

## = The Red Sea Sharks =

The Red Sea Sharks ( French : *Coke en stock* ) is the nineteenth volume of The Adventures of Tintin , the comics series by Belgian cartoonist Hergé . The story was initially serialised weekly in Belgium 's Tintin magazine from October 1956 to January 1958 before being published in a collected volume by Casterman in 1958 . The narrative follows the young reporter Tintin , his dog Snowy , and his friend Captain Haddock as they travel to the ( fictional ) Middle Eastern kingdom of Khemed with the intention of aiding the Emir Ben Khalish Ezab in regaining control after a coup d'état by his enemies , who are financed by slave traders .

Following on from the previous volume in the series , The Calculus Affair , The Red Sea Sharks was created with the aid of Hergé 's team of artists at Studios Hergé . Influenced by Honoré de Balzac 's The Human Comedy , Hergé used the story as a vehicle in which to reintroduce a wide range of characters who had first appeared in earlier installments of the series . The story dealt with the ongoing trade in enslaved Africans across the Arab world , however in the 1960s the story would generate controversy as Hergé was repeatedly accused of having portrayed the Africans in a racist manner . He was upset by these claims , and made alterations to the depiction of the Africans in later reprints . Hergé continued The Adventures of Tintin with Tintin in Tibet , and the series as a whole became a defining part of the Franco @-@ Belgian comics tradition . The Red Sea Sharks was critically well @-@ received , with various commentators describing it as one of the best Tintin adventures . The story was adapted for the 1991 animated series The Adventures of Tintin by Ellipse and Nelvana .

## = = Synopsis = =

In Brussels , Tintin and Captain Haddock bump into an old acquaintance , General Alcazar . Returning to Marlinspike Hall , they find that another acquaintance , the Emir of Khemed , Mohammed Ben Kalish Ezab , has been overthrown by his nemesis Sheikh Bab El Ehr , and that the Emir has accordingly sent his son , the disobedient Abdullah , to stay at Marlinspike for his own protection . The police detectives Thomson and Thompson visit , informing Tintin that Alcazar is seeking to purchase military aircraft from J. M. Dawson .

Investigating further , Tintin discovers that Dawson has also sold military aircraft to Bab El Ehr . Realising that the only way to be rid of Abdullah is to restore the Emir 's control of Khemed , Tintin , Haddock , and their dog Snowy travel to the Middle Eastern country . However the trio narrowly survive a bomb planted aboard the plane to kill them , and are able to slip into the city of Wadesdah unobserved . There they meet an old friend , the Portuguese merchant Oliveira da Figueira , who helps them to escape the city and ride on horseback to the Emir 's hideout . During the journey armoured cars and fighter planes are ordered to intercept them by " Mull Pasha " , who is actually Tintin 's old antagonist , Dr. Müller . The pursuit ends when a mix @-@ up in Muller 's order causes the fighter planes to destroy the armoured cars .

The Emir welcomes Tintin and Haddock , revealing that there is an ongoing slave trade through Khemed that is operated by the international businessman the Marquis di Gorgonzola , who falsely offers transport to African Muslims on the pilgrimage to Mecca and then sells them into slavery . Tintin , Haddock and Snowy leave for the Red Sea coast and board a sambuk for Mecca ; they are attacked by fighter planes before Tintin shoots one down and rescues its mercenary Estonian pilot , Piotr Skut . The four are picked up by di Gorgonzola 's yacht , the Scheherazade , but are soon offloaded onto the SS Ramona , a tramp steamer . Di Gorgonzola turns out to be another of Tintin 's old adversaries , Roberto Rastapopoulos . The Ramona is one of Rastapopoulos ' slave trading ships , and when a fire breaks out aboard it during the night , the ship 's commander Allan and his crew flee , leaving Tintin , Haddock , Snowy and Skut aboard along with a consignment of African slaves .

With Haddock taking on the ship 's captaincy , they are successfully able to put out the fire . However , Rastapopoulos sends a U @-@ Boat to destroy the Ramona , with the ship taking evasive manoeuvres to survive , ultimately being rescued by the cruiser USS Los Angeles . The Los

Angeles chases down the Scheherazade and attempts to capture di Gorgonzola , but he fakes his own death and escapes via a mini @-@ submarine . Tintin , Haddock and Snowy return to Belgium and learn that the Emir has recaptured Khemed and that Abdullah can return home . Their relaxation is cut short by Jolyon Wagg , who has arranged to use Marlinspike for an auto rally .

= = History = =

= = Background and publication = = =

Hergé was inspired to develop the plot for The Red Sea Sharks after reading a magazine article detailing the continued existence of the slave trade within the Arab world , in which it was claimed that African pilgrims headed to Mecca were being enslaved during the journey . Hergé included a reference to this slave trade in the story 's original French title , *Coke en Stock* ( " Coke on Board " ) , which referred to the slave smuggler 's use of " coke " as a codeword for the enslaved people .

Prior to writing the story , Hergé had read *Balzac et son monde* ( " Balzac and His World " ) , a 1955 book written by his friend Félicien Marceau . Intrigued by the work of Honoré de Balzac , Hergé was inspired by the way in which Balzac had introduced an array of characters from his earlier work into *The Human Comedy* , and he subsequently adopted this trait for *The Red Sea Sharks* , in which a wide range of characters from *The Adventures of Tintin* make a reappearance . Hergé also introduced a new character , the Estonian pilot Piotr Skut , who would later reappear in *Flight 714* .

To produce accurate illustrations for the *Ramona* , Hergé and his assistant Bob de Moor traveled aboard a Swedish cargo vessel , the *MS Reine Astrid* , from Antwerp to Gothenburg and back , during which they took photographs and drew sketches . Hergé had also collected press clippings depicting the *Christina* , a motor yacht owned by the Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis , and used them as the basis for his depiction of Rastapopoulos ' ship , the *Sheherezade* . The aircraft , cars , and machinery that appear in the story were drawn by Roger Leloup , one of the members of the *Studios Hergé* . In one scene in the latter part of the story , Hergé included a frogman , whose depiction was drawn from a press clipping of Lionel Crabb . His depiction of the Emir 's hideaway palace cut from the rock was based on the *Al Khazneh* in Petra , Jordan , which he had seen in an issue of *National Geographic* .

Hergé 's growing interest in art was reflected in the story , as he included a copy of Alfred Sisley 's *Le Canal du Loing* at Marlinspike Hall . He also included paintings by Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró aboard Rastapopolous ' *Scheherazade* . Muller 's pseudonym in the story , Mull Pasha , was based upon the British soldier Glubb Pasha . In the final scene , Hergé included cameos of both himself and his friend and colleague Edgar P. Jacobs .

The story began serialisation in Belgium 's *Tintin* magazine in October 1956 , before being serialised in the French edition of the magazine from December 1956 . It was then published in book form by Casterman in 1958 . Upon the story 's British publication in 1960 , *Coke en Stock* was renamed *The Red Sea Sharks* .

= = Racism and alterations = = =

Hergé had been accused of exhibiting a racist attitude toward Africans in an earlier story , *Tintin in the Congo* , and potentially hoped to exonerate himself from such criticism by depicting Tintin and Haddock freeing African slaves in *The Red Sea Sharks* . In preparing the latter story he had consulted a colleague who worked for an African @-@ themed magazine , *L'Afrique et le Monde* ( " Africa and the World " ) ; they translated some of the passages that Hergé wished to include in the story into Yoruba . However , in January 1962 an article in the magazine *Jeune Afrique* criticised Hergé for a racist depiction of Africans in the story , an accusation that would be echoed in other publications . These claims focused on the African characters ' simplistic use of pidgin language , which was similar to the speech patterns used in *Tintin in the Congo* .

African : " You speak well , Effendi . Wicked Arab , very wicked . Poor black men not want to be

slaves . Poor black men want to go to Mecca . "

Haddock : " Naturally , I realise that . But I repeat if you go there , you 'll be sold as slaves . Is that what you want ? "

African : " We not slaves , Effendi . We good Muslims . We want to go to Mecca . "

Hergé biographer Benoît Peeters expressed the view that " for the most part these attacks were extremely unfair " . Hergé was emotionally affected by the accusations , and made changes to the book for its 1967 reprint accordingly ; here he changed the Africans ' speech patterns , giving them improved grammar . However , he left Haddock speaking pidgin in response to the Africans .

For this version he also made changes to the Emir 's letter to Tintin ; the former version had been formal in its prose , stating " Most esteemed and well @-@ beloved friend , I entrust to you my son Abdullah , to improve his English . Here the situation is serious . Should any misfortune befall me I count on you , my friend , to care for Abdullah " . In Hergé 's revised edition , he adopts a more florid prose style : " This is to tell you , oh highly esteemed friend , that I entrust to you Abdullah , my adored son . Because here the situation is serious . Should misfortune descend on me like the hawk on an innocent gazelle ( for the world is made of life and death ) I am sure that Abdullah will find you with warmth and affection , refuge and peace . And in doing this you will be performing a fragrant act before Allah . "

He also expressed regret that he depicted the death of a shark in the story , later stating that " I still believed that sharks were big evil beasts " when writing The Red Sea Sharks .

= = Critical analysis = =

Commenting on the inclusion of a wide range of characters from The Adventures of Tintin , Harry Thompson referred to the story as " a Tintin family reunion " , commenting that it was " a story unusually full of the type of people Captain Haddock liked to avoid " . Michael Farr believed that in reviving so many older characters , Hergé had given The Red Sea Sharks " a marked retrospective quality " . Jean @-@ Marc Lofficier and Randy Lofficier thought that the story was too crowded , leaving little room for series regulars Professor Calculus or Thomson and Thompson , and leaving the introduced figure of Skut as " a nice supporting character , but nothing more " . The Lofficiers stated that " Hergé was doing some house @-@ cleaning of his past works and characters before embarking on something more serious and with more personal resonance " , Tintin in Tibet .

Hergé biographer Benoît Peeters described The Red Sea Sharks as a " complex , ambiguous , even labyrinthine " story which was " undoubtedly the book in which Hergé ventured furthest into the creation of his own universe . " He thought that " Hergé enters a new phase " with The Red Sea Sharks , as its author " seems to know his family of characters better and better , and he enjoys playing with them and his readers . " Peeters noted that the book was " in some respects a continuation " of Land of Black Gold , an assessment shared by Thompson , the Lofficiers , and Farr , all of whom described it as a partial sequel to the earlier book . Thompson added that The Red Sea Sharks " atoned for the relative failure " of Land of Black Gold , believing that although it had a " rather hasty finish " , it was " a first @-@ rate thriller " . The Lofficiers awarded it four out of five , stating that it was " very effective as a modern political thriller and far more believable than The Calculus Affair " . They also opined that it provided an effective political commentary on the West 's relationship with the Arab world . In their analysis , Tintin and Haddock seek to aid the Emir not because he is a good leader , but for their own selfish purposes ( to get Abdullah out of Marlinspike ) , just as Western governments and corporations build alliances with Arab leaders guilty of human rights abuses in order to benefit their own interests .

Thompson felt that the inclusion of slavery as a key theme led to this book being " one of Hergé 's more adult @-@ oriented adventures " . Nevertheless , Farr noted that the story contained " a good measure of humour " to balance out these darker elements . Farr drew comparisons with Anthony Powell 's A Dance to the Music of Time , a series of novels that was contemporary to The Red Sea Sharks and which was similarly inspired by Balzac 's The Human Comedy . Hergé biographer Pierre Assouline believed that The Red Sea Sharks represented " the culmination of his golden age " , which had begun with The Blue Lotus . He also commented that " it almost seemed as if Hergé had

regained the pace and rhythm of his most creative period " with this story .

In his psychoanalytical study of *The Adventures of Tintin* , the literary critic Jean @-@ Marie Apostolidès expressed the view that *The Red Sea Sharks* reflected a world in which traditional values have been degraded and everything ? including human life ? has become a commodity . He added that Rastapopoulos becomes " the embodiment of the global market " in this story , tying together all of the other characters and therefore replacing Tintin as the figure " at the centre of the universe " . Apostolidès opined that *The Red Sea Sharks* amplifies " the theme of the general equivalence of everything " that is present in the series , serving as " a kind of retrospective " by introducing old characters and establishing new relationships between them . He believed that the theme of the mirage pervaded the story , appearing repeatedly in such forms as Abdullah 's cuckoo clock which concealed a water squirter and the pseudonyms employed by the various characters throughout the narrative . The literary critic Tom McCarthy stated that *The Red Sea Sharks* exhibited a number of themes that recurred throughout *The Adventures of Tintin* . He believed that a scene in which one of Bab El Ehr 's men spies on the Emir in his mountain hideaway reflected a wider theme of eavesdropping that features throughout the series . McCarthy also highlighted Tintin 's actions in returning Abdullah to Khemed , expressing the view that it is part of a wider running theme throughout the series in which the hero takes an abandoned children to their home ; other instances included Tintin 's discovery of an adoptive family for the orphan Chang Chong @-@ Chen in *The Blue Lotus* and the delivery of the lost gypsy child Miarka to her family in *The Castafiore Emerald* .

= = Adaptations = =

In 1991 , a collaboration between the French studio Ellipse and the Canadian animation company Nelvana adapted 21 of the stories ? among them *The Red Sea Sharks* ? into a series of episodes , each 42 minutes long . Directed by Stéphane Bernasconi , the series has been praised for being " generally faithful " , with compositions having been actually directly taken from the panels in the original comic book .