

= The Shooting Star =

The Shooting Star (French : L'Étoile mystérieuse) is the tenth volume of The Adventures of Tintin , the comics series by Belgian cartoonist Hergé . The story was serialised daily in Le Soir , Belgium 's leading francophone newspaper , from October 1941 to May 1942 amidst the German occupation of Belgium during World War II . The story tells of young Belgian reporter Tintin , who travels with his dog Snowy and friend Captain Haddock aboard a scientific expedition to the Arctic Ocean on an international race to find a meteorite that has fallen to the Earth .

The Shooting Star was a commercial success and was published in book form by Casterman shortly after its conclusion ; the first Tintin volume to be originally published in the 62 @-@ page full @-@ colour format . Hergé continued The Adventures of Tintin with The Secret of the Unicorn , while the series itself became a defining part of the Franco @-@ Belgian comics tradition . The Shooting Star has received a mixed critical reception and has been one of the most controversial instalments in the series due to the anti @-@ Semitic portrayal of its villain . The story was adapted for both the 1957 Belvision animated series , Hergé 's Adventures of Tintin , and for the 1991 animated series The Adventures of Tintin by Ellipse and Nelvana .

= = Synopsis = =

A giant meteoroid approaches the earth , spotted from an observatory by Professor Decimus Phostle , while a self @-@ proclaimed prophet , Philippulus , predicts the end of the world . The meteoroid misses the earth , but a fragment of it plunges into the Arctic Ocean . Phostle determines that the object is made of a new material which he names phostlite , and sets off to find it with a crew of European scientists . Accompanied by Tintin and Snowy , their ship , the Aurora , is helmed by Tintin 's friend Captain Haddock . Meanwhile , another team has set out aboard the polar expedition ship Peary , backed by the financier Mr. Bohlwinkel ; wherefore , the expedition becomes a race to land on the meteorite . On the day of departure , Bohlwinkel has a henchman plant a stick of dynamite on the Aurora , but it is found and thrown overboard . In the North Sea , the Aurora is almost rammed by another of Bohlwinkel 's ships , but Haddock steers out of the way . Further setbacks occur at the Icelandic port of Akureyri , when Haddock is informed that there is no fuel available . He and Tintin then come across an old friend of his , Captain Chester , who reveals that there is plenty of fuel and that the Golden Oil Company (which has a fuel monopoly) is owned by Bohlwinkel . The three then secretly run a hose from Chester 's ship , Sirius , to the Aurora , and thus trick Golden Oil into providing the fuel they need .

Close to the Peary , the Aurora receives an indistinct distress call from another ship and alters its course to help ; but inquiries by Tintin expose that the distress signal is a decoy to delay them . Resuming the journey , they intercept a cable announcing that the Peary expedition has reached the meteorite but not yet claimed it . While the Peary crew rows to the meteorite , Tintin uses the Aurora 's seaplane to parachute onto the meteorite and plant the expedition 's flag . Tintin makes camp while the Aurora 's engines are repaired . The next day he discovers that Phostlite accelerates growth , and makes things much larger : his apple core grows into a large tree while a maggot grows into a huge butterfly , and Tintin is menaced by a giant spider and immense , explosive mushrooms before rescue arrives . A sudden seaquake shakes the meteorite to its core and it sinks into the sea , just as Tintin and Snowy escape to the Aurora with a piece of phostlite . Thereafter Bohlwinkel learns that he is expected to be tried for his crimes . As the Aurora returns home , Captain Haddock steers the ship toward land to refuel not with oil , but with whiskey .

= = History = =

= = = Background = = =

Amidst the German occupation of Belgium during World War II , Hergé had found employment at Le

Soir , Belgium 's leading newspaper , then under the administrative control of the occupying military government . His latest serial , The Shooting Star , initially featured the United States as the primary antagonists ; explaining this , Hergé asserted that the story revolved around the theme of " the rivalry for progress between Europe and the United States " . Although not disliking Americans themselves , he had a strong disdain for American big business , and had exhibited anti @-@ American themes in earlier works , in particular in Tintin in America . During serialisation of The Shooting Star , in December 1941 , the U.S. entered the war on the side of the Allies , thus coming into direct conflict with Germany . All of the scientists featured were from Axis or neutral countries , which might be a reflection of the strip 's anti @-@ Allies political slant . Entertainment producer and author Harry Thompson stated this should not be interpreted as a strong anti @-@ Ally bias , for the only two nation @-@ states in Europe that were part of the Allies at that point were the Soviet Union and United Kingdom , and that the characters of Haddock and Chester were British .

As he had done for other Adventures of Tintin which featured sea travel , Hergé was careful to obtain as much data about ships as possible in order to make his portrayals more realistic . The design of the Aurora was based on the RRS William Scoresby , while that of the Peary was most likely based upon another Antarctic ship , the RRS Discovery . The seaplane on which the expedition travels was based on the German Arado 196 @-@ A. Hergé nevertheless later criticised his own efforts in this area , saying that if Aurora had been a real ship , it would probably be unseaworthy .

The Shooting Star shared plot similarities with The Chase of the Golden Meteor , a 1908 novel by pioneering French science @-@ fiction writer Jules Verne . As in Hergé 's story , Verne 's novel features an expedition to the North Atlantic to find a meteorite fragment containing a new element . In both stories , the competing expedition teams were led by an eccentric professor and a Jewish banker , and Verne 's novel had a Doktor Schultze to Hergé 's Professor Schulze ? both from the University of Jena . Hergé denied deliberately copying Verne 's story , saying that he had only read one of the French novelist 's works ; it is possible that the influence from Verne came via Jacques Van Melkebeke , Hergé 's friend and assistant , who was a fan of the genre . The Swedish expedition member Eric Björgensköld physically resembles a real person : Auguste Piccard , who later became Hergé 's inspiration for Professor Calculus .

= = = Anti @-@ Semitism = = =

Under Nazi control , Le Soir was publishing a variety of anti @-@ Semitic articles , calling for the Jews to be further excluded from public life and describing them as racial enemies of the Belgian people . Hergé biographer Pierre Assouline noted that there was a " remarkable correlation " between the anti @-@ Semitic nature of Le Soir 's editorials and The Shooting Star 's depiction of Jews . Within months of the story 's publication , legislation was passed to collect and deport Jews from Belgium to Nazi concentration camps . Thus , The Shooting Star reflected trends in the Belgian political situation at the time . However , the story was not the first time that Hergé had adopted such a perspective in his work ; he had recently provided illustrations for Robert de Vrolyand 's Fables , a number of which contained anti @-@ Semitic stereotypes , reflecting the racism in much of de Vrolyand 's book . Similarly , his depiction of the character of Rastapopoulos , who was introduced in Tintin in America , has been cited as being based upon anti @-@ Semitic stereotypes .

When The Shooting Star appeared in Le Soir , Hergé featured a gag in which two Jews hear the prophetic news that the end of the world is near . They rub their hands together in eagerness , and one comments : " Did you hear , Isaac ? The end of the world ! What if it 's true ? " The other responds : " Hey , hey , it would be a gut ding , Solomon ! I owe my suppliers 50 @,@ 000 francs , and zis way I von 't haf to pay vem ! " Hergé omitted this scene from the collected edition .

The character of Blumenstein displays anti @-@ Semitic stereotypes , such as having a bulbous nose and being an avaricious , manipulative businessman . Hergé later dismissed concerns over this Jewish caricature , saying , " That was the style then . " In his assessment of Franco @-@ Belgian comics , Matthew Screech expressed the opinion that Blumenstein was an anti @-@ American stereotype rather than an anti @-@ Jewish one . Similarly , reporter and Tintin expert

Michael Farr asserted that Blumenstein was " more parodied as a financier than Jew " . Conversely , Lofficier and Lofficier asserted that both anti @-@ Americanism and anti @-@ Semitism were present , and that it is the United States and International Jewry who were the " ruthless opponents " of Tintin . Nazi apologists and revisionists such as French Holocaust denier Olivier Mathieu used The Shooting Star as evidence that Hergé was an anti @-@ Semite with Nazi sympathies .

To graphic novel specialist Hugo Frey , the competing expeditions are presented as a simplistic race between good and evil , wherein Blumestein displays the stereotypes of Jews held by advocates of the Jewish World Conspiracy presented in works such as the anti @-@ Semitic Protocols of the Elders of Zion . Frey writes that Blumenstein 's " large and bulbous nose ... rounded forehead , receding black hair , and small beady eyes " were stock anti @-@ Semitic imagery in the 1930s and 1940s , as promoted by those such as journalist Édouard Drumont , whose anti @-@ Semitic Paris @-@ based newspaper La Libre Parole was influential in Brussels . According to Frey , Blumenstein 's depiction as an overweight cigar @-@ smoker reflected the anti @-@ Semitic stereotype of Jews as being financially powerful , while he suggested that the scene in which Blumenstein learned that he was to be tracked down for his crimes recalled the contemporary roundup of Jews in Nazi Europe . Frey contrasts Hergé 's complicity with the anti @-@ Semites to the actions of others Belgians , such as those who struck against the Nazis at the Université libre de Bruxelles and those who risked their lives to hide Jews .

= = = Publication = = =

The Shooting Star was serialised daily in Le Soir from 20 October 1941 to 21 May 1942 in French under the title L Étoile mystérieuse (The Mysterious Star) . Tintin 's previous adventure , The Crab with the Golden Claws , had been serialised weekly until the demise of Le Soir 's children 's supplement , Le Soir Jeunesse , before continuing daily in the main newspaper itself ; the earlier serial had ended the day before The Shooting Star began . The Shooting Star was the first Tintin adventure to be serialised daily in its entirety . As with earlier Adventures of Tintin , the story was later serialised in France in the Catholic newspaper C?urs Vaillants , where it first appeared on 6 June 1943 .

On page 20 of the published book , Hergé included a cameo of the characters Thomson and Thompson and Quick & Flupke . The story also introduced Captain Chester , who is mentioned in later adventures , and Professor Cantonneau , who returns in The Seven Crystal Balls .

On 21 May 1942 , The Shooting Star concluded serialisation . Less than a week later , the occupied government proclaimed that all Jews in Belgium would have to wear a yellow badge on their clothing , and in July the Gestapo began raids on Jewish premises , followed by deportations of Jews to Nazi concentration camps and extermination camps , resulting in around 32 @,@ 000 Belgian Jews being killed . Hergé later recalled : " I saw very few Jews wearing the yellow star , but finally I did see some . They told me that some Jews were gone ; that people had come for them and sent them away . I didn 't want to believe it . "

The earlier Tintin albums reproduced the newspaper strips , which had come to appear weekly in Thursday supplements , two @-@ page allotments of three tiers to a page . War shortages reduced the space for the strip by a third , and later the supplements disappeared completely ; the comic appeared daily in the main newspaper as a four @-@ panel strip . For publication in book form , Casterman insisted that Hergé must adhere to a new album format of four sixteen @-@ page signatures , which gave sixty @-@ two pages of story plus a cover page . Though the format reduced the page count , it maintained the same amount of story by reducing the size of the panels reproduced . As The Shooting Star progressed , Hergé cut up and laid out clippings of the strip in an exercise book in preparation for the new layouts . It was the first volume of The Adventures of Tintin to be originally published in the 62 @-@ page full @-@ colour format that thereafter was the series standard (as opposed to first being published in a black and white newspaper strip reproduction format that all prior books had done) . Casterman published the album in September 1942 . Unlike the previous books in the series , because it was printed immediately in colour , it did not need to be totally redrawn . The 176 daily strips from the original serialisation were not enough to fill the 62

pages Casterman had allotted , so Hergé added large panels , such as a half @-@ page panel of a giant telescope on page three . Hergé wanted to include a small gold star inside the " o " of " Étoile " on the cover page , but Casterman refused , deeming it too expensive .

In 1954 , Hergé began making various changes to the story for its re @-@ publication . Aware of the controversy surrounding the anti @-@ Semitic depiction of Blumenstein , he renamed the character " Bohlwinkel " , adopting this name from bollewinkel , a Brussels dialect term for a confectionery store . He later discovered that , by coincidence , Bohlwinkel was also a Jewish name . Trying to tone down the book 's anti @-@ American sentiment , he also changed the United States to a fictional South American nation called São Rico , replacing the U.S. flag flown by the Peary 's crew with that of the fictional state . In 1959 , Hergé made a new list of changes to be made to the artwork in The Shooting Star , which included altering Bohlwinkel 's nose , but the changes were postponed and have never been made .

= = Critical analysis = =

Pierre Assouline remarked that Hergé 's attention to accuracy lapsed in The Shooting Star . For instance , the meteorite 's approach toward Earth caused a heat wave , while the meteorite itself proceeded to float on the surface of the ocean . In reality , no such heat wave would have been caused , while the meteorite would have plunged to the sea floor , causing a tsunami . He noted that the concept of madness was a recurring theme throughout the story , and that there was " an unreality in the whole adventure " . Fellow biographer Benoît Peeters asserted that The Shooting Star was " of great power and brilliant construction " . Elsewhere , Peeters wrote that the book was " notable for the entry of the fantastic into Hergé 's work " .

Jean @-@ Marc and Randy Lofficier deemed the anti @-@ Semitism a " sad moment " in the series , awarding the story one out of five stars . Nevertheless , they felt that the " pre @-@ apocalyptic ambiance is stark and believable " , and that the giant mushrooms on the meteorite were a " strange anticipation " of the mushroom @-@ clouds produced by the atomic bombings in 1945 . Focusing on the characters of Professor Phostle and Philippulus , they asserted that both resembled Sophocles Sarcophagus from Cigars of the Pharaoh and that the former was " in the Jules Verne tradition " of eccentric professors . According to philosopher Pascal Bruckner , Tintin experts find Philippulus a caricature of Marshal of France Philippe Pétain , who demanded the French repent imaginary sins when he took power . Philippe Goddin stated that the strips for this story " kept the reader daily on tenterhooks in a story replete with new twists and humour " .

Harry Thompson described The Shooting Star as " the most important of all Hergé 's wartime stories " , having " an air of bizarre fantasy " that was unlike his prior work . He observed that the character of Professor Phostle was a prototype for Professor Calculus , introduced later in the series . Michael Farr asserted that the apocalyptic setting of the story reflected the wartime mood in Europe . He characterises the opening pages of the story as being " unique in [Hergé 's] work for the feeling of foreboding they convey " , adding that " Hergé daringly eschews the strip cartoonist 's recognised means of denoting a dream , deliberately confusing the reader " . He felt that the " flow of the narrative is less accomplished " than in other stories , with " spurts and rushes followed by slower passages , upsetting the rhythm and pace " .

Literary critic Jean @-@ Marie Apostolidès psychoanalysed The Shooting Star , describing it as " the final attempt of the foundling [i.e. Tintin] to rid himself of the bastard [i.e. Haddock] and to preserve the integrity of his former values " , pointing out that the first thirteen pages are devoted purely to the boy reporter . He also argued that Phostle and Philippus represent two @-@ halves of " an ambivalent father figure " within the story , with the former prefiguring Calculus " more than any other previous character " . He suggests that when hiding on the Aurora , Philippus can be compared to The Phantom of the Opera , as he steals a stick of dynamite and climbs up the ship 's mast before threatening to detonate the weapon . Apostolidès believed that the shooting star itself is " more a religious mystery than a scientific one " and that Tintin is therefore " the perfect one to figure it out in some religious way ? that is , unrealistically " . Apostolidès analysed the political component of the story in terms of " the incarnation of unregulated capitalism against the spirit of

European values " , arguing that Hergé was adhering to " a utopian vision that , in 1942 , smacks of pro @-@ German propaganda " .

Literary critic Tom McCarthy believed that *The Shooting Star* represents the apex of the " right @-@ wing strain " in Hergé 's work . He highlighted the instance in which Tintin impersonates God in order to give commands to Philippus as representing one of various occasions in *The Adventures of Tintin* where " sacred authority manifests itself largely as a voice , and commanding ? or commandeering ? that voice is what guarantees power " . McCarthy further observes that the image of a giant spider in a ball of fire , which appears near the start of the story , reflects the theme of madness that is again present throughout the series . Discussing the political elements of Hergé 's series , McCarthy also noted that in the original publication of the story , the spider which climbed in front of the observatory telescope and was thus magnified greatly was initially termed *Aranea Fasciata* ; he saw this as an intentional satire of the threat to Europe posed by fascism .

= = Adaptations = =

In 1957 , the animation company Belvision Studios produced a string of colour adaptations based on Hergé 's original comics , adapting eight of the *Adventures* into a series of daily five @-@ minute episodes . *The Shooting Star* was the sixth to be adapted in the second animated series ; it was directed by Ray Goossens and written by Greg , a well @-@ known cartoonist who was to become editor @-@ in @-@ chief of *Tintin* magazine .

In 1991 , a second animated series based upon *The Adventures of Tintin* was produced , this time as a collaboration between the French studio Ellipse and the Canadian animation company Nelvana . *The Shooting Star* was the eighth story to be adapted and was divided into two twenty @-@ minute episodes . Directed by Stéphane Bernasconi , the series has been praised for being " generally faithful " to the original comics , to the extent that the animation was directly adopted from Hergé 's original panels .

In 2010 , American cartoonist Charles Burns authored *X 'ed Out* , a graphic novel with a variety of allusions to *The Adventures of Tintin* . In one scene , the protagonist Nitnit discovers a warehouse containing white eggs with red spots , akin to the mushrooms in *The Shooting Star* , with the cover of Burns ' book paying homage to Hergé . In 2015 , the original front cover sketch of the book was sold for ? 2 @. @ 5 million to a European investor , Marina David of *Petits Papiers* @-@ Huberty @-@ Breyne , at the Brussels Antiques and Fine Art Fair .