

= The Seven Crystal Balls =

The Seven Crystal Balls (French : Les Sept Boules de Cristal) is the thirteenth 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 December 1943 amidst the German occupation of Belgium during World War II . The story was cancelled abruptly following the Allied liberation in September 1944 , when Hergé was accused of collaborating with the occupying Germans and banned from working . After he was cleared two years later , the story was then serialised weekly in the new Tintin magazine from September 1946 to April 1948 . The story revolves around the investigations of a young reporter Tintin and his friend Captain Haddock into the abduction of their friend Professor Calculus and its connection to a mysterious illness which has afflicted the members of an archaeological expedition to Peru .

The Seven Crystal Balls was a commercial success and was published in book form by Casterman shortly after its conclusion . Hergé concluded the arc begun in this story with Prisoners of the Sun , while the series itself became a defining part of the Franco @-@ Belgian comics tradition . Critics have ranked The Seven Crystal Balls as one of the best Adventures of Tintin , describing it as the most frightening instalment in the series . The story was adapted for the 1969 Belvision film , Tintin and the Temple of the Sun and for the 1991 animated series The Adventures of Tintin by Ellipse and Nelvana .

= = Synopsis = =

Young reporter Tintin , his dog Snowy , and his friend Captain Haddock spend an evening at the music hall . There , they witness the performance of a clairvoyant , Madame Yamilah , who predicts the illness of one of the Sanders @-@ Hardiman expedition members , who recently returned from an archaeological expedition to the Andes mountains . They also view the act of a knife thrower whom Tintin recognises as General Alcazar , former President of San Theodoros . Meeting him backstage , Alcazar introduces them to his Indio assistant , Chiquito , and learn that he was deposed (once again) by his rival General Tapioca .

The next day , they learn that the members of the Sanders @-@ Hardiman expedition are falling into comas , with fragments of a shattered crystal ball found near each victim . Concerned , Tintin , Haddock , and their friend Professor Calculus visit Calculus 's old friend Professor Hercules Tarragon , the only expedition member yet to be affected . Professor Tarragon is under police guard , and he shows his visitors the mummified body of Inca king Rascar Capac , which the expedition brought back with them from Peru . A lightning storm strikes the house and sends ball lightning down the chimney and onto the mummy ? which evaporates . Worried , Tarragon states that this reflects the culmination of Capac 's prophecy , which declares that punishment will descend upon those who desecrate his tomb . Spending the stormy night at Tarragon 's house , Tintin , Haddock , and Calculus are each awoken by a dream involving Capac 's mummy . They find Tarragon comatose in his bed , with the accompanying crystal shards nearby ; the attacker had bypassed the guards by climbing in via the chimney . The next day , Calculus is walking on the grounds of Tarragon 's house when he discovers one of the mummy 's bracelets , which he places on himself .

Tintin and Haddock later realise that Calculus has gone missing , and surmise that he has been kidnapped by the same individual who placed Tarragon in a coma . The police set up road blocks , but the kidnappers switch cars and are able to evade them . Tintin visits a hospital where the seven stricken members of the Sanders @-@ Hardiman expedition are housed ; he is astonished that at a precise time of day , all awaken and scream about figures attacking them before slipping back into their comas . Haddock is dejected by Calculus ' abduction , but upon learning that police have spotted the kidnapper 's car at a port , he and Tintin race there , believing that the abductors seek to board a boat with Calculus and take him abroad . At the docks , they spot Alcazar boarding a ship to South America ; he reveals that Chiquito has disappeared and that he was one of the last descendants of the Inca , with Tintin surmising that Chiquito must be one of Calculus ' captors .

Having lost Calculus ' trail , Tintin and Haddock decide to pay a visit to Haddock 's old friend

Chester , who has docked at another nearby port . They miss Chester , but instead discover Calculus ' hat on the docks , indicating that he was taken to sea from here . Investigating , they realise that Calculus must be aboard the Pachacamac , a ship headed to Peru , and board a flight , intent on intercepting its arrival .

= = History = =

= = = Background = = =

Amidst the German occupation of Belgium during World War II , Hergé had accepted a position working for Le Soir , Belgian 's largest Francophone daily newspaper . Confiscated from its original owners , the German authorities permitted Le Soir to reopen under the directorship of Belgian editor Raymond de Becker , although it remained firmly under Nazi control , supporting the German war effort and espousing anti @-@ Semitism . Joining Le Soir on 15 October 1940 , Hergé was aided by old friend Paul Jamin and the cartoonist Jacques Van Melkebeke . Some Belgians were upset that Hergé was willing to work for a newspaper controlled by the occupying Nazi administration , although he was heavily enticed by the size of Le Soir 's readership , which reached 600 @,@ 000 . Faced with the reality of Nazi oversight , Hergé abandoned the overt political themes that had pervaded much of his earlier work , instead adopting a policy of neutrality . Without the need to satirise political types , entertainment producer and author Harry Thompson observed that " Hergé was now concentrating more on plot and on developing a new style of character comedy . The public reacted positively . "

Following the culmination of his previous Tintin adventure , Red Rackham 's Treasure , Hergé had agreed to a proposal that the newspaper could include a detective story revolving around his characters , Thomson and Thompson . Titled Dupont et Dupond , détectives (" Thomson and Thompson , Detectives ") , Hergé provided the illustrations while the story was authored by the Le Soir crime writer Paul Kinnet . While this was being serialised , Hergé began contemplating ideas for his new Tintin adventure , toying with the idea of a story surrounding a dangerous invention that Calculus had developed . The story was probably inspired by an article authored by Le Soir 's science correspondent , Bernard Heuvelmans , and while Hergé did not use it at the time , he revived it a decade later as the basis for The Calculus Affair .

As with Hergé 's two previous stories , The Secret of the Unicorn and Red Rackham 's Treasure , The Seven Crystal Balls was designed as part of a twofold story arc , to be concluded with the then yet unnamed Prisoners of the Sun . Hergé planned for the former story to outline a mystery , while the latter would see his characters undertake an expedition to solve it . His use of an ancient mummy 's curse around which the narrative revolved was inspired by tales of a curse of the pharaohs which had been unearthed during the archaeologist Howard Carter 's 1922 discovery of Pharaoh Tutankhamun 's tomb . This was not the first time that Hergé had been inspired by this tabloid story , having previously done so when authoring Cigars of the Pharaoh .

In autumn 1943 , Hergé decided that he wanted Edgar P. Jacobs , a fellow cartoonist , to collaborate with him on The Adventures of Tintin . Although initially hesitant , Jacobs eventually agreed , adopting the paid position in January 1944 . The two became close friends and artistic collaborators , with Jacobs aiding him in developing various aspects of the plot , for instance developing the idea of the crystal balls and the story 's title . Although stylistically they were different both in forms of illustration and narrative , they influenced each other greatly . He used Jacobs as a life model from whom he drew various poses that characters adopt in the story . He also used Jacobs as a researcher , sending him to the Cinquantenaire Museum to study its collections of Incan material , and it was the mummified Incan corpse in their collection that was used as the basis for the mummy of Rascar Capac .

The museum 's director , Professor Capart , exhibited similarities with Professor Tarragon , a new character that Hergé had developed for the story . He also included a number of characters who had previously appeared in earlier adventures , among them Professor Cantonneau from The Shooting

Star , General Alcazar from The Broken Ear , and Bianca Castafiore from King Ottokar 's Sceptre .

The scenery and background of the story was meticulously copied from existing sources ; car model types like the Opel Olympia 38 in which Calculus ' abductors escaped the police were drawn from real examples , while Hergé closely adhered to the reality of the port and docks at Saint @-@ Nazaire . Professor Tarragon 's house was drawn from a real house in Avenue Delleur , Boitsfort , which Jacobs had identified for Hergé 's purposes . Hergé and Jacobs stationed themselves outside the house and completed a sketch of the building . Immediately after , two grey cars containing German soldiers pulled up ; the house had been requisitioned by the Schutzstaffel (SS) . Hergé realised that , had he and Jacobs been discovered sketching , they would have been interrogated .

= = = Publication = = =

The story began serialisation in Le Soir under the title of Les Sept Boules de Cristal on 16 December 1943 . However , Hergé 's health declined , as he was afflicted with flu , sinusitis , and ear ache . This was accompanied by general exhaustion , depression , and fear that upon the imminent collapse of German administration , he would face retribution as a collaborator ; many accused of being collaborators had already been killed by the Belgian Resistance . Experiencing a breakdown , he took a hiatus from producing The Seven Crystal Balls between 6 May and 6 July 1944 , during which a message was posted in Le Soir stating :

They 're coming ! Who ? Why , Tintin and Snowy , of course ! Perhaps , since you have not heard anything about them lately , you have been afraid , dear readers , that something bad had happened to them ? Nothing of the sort ! Tintin and Snowy were simply waiting for our excellent associate and friend Hergé to return to better health , as he was sick for a few weeks .

The story returned to its serialisation in Le Soir on 7 July , starting with a summary of the story so far . However , it would be interrupted again on 2 September 1944 . Brussels was liberated from German occupation by the Allied forces on 3 September , upon which Le Soir immediately ceased publication . Hergé had been forced to abandon the story after 152 strips , equivalent to fifty pages of the later published book volume . The story had been left hanging after the scene in which Tintin leaves the hospital after seeing the seven members of the expedition having a simultaneous fit . Three days later the entire staff were fired and a new editorial team introduced .

Hergé was arrested on 3 September , having been named as a collaborator in a Resistance document known as the " Gallery of Traitors " . This would be the first of four incidents in which Hergé was arrested and freed : by the State Security , the Judiciary Police , the Belgian National Movement , and the Front for Independence , during which he spent one night in jail . On 8 September the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force issued a proclamation announcing that " any journalist who had helped produce a newspaper during the occupation was for the time being barred from practising his profession . " Blacklisted , Hergé was now unemployed . A newspaper closely associated with the Belgian Resistance , La Patrie , issued a strip titled The Adventures of Tintin in the Land of the Nazis , in which Hergé was lampooned as a collaborator .

The period witnessed widespread allegations against accused collaborators , with military courts condemning 30 @,@ 000 on minor charges and 25 @,@ 000 on more serious charges ; of those , 5 @,@ 500 were sentenced to life imprisonment or capital punishment . A judiciary inquiry into Hergé 's case was launched by the deputy public prosecutor , Mr Vinçotte , although in his report he urged lenience , stating that " I am inclined to close the case . I believe it would bring ridicule on the judicial system to go after an inoffensive children 's book author and illustrator . On the other hand , Hergé worked for Le Soir during the war , and his illustrations are what made people buy the newspaper . " Unable to work for the press , Hergé worked from home re @-@ drawing , and Jacobs colouring , the older Adventures of Tintin for publication by his book publisher Casterman , completing the second version of Tintin in the Congo and starting on King Ottokar 's Sceptre . Casterman supported Hergé throughout his ordeal , for which he always remained grateful . He and Jacobs produced a comic strip under the pseudonym of " Olav " , although no publishers accepted it . Although this period allowed him an escape from the pressure of daily production which had affected most of his working life , he also had family problems to deal with ; his brother Paul returned to Brussels from a

German prisoner @-@ of @-@ war camp and their mother had become highly delusional and was moved to a psychiatric hospital .

In October 1945 , Hergé was approached by Raymond Leblanc , a former member of a conservative Resistance group , the National Royalist Movement (MNR) , and his associates André Sinave and Albert Debaty . The trio were planning on launching a weekly magazine for children . Leblanc , who had fond childhood memories of Tintin in the Land of the Soviets , thought Hergé would be ideal for it . Hergé agreed , and Leblanc obtained clearance papers for him , allowing him to work . Concerned about the judicial investigation into Hergé 's wartime affiliations , Leblanc convinced William Ugeux , a leader of the Belgian Resistance who was now in charge of censorship and certificates of good citizenship , to look into the comic creator 's file . Ugeux concluded that Hergé had been " a blunderer rather than a traitor " for his work at Le Soir . The decision whether Hergé would stand trial belonged to the general auditor of the Military Tribunal , Walter Ganshof van der Meersch . He closed the case on 22 December 1945 , declaring that " in regard to the particularly inoffensive character of the drawings published by Remi , bringing him before a war tribunal would be inappropriate and risky " .

Now free from threat of prosecution , he continued to support his colleagues at Le Soir who were being charged as collaborators ; six of them were sentenced to death , and others to lengthy prison sentences . Among those sentenced to death was Hergé 's friend , Paul Jamin , although his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment . In May 1946 , Hergé was issued a certificate of good citizenship , which became largely necessary to obtain employment in post @-@ war Belgium . Celebrations were marred by his mother 's death at age 60 in April 1946 . Harry Thompson has described this post @-@ war period as the " greatest upheaval " of Hergé 's life . Hergé later described it as " an experience of absolute intolerance . It was horrible , horrible ! " He considered the post @-@ war trials of collaborators a great injustice inflicted upon many innocent people , and never forgave Belgian society for the way that he had been treated , although he hid this from his public persona .

Leblanc 's new magazine was titled Tintin at the advice of Sinave , who believed that this would help attract a wide audience . Adopting the slogan of " The Newspaper for the Young Aged 7 to 77 " , the magazine 's logo featured the Tintin character himself . Inspired by the example set by Le Petit Vingtième , Tintin magazine was to be a weekly , centred on the eponymous hero . The Adventures of Tintin would be serialised two pages per week , accompanied by other Franco @-@ Belgian comics . For the first time , the Adventures would be in colour from the outset . Hergé assembled a team of artists for the purpose , including Edgar P. Jacobs and Jacques Van Melkebeke , who became the magazine 's first editor . Hergé continued at the point where he had left The Seven Crystal Balls , prior to embarking on Prisoners of the Sun , although both were published under the title of Le Temple du Soleil (The Temple of the Sun) . Rather than re @-@ serialising the story from its beginning , he began the new magazine with a summary of the story so far , presented as a press clipping . The magazine was an instant success , soon gaining a weekly circulation of 100 @, @ 000 in Belgium and the Netherlands . The Seven Crystal Balls serialisation finally concluded on 22 April 1948 , four and a half years after it had begun .

= = = Republication = = =

As with previous adventures , it then began serialisation in the French Catholic newspaper C?urs Vaillants , from 19 May 1946 . After the story had finished serialisation , the publishing company Casterman divided it into two volumes , Les Sept Boules de Cristal and Le Temple du Soleil , which they released in 1948 and 1949 respectively . One of the scenes that had been found in Le Soir , in which Haddock is humiliated by the clairvoyant at the theatre , was removed from the story when it was being reformatted in book form . The book contained additional backgrounds not found in the original serialised story which had been drawn by Jacobs .

When translated into English for a publication by Methuen in 1963 , a number of Francophone place @-@ names were changed ; for instance , the port of Saint @-@ Nazaire was renamed Westermouth , which , according to author Michael Farr , was probably inspired by the real English

coastal town of Weymouth . As the English @-@ language translation was published after the English translation of other Tintin adventures , which had actually been authored later than The Seven Crystal Balls , in the English version , references are made to events that would occur in The Calculus Affair and The Red Sea Sharks .

= = Critical analysis = =

Biographer Benoît Peeters described The Seven Crystal Balls as " the most terrifying of The Adventures of Tintin " . He believed that in this story , Hergé had come under the clear influence of Jacobs , in that the " décor grows more lush ; the details clearer . No more streets suggested by a few lines , monochromatic posters , or characters walking on the edge of the frame . " Elsewhere , he noted that in this story , Hergé " produced a gripping tale that went further than any other in the direction of the supernatural . " Fellow biographer Pierre Assouline believed that The Seven Crystal Balls achieved " a more complete integration of narrative and illustrations " than previous adventures , and that from that point on , his books " begin to form a coherent body of work , an oeuvre . "

Harry Thompson stated that the " overriding theme " of The Seven Crystal Balls was " fear of the unknown " , adding that while it did blend humour with menace , it remained " Hergé 's most frightening book " . He noted that the story marks the complete transition of Captain Haddock from the " pitiable drunk " which he was introduced as in The Crab with the Golden Claws to the position of " chief sidekick and comic attraction " , with Snowy being relegated to the position of " normal dog " .

Michael Farr described both The Seven Crystal Balls and Prisoners of the Sun as " classic middle @-@ period Tintin " , commenting on their " surprisingly well @-@ balanced narrative " and noting that they exhibited scant evidence of Hergé 's turbulent personal life . He felt that The Seven Crystal Balls encapsulated the " air of doom " which pervaded the mood of Europe at the time to an even greater extent than Hergé had done in his earlier work , The Shooting Star . At the same time , Farr thought it to be " a simple detective story " , comparing Tintin 's hunt for clues regarding Calculus ' disappearance to Arthur Conan Doyle 's stories of fictional detective Sherlock Holmes . He thought that the story was " truly Hitchcockian in its suspense and quite cinematic in its presentation " , comparing the use of the music hall in the story with its use in Hitchcock 's film , The 39 Steps (1935) . Farr suggested that in the scene in which Haddock dejectedly sits around Marlinspike awaiting news of Calculus , " Hergé had allowed himself to step for a moment into Haddock 's shoes and to be autobiographical " .

Jean @-@ Marc Lofficier and Randy Lofficier believed that the two @-@ story arc represents " one more leap forward in Hergé 's graphic and narrative skills " as a result of the transition to full colour double pages as the initial means of publication . They noted that The Seven Crystal Balls is " bathed in the surreal atmosphere that Hergé knew how to create so well " , with Tintin confronting " a dark and oppressive force " that was " worthy of a Hammer film . " They asserted that the character of Professor Tarragon was " to archaeology what Haddock is to the sea " , adding that Mark Falconer (Marc Chalet) resembled an older Tintin with darker hair . Ultimately , they awarded both halves of the story arc five out of five .

Literary critic Tom McCarthy praised the character of Tarragon , stating that he exudes a presence " far beyond what we might expect from a novelist , let alone a cartoonist " . He then compared the scenario in which Tarragon was trapped within his home to that in The Calculus Affair in which Professor Topolino was tied up in his house . He also identified elements within the story that he believed reflected recurring themes within The Adventures of Tintin . He argued that the way in which Alcazar was presented as Tintin 's friend in this story was a manifestation of the recurring theme of friendship . He thought that the appearance of Rascar Capac 's jewels reflected Hergé 's use of jewels as a theme throughout the series , while the mummy 's removal from its tomb was a manifestation of the recurring concept of the tomb .

In his psychoanalytical study of the Adventures of Tintin , the academic Jean @-@ Marie Apostolidès believed that The Seven Crystal Balls @-@ Prisoners of the Sun arc reflects a confrontation between civilisations , and between the sacred and the secular . He also discussed

Haddock 's position in the story , noting that the scene at the theatre in which a bull 's head mask falls onto Haddock 's head reflects " one of Hergé 's most constant themes : the union of human and animal " . He further added the opinion that Haddock 's transformation from seaman to country gentleman was not believable . He suggested that the appearance of Yamila and Castafiore at the start of the story injected " a feminine element " into the story , which represented an attempt to " round out Haddock 's family " , which was dominated by the male figures of Tintin , Calculus , and Snowy . He further argued that Calculus ' kidnapping represented a " rite of passage " that would allow him to join Tintin and Haddock 's family .

= = Adaptations = =

In 1969 , the animation company Belvision Studios , which had produced the 1956 ? 57 television series Hergé 's Adventures of Tintin , released its first feature @-@ length animated film , Tintin and the Temple of the Sun , adapted from the Seven Crystal Balls @-@ Prisoners of the Sun story arc . Produced by Raymond Leblanc and directed by Eddie Lateste , it was written by Lateste , the cartoonist Greg , Jos Marissen , and Laszló Molnár . Music was by François Rauber and Zorrino 's song was composed by Jacques Brel . Lofficier and Lofficier commented that the part of the film based on The Seven Crystal Balls " suffers from being overly condensed for timing reasons . "

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 Seven Crystal Balls was the eleventh story to be adapted and was divided into two thirty @-@ 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 .

The video game Prisoners of the Sun was developed and published by the French company Infogrames in 1997 , based on The Seven Crystal Balls and Prisoners of the Sun .

At the turn of the new century , Tintin remained popular . In 2001 , The Seven Crystal Balls and Prisoners of the Sun were adapted into a theatrical musical , Kuifje ? De Zonnetempel (Tintin ? The Temple of the Sun) , which premiered at the Stadsschouwburg in Antwerp in the Dutch language on 15 September . The production , directed by Dirk de Caluwé , adapted by Seth Gaaikema and Frank Van Laecke with music by Dirk Brossé , featured Tom Van Landuyt as Tintin . The musical was adapted by Didier Van Cauwelaert into French and premiered a year later in Charleroi as Tintin ? Le Temple du Soleil . From there , the production was scheduled for Paris in 2003 but was cancelled . It returned for a brief run in Antwerp on 18 October 2007 .