

= The Black Island =

The Black Island (French : L 'Île noire) is the seventh volume of The Adventures of Tintin , the comics series by Belgian cartoonist Hergé . Commissioned by the conservative Belgian newspaper Le Vingtième Siècle for its children 's supplement Le Petit Vingtième , it was serialised weekly from April to November 1937 . The story tells of young Belgian reporter Tintin and his dog Snowy , who travel to England in pursuit of a gang of counterfeiters . Framed for theft and hunted by detectives Thomson and Thompson , Tintin follows the criminals to Scotland , discovering their lair on the Black Island .

The Black Island was a commercial success and was published in book form by Casterman shortly after its conclusion . Hergé continued The Adventures of Tintin with King Ottokar 's Sceptre , while the series itself became a defining part of the Franco @-@ Belgian comics tradition . In 1943 , The Black Island was coloured and re @-@ drawn in Hergé 's distinctive ligne @-@ claire style for republication . In the mid @-@ 1960s , Hergé 's British publishers requested a major revision of the story , for which he sent his assistant Bob de Moor to Britain on a research trip ; on his return , Studios Hergé produced a revised , third edition of the story , serialised in Tintin magazine . The Black Island introduces the recurring villain Dr. Müller , and has been widely cited as one of the most popular instalments in the series . The story was adapted for both the 1957 Belvision animation , Hergé 's Adventures of Tintin , and for the 1991 Ellipse / Nelvana animated series The Adventures of Tintin .

= = Synopsis = =

Tintin discovers a plane stranded in the Belgian countryside , offers to help , but is shot by the pilot . Tintin awakens in hospital , where the detectives Thomson and Thompson visit him . They inform him that the plane subsequently flew to Sussex , England , where it crashed . Tintin and Snowy proceed to Sussex , but along the way , two criminals frame Tintin for robbery . Arriving in England by ferry in Newhaven , the criminals kidnap Tintin and attempt to kill him over the cliffs of Seaford , but with Snowy 's help , he escapes . Discovering the plane wreckage , he finds a torn up note in the pilot 's jacket , and following the writing on it arrives at the estate of Dr. J. W. Müller , a German who owns a mental institution . Müller captures Tintin , but the young reporter again escapes . In a scuffle , Müller 's house catches ablaze and the criminals escape .

The next morning , Tintin finds electric cables and red beacons in the garden , surmising that they are there designed to attract a plane drop . At night , he lights the flares , and finds that planes drops sacks of counterfeit money , revealing that Müller is running a gang of forgers . He pursues Müller and his accomplices and along the way , Thompson and Thomson join them . When Müller takes a plane north , Tintin , Snowy and the two detectives follow , but hit a storm and crash land in rural Scotland .

Learning that Müller 's plane had crashed off the coast of Kiltloch , a Scottish coastal village , Tintin travels there to continue his investigation . At Kiltloch , an old man tells him the story of Black Island ? an island off the coast where a " ferocious beast " kills any visitors . Tintin and Snowy travel to the island , where they find that the " beast " is a trained gorilla named Ranko . They further discover that the forgers are using the island as their base , and radio the police for help . Although the criminals attempt to capture Tintin , the police arrive and arrest the criminals , with Ranko going to a zoo .

= = History = =

= = = Background and research = = =

Georges Remi ? best known under the pen name Hergé ? was employed as editor and illustrator of Le Petit Vingtième (" The Little Twentieth ") , a children 's supplement to Le Vingtième Siècle ("

The Twentieth Century "), a staunchly Roman Catholic , conservative Belgian newspaper based in Hergé 's native Brussels which was run by the Abbé Norbert Wallez . In 1929 , Hergé began The Adventures of Tintin comic strip for Le Petit Vingtième , revolving around the exploits of fictional Belgian reporter Tintin . Wallez ordered Hergé to set his first adventure in the Soviet Union as anti @-@ socialist propaganda for children (Tintin in the Land of the Soviets) , to set his second adventure in the Belgian Congo to encourage colonial sentiment (Tintin in the Congo) , and to set his third adventure in the United States to use the story as a denunciation of American capitalism (Tintin in America) . Wallez was subsequently removed from the paper 's editorship following a scandal , although Hergé was convinced to stay on the condition of a salary increase .

For his next serial , Hergé planned to put together a story that caricatured the actions of Nazi Germany , developing the plot for King Ottokar 's Sceptre . However , he temporarily set aside that project when he began to experience dreams of white and a car stuck in the snow , having ideas of sending Tintin to the north , considering Greenland or the Klondike as potential locations . The result was The Black Island , although Hergé only sent Tintin as far north as Scotland , and he instead used the idea of the car stuck in a snowdrift on a greetings card that he designed . He also had an idea of Tintin combating a group of anarchists bent on destroying Europe 's iconic buildings , but again this idea did not make it into the eventual story . Having decided to set most of his story in Britain , Hergé briefly visited London and the southern English coast to learn more about the country . There , he purchased a stainless steel Gillotts Inqueduct G @-@ 2 pen , a type that he would continue to use throughout his life . His positive depiction of Britain was in part due to an Anglophilia that he had received from his childhood , with the British government having been a longstanding ally of Belgium , supporting its 1831 creation and liberating it from German occupation during the First World War .

Hergé retained the anti @-@ German sentiment that he had first considered for King Ottokar 's Sceptre through the inclusion of a German villain , Dr. Müller , who would go on to become a recurring character in the series . He based the character largely on Georg Bell , a Scottish forger who had been a vocal supporter of the Nazi regime , and who he had learned about from an article in anti @-@ conformist Belgian magazine La Crapeauille (The Mortar Shell) . Rather than Germans , Müller 's henchmen were given the Russian names Ivan and Wronzoff , although the latter would be renamed Puschov by Michael Turner and Leslie Lonsdale @-@ Cooper for the English translation . Forging banknotes was a topical crime at the time , while the idea of villains using superstition to hide their lair was a common trope , one that Hergé had used previously in Tintin in the Land of the Soviets . The idea of Ranko brought together two popular fictional creatures of the 1930s ; the giant ape King Kong , who had been introduced in the film King Kong (1933) , and the Loch Ness Monster , a cryptid who was to have lived in Loch Ness . Gaston Leroux 's character of Baloo the gorilla , who had appeared in a 1911 book and a 1913 film , might also have been an influence on Ranko . The plot and themes of the story were also influenced by Alfred Hitchcock 's 1935 film The 39 Steps , itself an adaptation of John Buchan 's 1915 adventure novel .

= = = Original publication = = =

The Black Island was first serialised in Le Petit Vingtième from 15 April to 16 November 1937 under the title Le Mystère De L 'Avion Gris (The Mystery of the Grey Plane) . From 17 April 1938 , the story was also serialised in the French Catholic newspaper , C?urs Vaillants . In 1938 , Éditions Casterman collected the story together in a single hardcover volume , publishing it under the title L 'Île noire (The Black Island) . Hergé however was unhappy with this publication due to errors throughout , most egregiously that the front cover omitted his name .

The inclusion of a television in the original version would have surprised many readers . The BBC had only introduced television to Britain in the late 1930s (suspended entirely until 1946) and Belgium would not have television until 1955 .

= = = Second and third versions = = =

In the 1940s and 1950s , when Hergé 's popularity had increased , he and his team at Studios Hergé redrew and coloured many of the original black and white Tintin adventures . They used the ligne claire (" clear line ") drawing style that Hergé had developed , in this way ensuring that the earlier stories fitted in visually alongside the new Adventures of Tintin being created . Casterman published this second , coloured version of the story in 1943 , reduced from 124 pages to 60 . This second version contained no significant changes from the original 1937 one , although the black and white television screen that had appeared in the 1930s version was now depicted as a colour screen , despite the fact that such technology was not yet available .

In the early 1960s , Hergé 's English language publishers , Methuen , were planning on translating and publishing The Black Island for the British market . Methuen believed that many British readers would find the depiction of Britain in the comic inaccurate and out of date , and drew up a list of 131 errors that they asked Hergé to rectify before they would publish it in English . They were also aware that the work would appear particularly dated when compared with some of the most recently published Adventures like Destination Moon and The Calculus Affair , which made use of advanced technologies in their plot . At the time , Hergé was busy producing the twenty second Tintin story , Flight 714 , and so did not have the time to undertake research into contemporary British society and culture . Instead , he sent his assistant Bob de Moor to Britain in October 1961 , where he visited such sites as Batemans and the White Cliffs of Dover , making many observations as to new developments in clothing and architecture . While in England , de Moor sought out various contemporary uniforms to use as a basis for more accurate illustrations . A police constabulary lent him a police uniform , although when he asked British Rail if he could borrow one of their uniforms , their staff were suspicious and refused .

The new version was serialised in Tintin magazine from June to December 1965 , before Casterman published it in a collected volume in 1966 . Studios Hergé made many alterations to the illustrations as a result of de Moor 's research . Reflecting the fact that television had become increasingly commonplace in Western Europe , Hergé changed the prose from " It 's a television set ! " to " It 's only a television set ! " However , as colour television was not yet available in Britain , the screen on the television encountered in Britain was once again reverted to black and white . Additionally , at least one line of dialogue was " softened " from the original version - in one scene where Tintin aims a pistol at two of the counterfeiters , he states , " Get back ! And put up your hands ! " compared to the original 's " Take one more step and you 're dead ! " . The counterfeit notes that Tintin finds were also increased in value , from one pound to five pounds . The multiple aircraft featured throughout the story were redrawn by Studios member Roger Leloup , who replaced the depiction of planes that were operational in the 1930s to those active at the time , such as a Percival Prentice , a D.H. Chipmunk , a Cessna 150 , a Tiger Moth , and a British European Airways Hawker Siddeley Trident .

The clothing worn by characters was brought up to date , while the old steam railways were replaced by electrified alternatives . Adverts for the genuine Johnnie Walker whisky were replaced by adverts for a fictional alternative , Loch Lomond whisky , while a Sussex County Council signpost was added to page 11 . Various English towns and villages were renamed , with Puddlecombe becoming Littlegate , and Eastbury becoming Eastdown , while Scottish pub Ye Dolphin was renamed The Kiltoch Arms . The police were no longer depicted as carrying guns , as was accurate , while the journalists Christopher Willoughby and Marco Rizotto , who had first appeared in The Castafiore Emerald (1963) , were retroactively added into the background of one scene . With the backgrounds and other elements of the new version drawn by staff members of the Studios , the only thing drawn by Hergé in the 1966 version was the characters themselves .

= = = Later publications = = =

Casterman republished the original black and white version of the story in 1980 , as part of their Archives Hergé collection . In 1986 , they then published a facsimile version of that first edition , that they followed in 1996 with the publication of a facsimile of the second , 1943 edition .

= = Critical analysis = =

Harry Thompson thought that *The Black Island* expressed a "convenient, hitherto unsuspected regard for the British" on Hergé's behalf, with Britain itself appearing as "a little quaint." He thought that it "outstrips its predecessors" both artistically and comedically, describing it as "one of the most popular Tintin stories." He felt that some of the logically implausible slapstick scenes illustrated "the last flicker of 1920s Tintin", but that the 1966 version was "a fine piece of work and one of the most beautifully drawn Tintin books." Michael Farr commented on the "distinct quality and special popularity" of *The Black Island*. He thought that the inclusion of many airplanes and a television in the first version was symptomatic of Hergé's interest in innovation and modernism. Commenting on the differences between the third version of the comic and the earlier two, he thought that the latter was "strongly representative" of the artistic talents of Studios Hergé in the 1960s, but that it was nevertheless inferior, because it had replaced the "spontaneity and poetry" of the original with "over @-@ detailed and fussily accurate" illustrations.

Jean @-@ Marc and Randy Lofficier described *The Black Island* as "a clever little thriller" that bore similarities with the popular detective serials of the era. The Lofficiers thought that the 1966 version "gained in slickness" but became less atmospheric, awarding it two out of five. Biographer Benoît Peeters thought *The Black Island* to be "a pure detective story", describing it as "Remarkably well constructed" and highlighting that it contrasted the modern world of counterfeiters, airplanes, and television, with the mysteries of superstition and the historic castle. He described it as "an adventure full of twists and turns", with the characters Thompson and Thomson being "on top form". He nevertheless considered the 1966 version to be "shorter on charm" than the earlier versions. Elsewhere he was more critical, stating that "under the guise of modernization, a real massacre occurred", and adding that "the new *Black Island* was more than just a failure; it also showed one of the limitations of the Hergéan system", in that it was obsessed with repeated redrawing.

Literary critic Jean @-@ Marie Apostolidès of Stanford University believed that *The Black Island* expanded on a variety of themes that Hergé had explored in his earlier work, such as the idea of counterfeiting and Snowy's fondness for whisky. He thought that there was a human @-@ animal link in the story, with Tintin's hair matching Snowy's fur in a similar manner to how Wronzoff's beard matched Ranko's fur coat. However, he added that while Tintin's relationship with Snowy was wholly one based in good, Wronzoff's connection with Ranko is one rooted in evil. By living on an island, Apostolidès thought that Wronzoff was like "a new Robinson Crusoe", also highlighting that it was the first use of the island theme in Hergé's work. Literary critic Tom McCarthy thought that *The Black Island* linked to Hergé's other Adventures in various ways; he connected the counterfeit money in the story to the counterfeit idol in *The Broken Ear* and the fake bunker in *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets*. He also connected Tintin's solving of the puzzle in the airman's jacket to his solving of the pirate puzzles in *The Secret of the Unicorn*, and that in transmitting from a place of death, Ben Mor, or mort (death), it linked to Tintin's transmitting from the crypt of Marlinspike Hall in *The Secret of the Unicorn*.

= = Adaptations = =

The Black Island is one of *The Adventures of Tintin* that was adapted for the second series of the animated Hergé's Adventures of Tintin by the Belgian studio Belvision in 1957. Belvision's adaptation, directed by Ray Goossens and written by Michel Greg, divided *The Black Island* up into 5 @-@ minute colour episodes that diverted from Hergé's original plot in a variety of ways. The French studio Ellipse and Canadian animation company Nelvana subsequently adapted the comic into a 1991 episode of *The Adventures of Tintin* television series. Directed by Stéphane Bernasconi, Thierry Wermuth voiced the character of Tintin.

On 19 March 2010, the British TV network Channel 4 broadcast a documentary titled *Dom Joly and The Black Island* in which the comedian Dom Joly dressed up as Tintin and followed in Tintin's

footsteps from Ostend to Sussex and then to Scotland . Reviewing the documentary in The Guardian , Tim Dowling commented ; " it was amusing in parts , charming in others and a little gift for Tintinophiles everywhere . A Tintinologist , I fear , would not learn much he or she didn 't already know . "