourished in these lands... At the same time he acts as representative for Skoil Petroleum.

He lives here?

Yes, in Wadesdah, my capital ... about twenty miles from here, on the coast. He lives in an enormous palace, perched like an eagle's nest on the top of a cliff.

I see... There's just one more thing...



Take no notice ... Just a cap... Abdullah scattered them everywhere ... They lived things up in the palace...

Oh? ... I see.

Where was I? ... Oh, yes... The two friends I mentioned... I have a great favour to ask on their behalf: please treat them as your honoured guests. Lavish every comfort upon them; take every possible care of them... But if you want me to find your son, for pity's sake, don't allow them out of the palace on any pretext whatsoever.

Next morning, in Wadesdah...

That must be Professor Smith's palace, up there ...



Great snakes! It's Senhor Oliveira da Figueira! (1)



What a salesman!
Just the same!
He's persuaded
that man to buy
a pair of roller-
skates!



**But come in, come in,
honoured sir... Absolutely
no obligation ...
But I'm sure you'll
find a little something
you need once you're
inside my shop ...**



To tell the truth, Senhor Oliveira, I don't need anything ... But I'm delighted to see you... Do you remember me?
Tintin!... Esplêndido!... What a wonderful surprise!... This calls for a celebration!



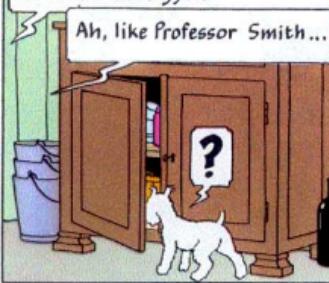
**Si!... Si!... You must take
a glass of wine with me...
Some fine Portuguese
rosé ... My country's
bottled sunshine!**



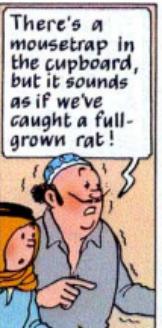
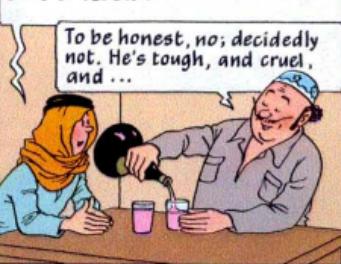
**Now, what brings
you to this god-
forsaken land!**

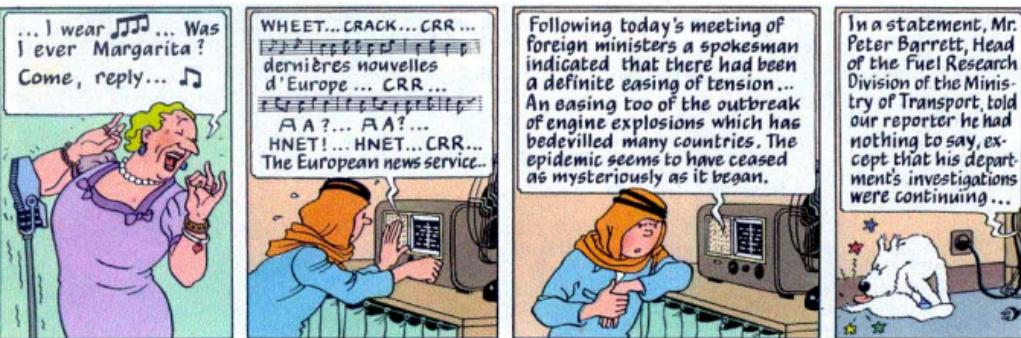
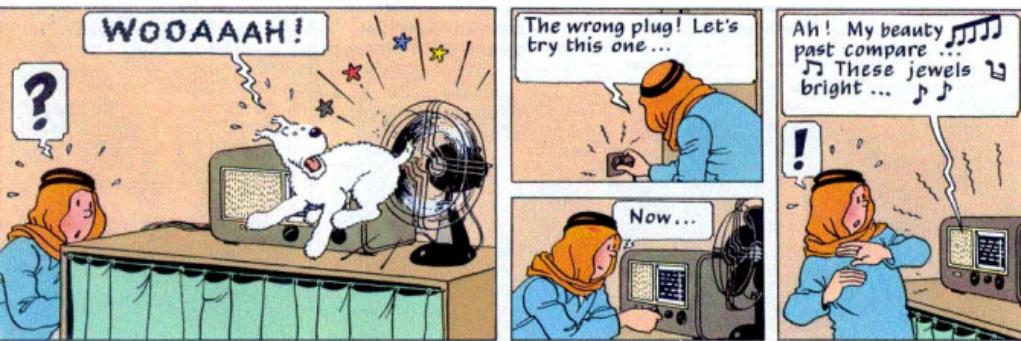
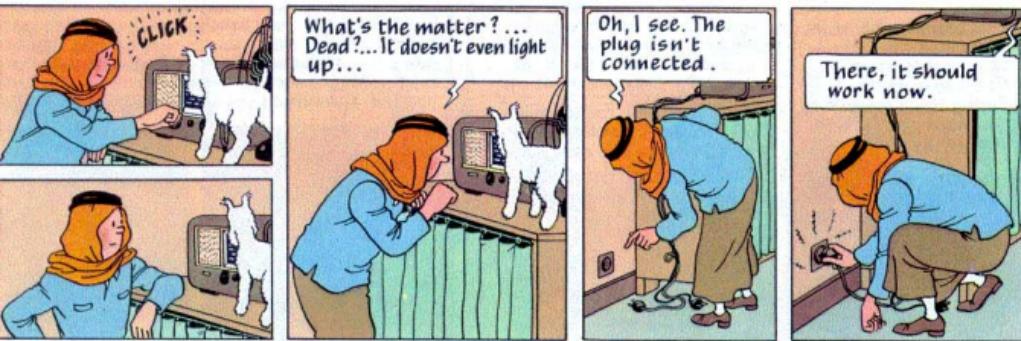


**Well... I... I... er... I'm interest-
ed in archaeology...**



**Exactly... You seem to know him.
Tell me, what's he like? A pleasant
sort of fellow?**





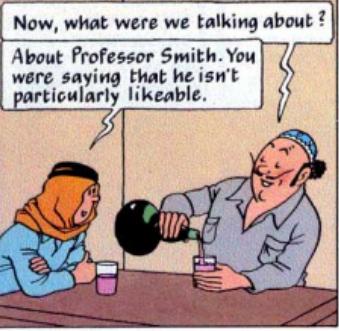
Here we are... Ah, you're listening to the news...

Yes, The threat of war seems to be lessening, thank heavens!

Now, what were we talking about?

About Professor Smith. You were saying that he isn't particularly likeable.

That's true... But he's extremely rich, and I'm his main supplier... So you see... My customers include all the top people in the area... At least, not quite all... Not the emir, alas! ... What a man! ... One of the best! ... Which is more than can be said for his nasty little son... A real pest, young Prince Abdullah! ... But you won't have heard: he's just been kidnapped!



Look here, Senhor Oliveira, would you like to be appointed official supplier to the Emir Ben Kalish Ezab?

Would I like it? ... Of course! ... It would be the crowning glory of my career... But... what would I have to do?



Help me recover Prince Abdullah... To do that, smuggle me into Professor Smith's house...

Professor Smith... What for? ... Well, if you like... It's quite easy... I go there each morning...



The next morning...

Salaam aleikum, Murad!

Aleikum sala... Tchoo!!



Who is the young stranger?

My nephew Alvaro... I want him to meet the palace servants.



My friends, let me introduce my nephew Alvaro, just arrived from Portugal... He's an orphan, poor lad... I've taken him into my family...

ATCHOON!



Just between ourselves he's a little... well... a bit simple... Not surprising after what's happened to him... A dreadful story... Just imagine, his father, who was a well-known snail-farmer... Excuse me, just a minute...



Be a good boy, Alvaro... While I'm busy with the gentlemen, you run and play in the garden... I'll call you...



But listen carefully, Alvaro... Don't make a noise. Professor Smith is working in his study upstairs. You're not to disturb him...



That's fine... He'll keep them safely occupied with one of his endless stories... but I mustn't waste time...



That'll be Professor Smith's study ...



Let's see if he really is there ... I just need some pebbles ...



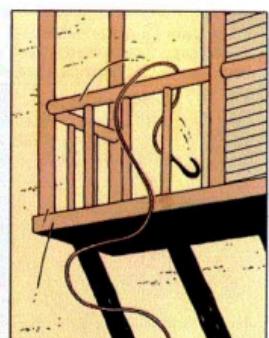
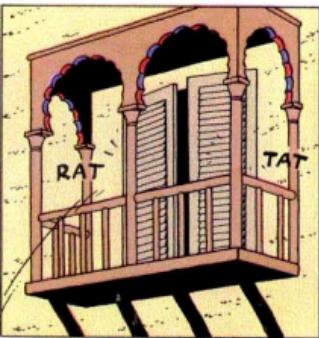
Right on the shutters ...



Any sign of life? ... No ...



Let's try again ...



Hooked first time! That's a bit of luck!



Careful...mustn't take chances...

Meanwhile ...

...So his father, who'd married the daughter of Da Costa the pirate from Lisbon, suddenly found himself in the middle of an extraordinary adventure. One day ...



Aha! ... The room's empty ...



I must lock the door ... If someone comes, it'll give me time to make a getaway ...



The key's in the door... And the door's locked from the inside!... But there's no-one here... It doesn't make sense...

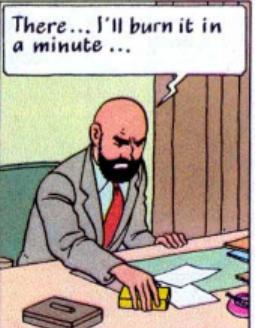
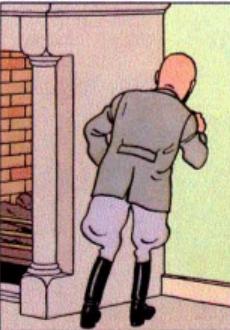
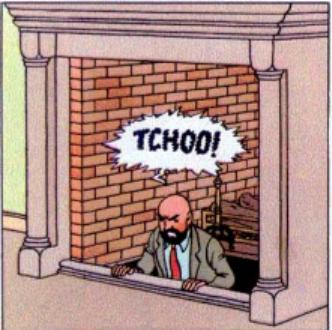
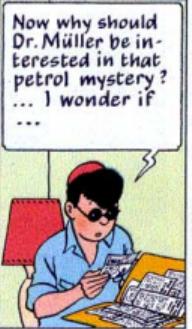


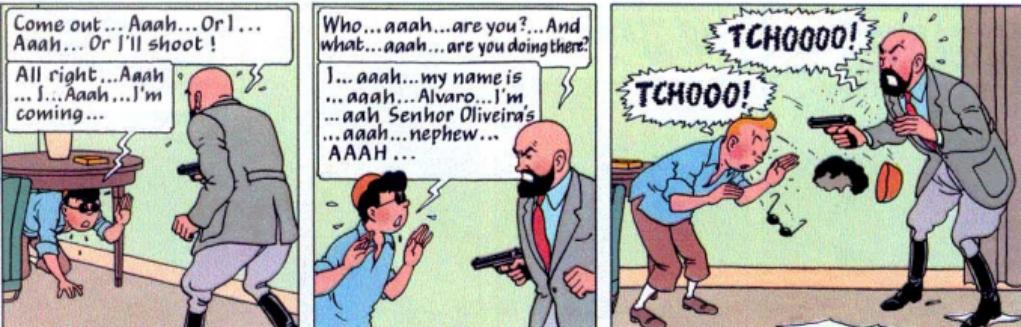
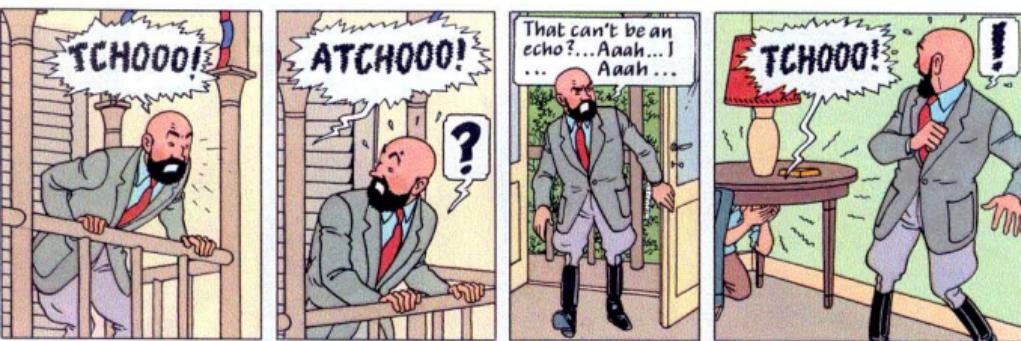
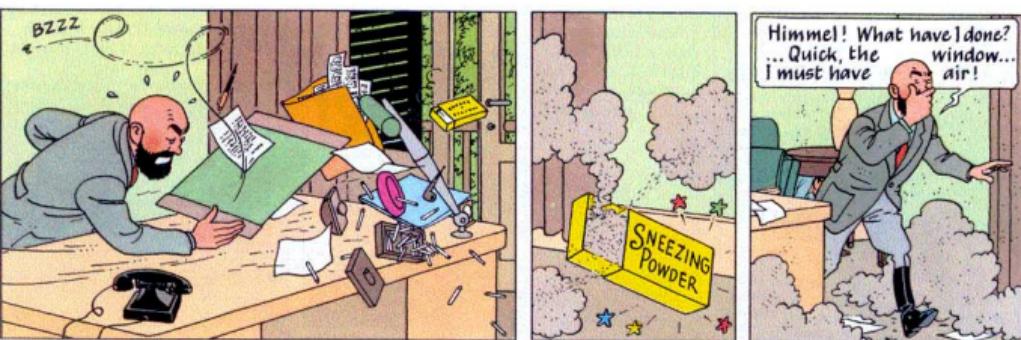
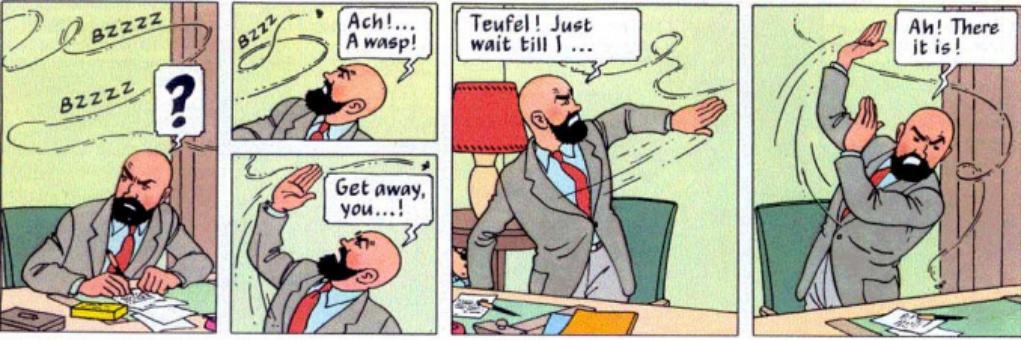
SCIENTISTS BAFFLED

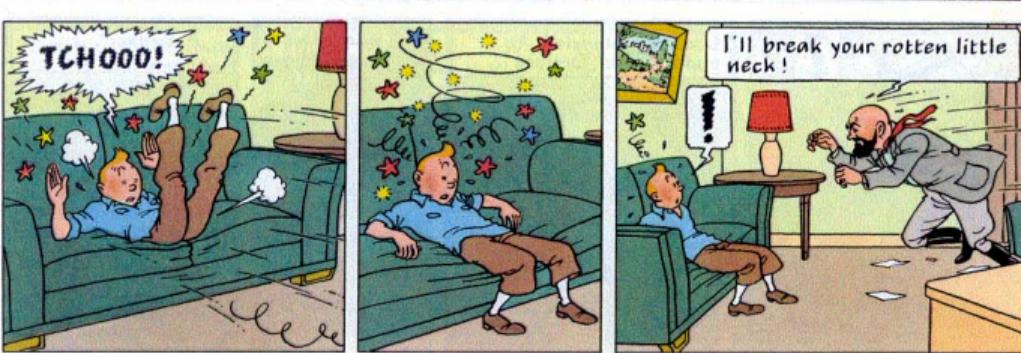
MORE PETROL BLASTS
by our Motoring Correspondent in the street
... I wonder if

WORLD'S AIRCRAFT GROUNDED
LONDON, Monday stand...
Heathrow Airport
tod...
Air...
almost depa...
BOA...
and o...
spoke...
Bussen...
What's gone wrong with our petrol?
An outbreak of mysterious automobile explosions is terrorising the world's capitals. Car engines

FUEL MYSTERY
the world's capitals. Car engines without warning.







Whew! Saved again! He's still out cold... Quick, I must tie him up, gag him, hide him somewhere... and telephone to the emir...

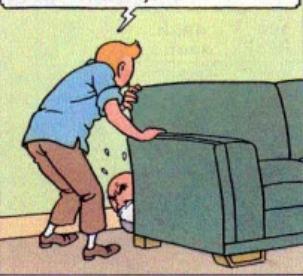


Meanwhile, in the kitchen...

...Alas! The poor woman never got over it. She died of grief and shame, at the age of ninety-seven. Her husband, broken-hearted, soon followed her to the grave. But that wasn't the end of the terrible tragedies this unhappy family had to suffer... One day, their son



There, Doctor Müller... That's taken care of you!



Hello?... Hello?... Is that the royal palace?... I want to speak to His Highness... Tintin... Hello? is that you, Highness?



Tintin?... Yes... Where are you?... With Professor Smith?... What?... My son there?... A prisoner?... What's that you say?... What?... Oh! You sneezed! Bless you!



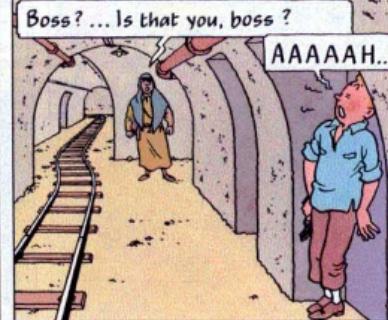
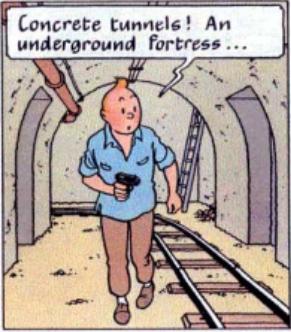
You must send men to Wadesdah... Have the palace surrounded... Meanwhile, I'll try to rescue the prince...

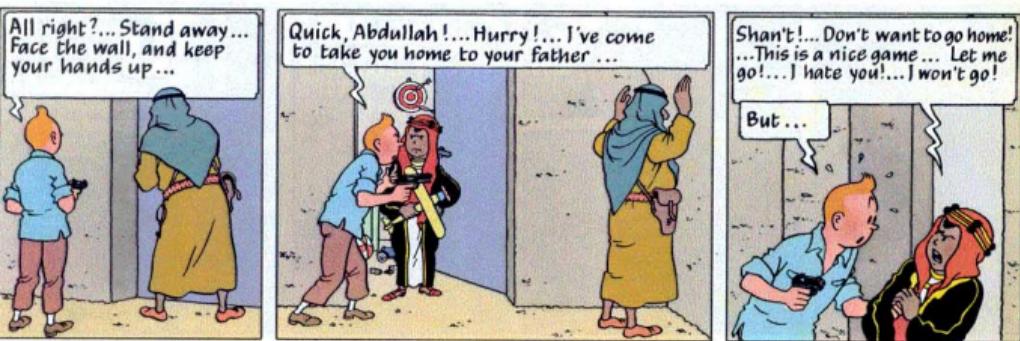
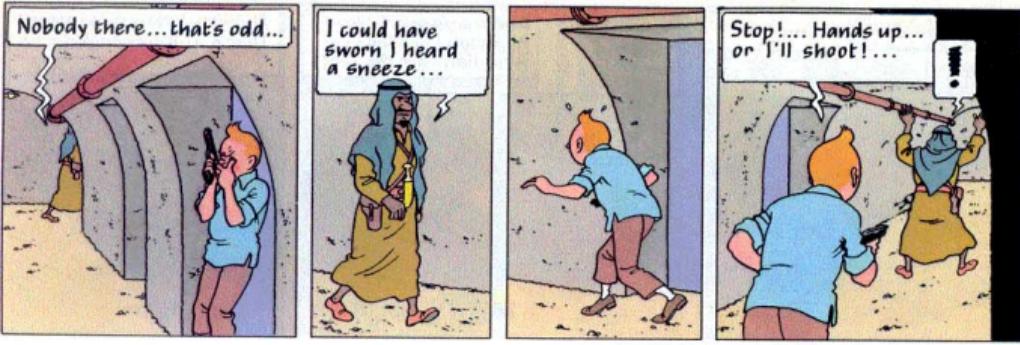


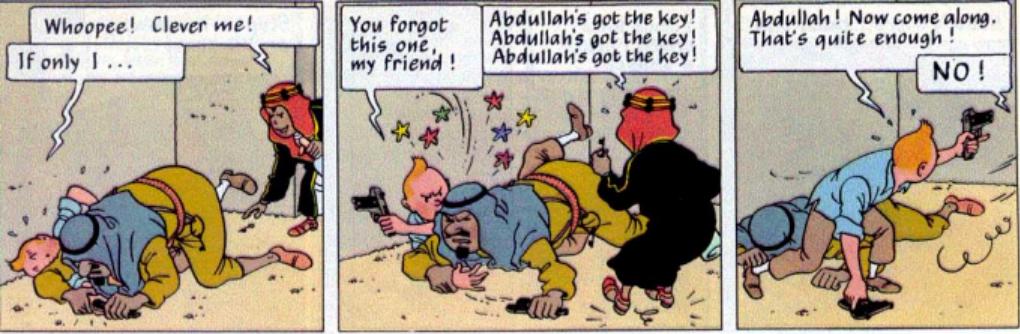
I can't say I like these boys, but this time I'd better be armed.



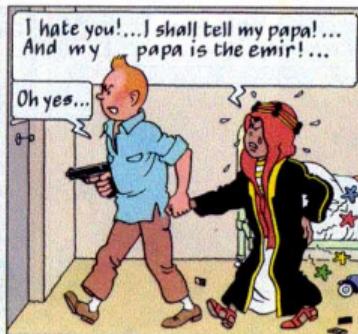
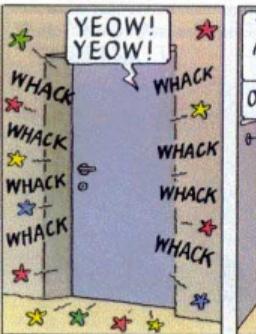
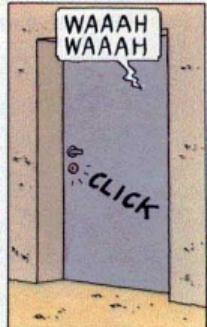
Now let's have a closer look at this...







Be quiet, you little pest!
Be quiet!



Quick, Murad! ... Find Daud and Abdul... Take Daud with you and start searching from the far end... Send Abdul to me... We'll wait here for the young swine ...

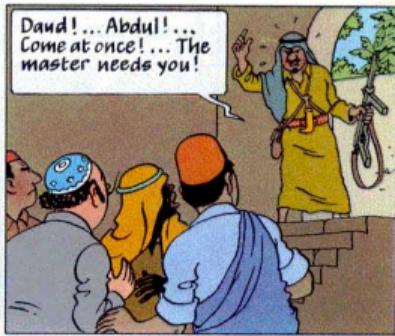
I go, master.



...At that moment the count stepped forward. Aha! he cried in Portuguese (you mustn't forget, Portuguese was his native tongue) and without a moment's hesitation he flung open the door... He stood frozen with horror! ...



Daud! ... Abdul! ... Come at once! ... The master needs you!



I ... er... how I rattle on!
I must go... an important appointment ... Er... if you see my nephew, send him home, will you? ... Goodbye!



With us here and Murad and Daud at the other end, he's trapped!

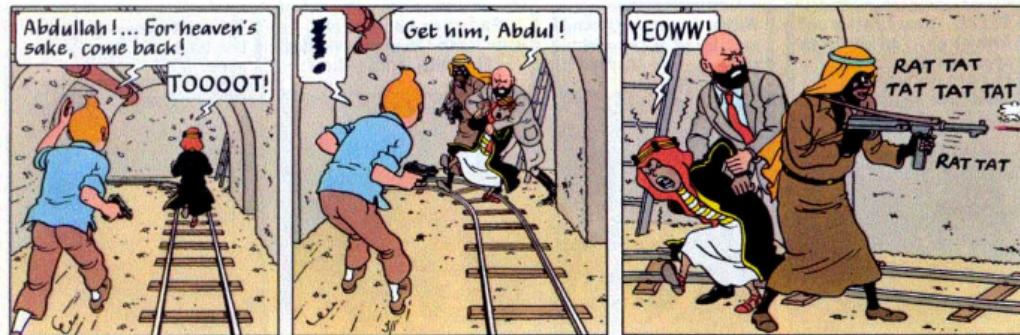
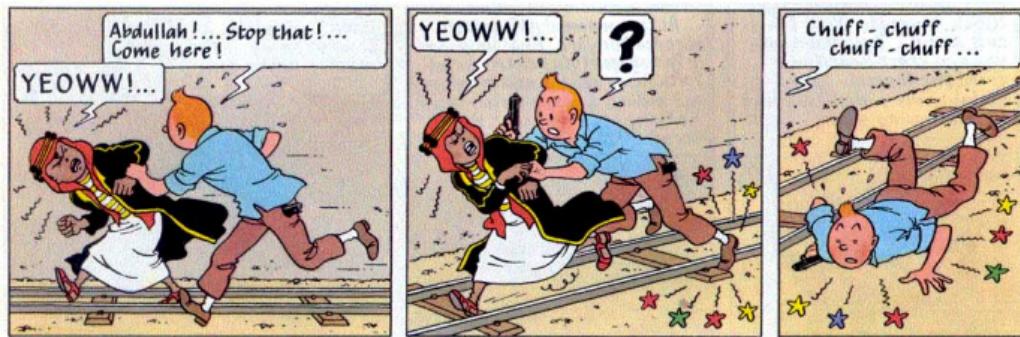


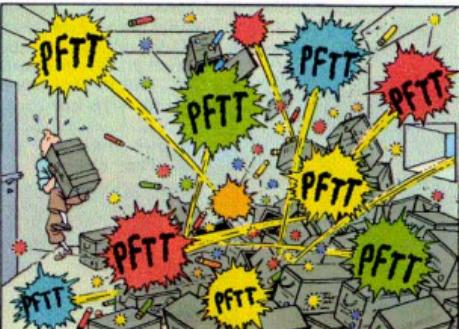
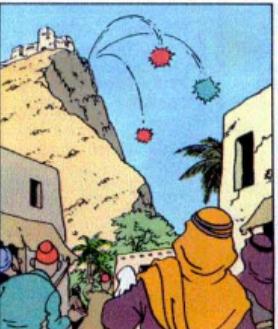
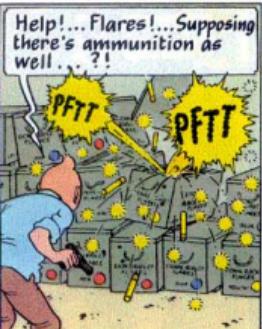
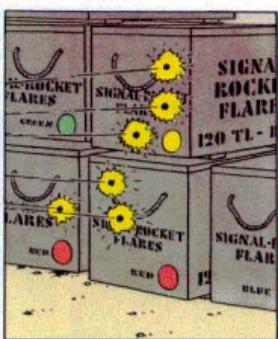
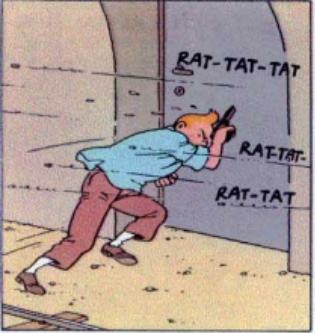
...And then he'll cut off your head... and play skittles with it... So there!

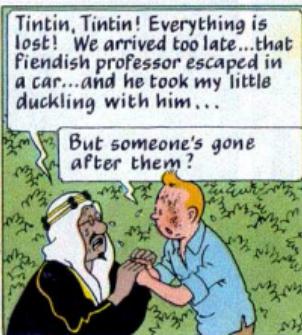


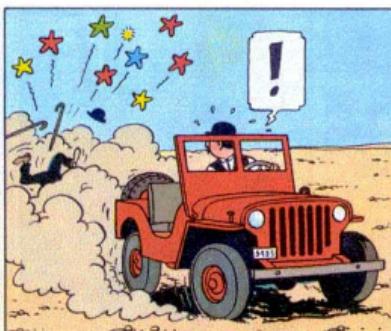
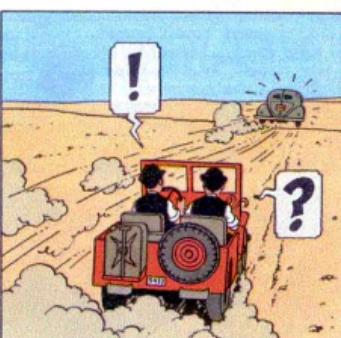
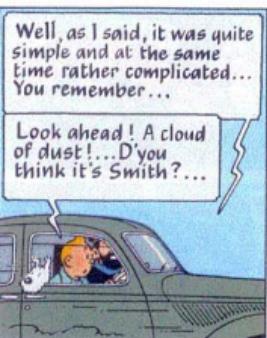
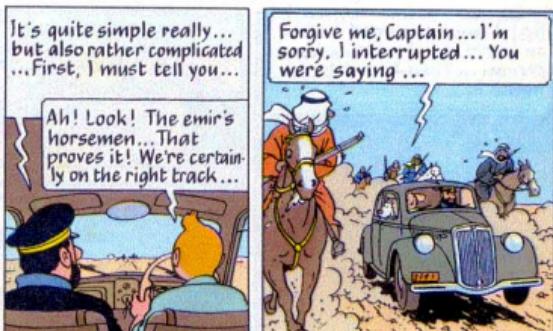
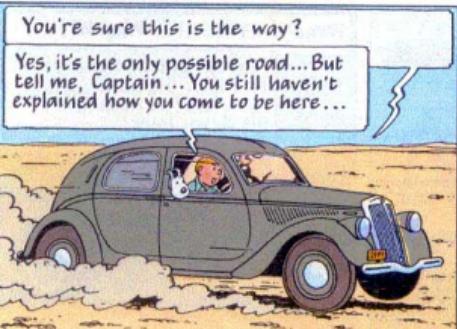
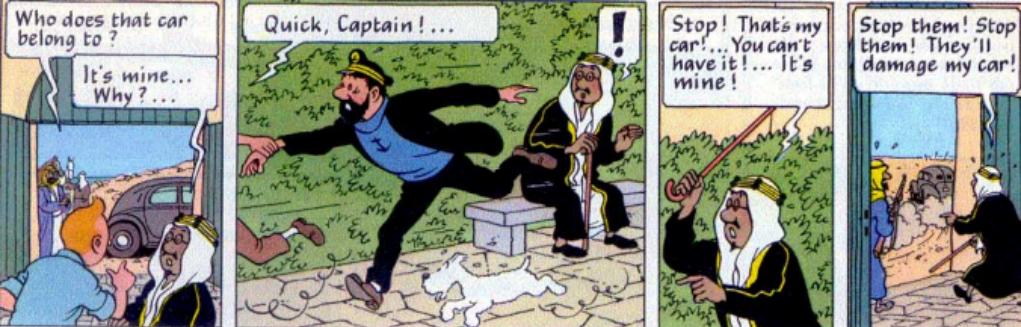
He can't escape...with the boss guarding the other exit...







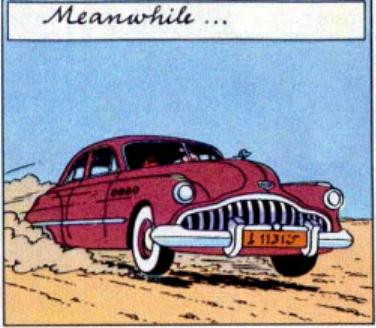




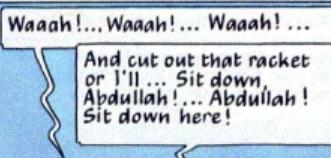
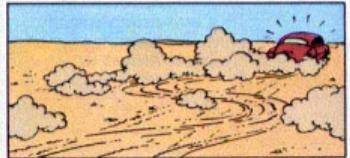
Moving? ... Were we moving? ... Oh, now I see... It must have been that other car... It passed us so fast I thought we were standing still...



Meanwhile...



No! I want one now! I want an icecream! I want an icecream!... Then I want to go home!...

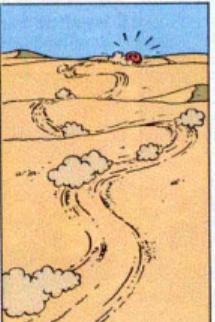


No! I want to sit here!... I hate you!... I shall tell my papa... And my papa is the emir!...

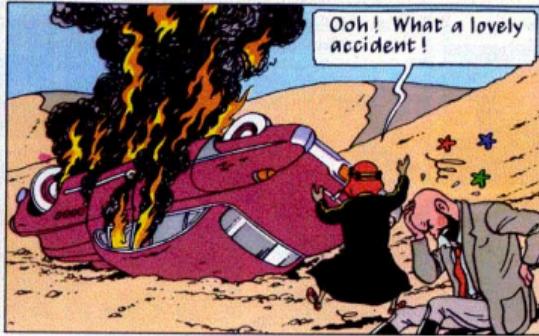
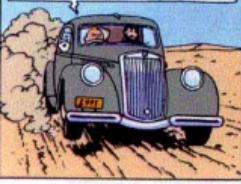


Yes, you're right... I was just going to tell you... As I said, it was really quite simple... but at the same time rather complicated...

There they are! Another dust-cloud! ... This time it's certainly Müller!



Look at their tracks!
... Müller must have
lost control of the car...
it went over, and
caught fire... Let's hope
nothing's happened to
the prince ...



All right, Müller... We've got you!



Got me? ... Not yet! ... Take one more step and I'll shoot the boy!

Whoopie! Just like a real gangster film!



Look! Another gun to shoot them with!

Thanks, Abdullah! You! Throw down your guns!



So you can shoot us down like rabbits? ... No! We're keeping them!



Just as you like! ... But watch it! ... One false move and the child's had it! ... Now, move away! ... Go on, move backwards...

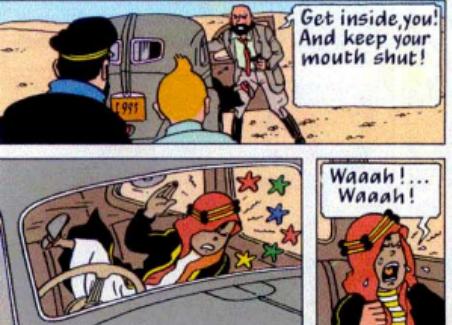


Aha! ... Excellent! ... Another car ready and waiting! ... Go on! Keep moving back!

Ooh! Papa's car! That's Papa's car! Are we going to play another accident?



Get inside, you! And keep your mouth shut!



All right... One bullet at the car when I go and I'll wring this repulsive little monkey's neck! ... Understand? ... So, auf wiedersehen!



Waaah! ... Waaah!

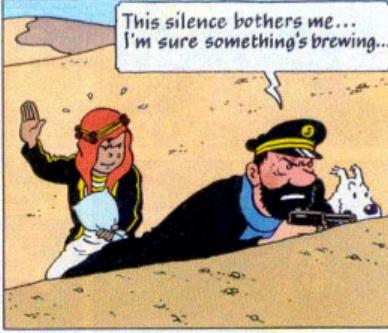
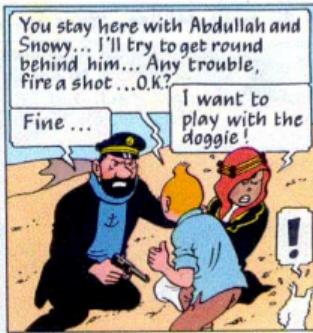
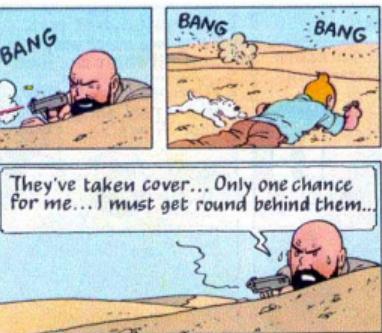
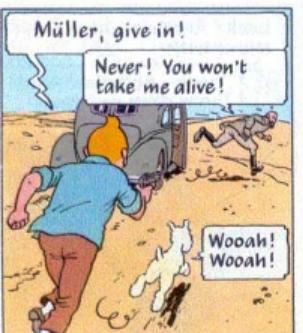
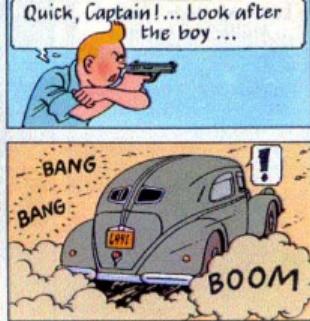
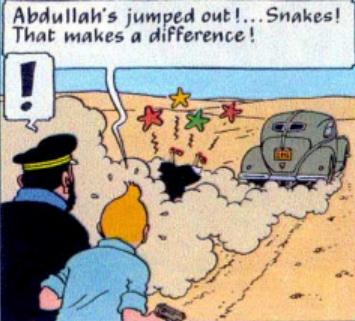


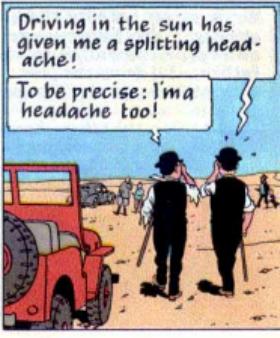
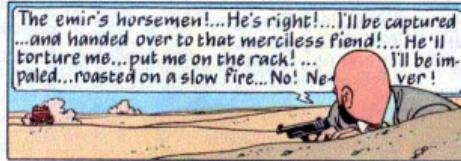
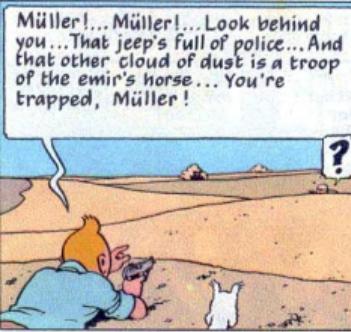
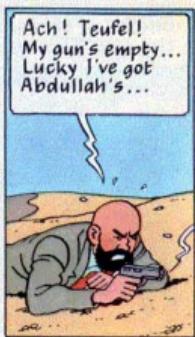
Waaah! Waaah!

Beast! ... Baby-snatcher! ... Brigand! ... Baboon! ... Belémnite! ... Bully! ... Bougainvillaea! ... Bashi-bazouk!

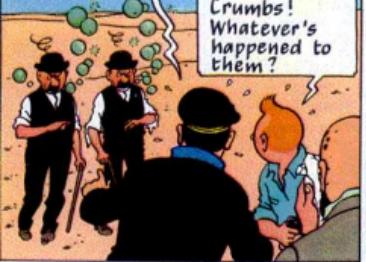
Waaah!







Blistering barnacles! ... Look at the two Thompsons!



I don't know... hic... the heat, per... hic... perhaps... Unless it was the aspirin we... hic... we just took ...

A tube we found in the sand... Here ...

What sort of aspirin?

I don't understand ... It seems real enough... But let's take a look at the contents...

Strange... the tablets have the maker's mark, all right... It's extra-ordinary ...

I agree, it's very odd ...

Blistering-Barnacles!
Blistering-Barnacles!
Look at your funny Friends now! ...



Captain! Captain! ... How awful!

Er... I... hic... Feel rather peculiar!

Er... to be pre... hic... Me too!

Do it again, thundering barnacles!

We must get help for them at once... You take the car, and return Abdullah to his father... I'll drive the jeep, with Müller and the Thompsons ...



I'll make you rich for life if you destroy those aspirins, instead of analysing them...

So! The tube belongs to you... What's in the tablets?

Why worry?... Destroy them and your fortune's made!

No thank you, Doctor Müller... I'm not interested.



At Wadesdah Hospital, two hours later...

Doctor, doctor! Come quickly! Two extra-ordinary cases! ...



A little later...

Master!... See!
Your car is returning!

With Abdullah?



With Abdullah!... Abdullah!... My little sugar plum!... My darling chocolate candy!

He can have his sugar plum, as far as I'm concerned!



My sweetest strawberry angel cake!...

At last! Now I can have a quiet smoke!



WAAAH!

Waaah! Waaah! Waaah!
Want to stay with Blistering-Barnacles!



My nose!... Billions of blistering barnacles!... My nose!

Again!... Burn your nose again!

Come, come, don't be cross... It was his little game... a jolly prank...



Ah, here comes Tintin...



So the Thompsons are in hospital... No one knows yet what's the matter... They have to have their hair cut every half hour... I sent at once to Professor Calculus, to ask him to analyse those filthy tablets, the ones Müller...

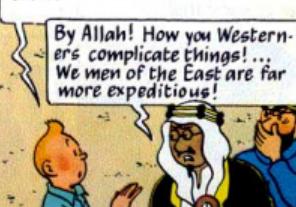
Müller?



Oh... of course, Highness... you don't know... Müller is the real name of Professor Smith.



Müller is in the hands of the police, Highness. And I've given my word that he'll have a fair trial.



The trial will attract plenty of attention! ... I found these papers on him. They prove Müller was a secret agent for a major foreign power... In the event of war it was his job to use his men to seize the oil wells, which explains the veritable arsenal we found under his palace... And he was already manoeuvring to oust Arabex in favour of Skoil.



Those are the essentials. A police search of his palace, and a full interrogation of Müller and his accomplices will fill in the details. Quite simply, it's an episode in the perpetual warfare over oil... the world's black gold...



Some days later...

Tintin! Tintin!... A letter from Calculus!



My friends, I have immediately analysed the tablets you sent. I have discovered that if you add only a minute part to petrol its explosive qualities are increased to an alarming degree.

By trial and error I have concluded that one single tablet dissolved in a tank holding 5000 gallons of petrol would be enough to cause a

Anyway, Captain, that solves the mystery of cars blowing up... Hey, what's the matter? What have you got there?

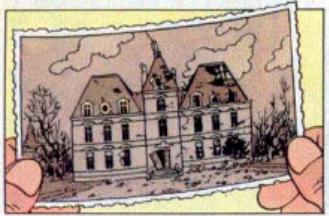
Thundering typhoons!





My house, by thunder! What's that nitwitted ninepin done to my beautiful house?

Let's read on: he's sure to explain ...



The research was exceedingly difficult. I enclose a photograph of Marlinspike after my first experiments ...

His first?... Did he do some more?!!



... Anyway, they were successful: that's all that matters. As for the phenomena in the capillary systems of the Thompsons, these will soon cease with the aid of the powders I have prepared and sent to you separately. The other substance I have sent is for use with petrol, and will entirely neutralize the effects of the compound Formula Fourteen...



Some weeks later...

"Each day of the Müller trial brings startling new disclosures. Today the whole mystery of the exploding car engines was revealed. It is now known that a major foreign power had developed a new chemical, known simply as Formula Fourteen. This chemical, added to petrol, increased its explosive qualities tenfold..."



"In the event of war, the agents of this foreign power could easily contaminate the oil reserves of the other side. The recent outbreak of car explosions was by way of a trial, on a reduced scale, of this new tactic. Thanks to the work of the famous boy reporter, Tintin, the secret of Formula Fourteen has been discovered."



"... An effective antidote has immediately been developed by his distinguished colleague, Professor Cuthbert Calculus, to neutralize the effects of the chemical. By his prompt action, Tintin has undoubtedly prevented the outbreak of war. Better news too of the detectives Thomson and Thompson who inadvertently swallowed some Formula Fourteen. They are now out of danger, and well on the way to recovery."



What about that? We had a narrow escape, eh?... If it hadn't been for the Thompsons, we'd be at war!... You know, Captain, you still haven't told us how you came to be mixed up in this business...

Oh, yes... Well, I... thank you, Highness...



Well... Pff... It's like this... Pff... I think I told you... Pff... it's quite simple really... Pff... and at the same time rather complicated...



Would you believe it... Pff... I... Pffff...



Another of Abdullah's little tricks!... And he promised me he'd be good!... Ah, what adorable little ways he has!

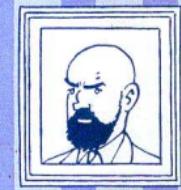
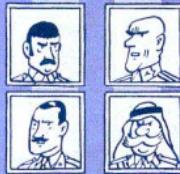


Adorable!... Adorable!... I'll say he is!!!... Well, if you want to hear my story, it won't be from me!... Blistering barnacles, as far as I'm concerned, this is the end!



END





THE ADVENTURES OF TINTIN

LAND OF BLACK GOLD

Who is trying to sabotage European supplies of petrol, and why? An international situation develops which threatens to result in war unless the saboteurs can be brought to justice. Tintin is called in, and he and Snowy are soon following the tracks of the evil and dangerous plotters to the deserts and towns of the Middle East, where their efforts to find them are complicated by hazards difficult even by Tintin's standards . . .

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