

= Tintin and the Picaros =

Tintin and the Picaros ( French : Tintin et les Picaros ) is the twenty @-@ third volume of The Adventures of Tintin , the comics series by Belgian cartoonist Hergé . The final instalment in the series to be completed by Hergé , in Belgium it was serialized in Tintin magazine from September 1975 to January 1976 before being published in a collected volume by Casterman in 1976 . The narrative follows the young reporter Tintin , his dog Snowy and his friends Captain Haddock and Professor Calculus as they travel to the ( fictional ) South American nation of San Theodoros to rescue their friend Bianca Castafiore , who has been imprisoned by the government of General Tapioca . Once there , they become involved in the anti @-@ government revolutionary activities of Tintin 's old friend General Alcazar .

Hergé began work on Tintin and the Picaros eight years after completing the previous volume in the series , Flight 714 , creating it with the aid of his team of artists at Studios Hergé . The setting and plot was inspired by Hergé 's interest in Latin American revolutionaries , particularly those active in the Cuban Revolution . The book reflected changes to the appearance and behaviour of several key characters in the series ; Tintin himself for instance no longer wears his trademark plus fours , instead wearing bell @-@ bottoms . The volume was published to a poor reception and has continued to receive negative reviews from later commentators on Hergé 's work . Hergé continued The Adventures of Tintin with Tintin and Alph @-@ Art , a story that he never completed , and the series as a whole became a defining part of the Franco @-@ Belgian comics tradition . The story was adapted for an episode of the 1991 animated series The Adventures of Tintin by Ellipse and Nelvana .

= = Synopsis = =

Tintin and his dog Snowy visit their friends Captain Haddock and Professor Calculus at Marlinspike Hall . There , they learn that Bianca Castafiore , her maid Irma , pianist Igor Wagner and the detectives Thomson and Thompson have been imprisoned in San Theodoros for allegedly attempting to overthrow the military government of General Tapioca . Tapioca 's government have further alleged that the plot was masterminded by Tintin , Haddock , and Calculus themselves . Tapioca invites the trio to visit San Theodoros , promising them safe passage , but Tintin deems it to be a trap , leaving Haddock and Calculus to go alone . Once there , the Captain and Professor are taken to a rural villa , where they are closely monitored by the security services .

Tintin joins his friends a few days later , where he points out to Haddock and Calculus that their villa is bugged . He recognises one of the staff as Pablo , a man who had saved his life in The Broken Ear . From Pablo , Tintin learns that the entire scenario is a plot organised by Colonel Sponsz , a figure in the Bordurian military who is assisting Tapioca 's government in order to gain revenge against Tintin for the events of The Calculus Affair .

With Pablo 's assistance , Tintin , Snowy , Haddock , and Calculus escape from their guards and seek refuge with General Alcazar and his small band of anti @-@ Tapioca guerrillas , the Picaros , who are hiding in the San Theodoran jungle . After realising that Pablo is a double agent working for Tapioca , they escape an attempt on their lives and then shelter for a time with the Arumbaya , an indigenous community who live within the forest . Here , Tintin is reunited with his old acquaintance , the explorer Ridgewell , who is living with the Arumbaya . Leaving the Arumbaya settlement , they eventually arrive at the Picaros ' encampment , where they meet Alcazar 's wife , Peggy .

Alcazar realises that the Picaros will not be able to launch a successful coup against Tapioca while they remain drunkards ( owing to frequent parachute drops of whisky from Tapioca 's forces ) , and to combat this problem Calculus provides them with tablets which render the taste of alcohol disgusting ( and which he has been secretly testing on Haddock , Tintin , Ridgewell and the Arumbayas in the course of the story ) . Soon afterward , Jolyon Wagg and his troupe of carnival performers , the " Jolly Follies " , arrive at the camp , having lost their way to Tapiocapolis where they mean to take part in the carnival . At Tintin 's suggestion , the Picaros disguise themselves in the Follies ' costumes and enter Tapiocapolis during the carnival . There , they storm the

presidential palace and seize control ; Alcazar becomes president , with Tapioca and Sponsz being banished from the country and sent back to Borduria . Thomson and Thompson are rescued from a firing squad while Castafiore and her assistants are released from prison .

In the final panel of the book , as Tintin , Haddock and Calculus 's flight back home departs from the newly named Alcazaropolis , it flies over a slum that was seen earlier when they flew into the country . In a stroke of political commentary , the upheaval of the government has caused virtually no change to the slum or the lives of its inhabitants .

= = History = =

= = Background = =

Hergé began Tintin and the Picaros eight years after completing his previous Adventure of Tintin , Flight 714 . It would prove to be the only book that he completed during the final fifteen years of his life . He decided to develop the story around a group of Latin American revolutionaries , having had this idea since the early 1960s , prior to embarking on The Castafiore Emerald . In particular , he had been inspired by the activities of Fidel Castro 's 26th of July Movement when they were launching a guerrilla war from the Sierra Maestra during the Cuban Revolution against President Fulgencio Batista . Specifically , Hergé was interested in Castro 's statement that he would not cut his beard until the revolution had succeeded . Adopting this idea of the revolutionaries ' facial hair , he initially planned to refer to Alcazar 's group as the Bigotudos , a reference to the Spanish word *bigotudos* , meaning " moustached " . As such , the story 's initial working title was Tintin et los Bigotudos , before Hergé later settled on Tintin et les Picaros .

Hergé 's depiction of a band of Latin American revolutionaries was also influenced by the French leftist activist Régis Debray 's accounts of his time spent fighting in the Bolivian Andes alongside the Argentine Marxist ? Leninist revolutionary Che Guevara . Hergé 's depiction of Bordurian support for Tapioca 's government was a reference to the Soviet Union 's support for various Latin American regimes , most notably that of Castro 's Cuba , with San Theodoros being depicted as having been governed under the ideological system of Borduria 's political leader , Kurvi @-@ Tasch . Similarly , Hergé included a reference to Alcazar being backed by the International Banana Company in order to reflect the influence of Western multinational corporations in Latin America .

Hergé 's depiction of the city of Tapiocapolis was visually based on the city of Belo Horizonte in Brazil . His depiction of a public sculpture in the city was inspired by the work of sculptor Marcel Arnould , while the paintings that he designed for the Tapiocapolis hotel in which Tintin and Haddock stay are based on the work of Serge Poliakoff .

Hergé incorporated many characters from previous Adventures into Tintin and the Picaros ; these include Pablo , Ridgewell , and the Arumbaya tribe from The Broken Ear , as well as Colonel Sponsz from The Calculus Affair . The character of General Tapioca , who had been mentioned in previous Adventures but never depicted , was also introduced . Hergé also introduced a new character , Peggy Alcazar , whom he had based upon the American secretary to a Ku Klux Klan spokesman whom Hergé observed in a television documentary . In his preparatory notes for the story , Hergé had considered introducing Peggy as the daughter of arms dealer Basil Bazaroff ? the satirical depiction of the old times real @-@ life arms dealer Basil Zaharoff , who had appeared in The Broken Ear . He also introduced the Jolly Follies into the story , a group who were based on three separate touring party groups that Hergé had encountered . He had initially considered a number of alternative names for the troupe , including the Turlupins , Turlurans , and Boutentrins .

For this Adventure , Hergé decided to update his depiction of Tintin 's clothes , having been influenced in doing so by the depiction of the character in the 1969 animated film Tintin and the Temple of the Sun . As such , in Tintin in the Picaros , the young reporter is depicted wearing a motorcycle helmet emblazoned with a CND symbol , while he also wears new flared brown trousers rather than the plus @-@ fours that he had worn in previous instalments . Later commenting on the inclusion of the CND peace symbol , Hergé stated that for Tintin , " That 's normal . Tintin is a

pacifist , he was always anti @-@ war . " Hergé also changed the behaviour of several characters within the story , for instance by depicting Tintin practising yoga and Nestor the butler both eavesdropping and drinking Haddock 's whisky . Another new development that Hergé added to the story was through revealing that Haddock 's first name is Archibald for the first time .

Hergé 's depiction of the San Theodoran carnival was drawn largely from images of the Nice Carnival . Among the revelers , he included those dressed in the costumes of various different cartoon and film characters , such as Mickey Mouse , Donald Duck , Asterix , Snoopy , Groucho Marx , and Zorro . Hergé also included a band known as the Coconuts into the carnival scene ; these were not developed by Hergé himself but were rather the creations of his friend and colleague Bob de Moor , who had devised them for his own comic series , Barelli . The street that they were marching down , Calle 22 de Mayo , was named after Hergé 's own birthday , 22 May .

= = = Publication = = =

Tintin et les Picaros began serialisation in both Belgium and France in Tintin @-@ l 'Hebdomiste magazine in September 1975 . It was then published in a collected volume by Casterman in 1976 . For this publication , a page was removed from the story so that it would fit the standard 62 @-@ page book format . The page in question was located between pages 22 and 23 of the published book , and featured Sponz attempting to smash a glass , but accidentally breaking a statue of Bordurian political leader Kurvi @-@ Tasch instead . A launch party was held at the Hilton Hotel in Brussels .

Upon publication , it proved a commercial success with one and a half million copies soon sold . It was nevertheless critically panned at the time . Various contemporary critics condemned what they deemed to be the political apathy of the story ; as they pointed out , Hergé 's depiction of regime change in San Theodores does not bring about any improvement for the nation 's populace , with the critics from Belgium 's Hebdo 76 and France 's Révolution thereby characterising it as a reactionary work . On this front , Tintin in the Picaros was defended by the French philosopher Michel Serres , who stated that " The criticism that has been leveled at Picaros is astonishing . There is no talk of revolution ; the people are in the favelas , and they stay there . It is only a government overthrow . A general , aided by several assassins , takes the place of a general protected by his own bodyguards . This is why it is only repetition ; it is just a movement reduced to this . And that is the chloroform ; it is what we see everywhere . You can give as many modern examples of the Alcazar @-@ Tapioca rivalry , or of double identities , as you want . " In June 1977 , Hergé travelled to Britain for Methuen 's launch of the story 's English translation , where he spent two weeks giving interviews and attending book signings .

= = Critical analysis = =

Harry Thompson felt that Hergé 's use of various characters from earlier stories lent Tintin and the Picaros " the air of a finale " . Hergé biographer Benoît Peeters felt that in this story , the characters were " more passive than in the earlier adventures , submitting to events more than setting them off " , with this being particularly evident for the character of Tintin . Michael Farr stated that " Tintin has changed " , as is evidenced by the change in his clothing , however he felt that " such image modernising only succeeds in dating the adventure " , adding that " to alter Tintin 's appearance at the end of his career was not only superfluous but a mistake " . Jean @-@ Marc Lofficier and Randy Lofficier stated that in this story , Alcazar was " a deflated version of what he used to be " , noting that by the end of the story he had become " a prisoner in his own palace . A sad , yet somehow appropriate , ending . " Farr suggested that the changes to the characters represented " an element of dismantling of the characters and their traits " , something that he believed had also been present in the previous two adventures , Flight 714 and The Castafiore Emerald . In his psychoanalytical study of The Adventures of Tintin , the literary critic Jean @-@ Marie Apostolidès expressed the view that , as with The Red Sea Sharks , Tintin and the Picaros served as " a kind of retrospective " due to the return of various characters . He also suggested that the carnival revelers in San

Theodores evoked the figures from the previous stories : " Scots , Africans , Chinese , Indians , cowboys , bullfighters , and , of course , the inevitable parrot " . The Lofficiers saw the adventure as a partial sequel to The Broken Ear , which was also set in San Theodoros and which contained many of the same characters .

Thompson considered Tintin and the Picaros to be " Hergé 's most overtly political book for many years " but felt that , unlike Hergé 's earlier political works , " no campaigning element " is present . Peeters agreed , noting that Tintin in the Picaros is " a far cry from the denunciation of a political system found in Tintin in the Land of the Soviets , and also from the almost militantly anti @-@ Japanese tone of The Blue Lotus . " He thought that in this story , " a sense of disillusionment has taken over " , for it is " quite clear that [ Alcazar 's seizure of power ] is no real revolution but a palace coup " . Farr noted that this story showed that " the idealist of 1930s is by 1970s a realist " , in that while " totalitarianism ... and the manipulation of the multinational concerns ... are still condemned ... Tintin accepts he can do little to change them " .

The Lofficiers were ultimately highly critical of Tintin and the Picaros , awarding it two out of five , and describing it as " just sad " . Specifically , they felt that the " undefinable magic of the Hergé line " was " sometimes missing " from the story , believing that this had been caused by too much of the work having been turned over to his assistants in the Studios Hergé . Further , they felt that the " characters seem tired : Tintin is totally reactive ? even on the book cover , it is Haddock who takes the lead . " Thompson echoed similar views , believing that " life has not been breathed into the characters as normal " and that there was " something indefinable absent " from the drawings , " enjoyment , perhaps " . He added that while it contained " many fine vignettes " , " over all it is a lacklustre story , missing the sparkle of a genuine Tintin adventure " . Peeters thought that " the comedy here seems mechanical " and " neither the characters , nor the plot , nor the drawings ring true " .

The literary critic Tom McCarthy believed that Tintin and the Picaros reflected a number of themes found throughout The Adventures of Tintin . For instance , he believed that the theme of eavesdropping was exhibited in the scene in which Nestor the butler listens in on Tintin and Haddock 's argument . He also expressed the view that Tintin , Haddock , and Calculus ' imprisonment in their Los Dopicos hotel reflected the " uneasy host @-@ guest relationship " theme .

McCarthy believed that the inclusion of the CND symbol on Tintin 's motorcycle helmet at the start of the story was a sign that Hergé 's left @-@ wing tendency had won out over the right @-@ wing perspectives which dominated his early work . He also placed emphasis on the fact that no executions were held during Alcazar 's revolution , adding that " its blood ... will fail it : it will be anaemic " , thus being a reference to Hergé 's anaemia . Further , he suggested that the loss of the ability to drink alcohol served as a symbolic castration .

Apostolidès expressed the view that many of the characters in Tintin and the Picaros could be divided into pairs . He considered Calculus and Alcazar to be one such pair , noting that they are " both masters of power and control , the former in science and the latter in politics " . He also placed Castafiore and Peggy together as a pair , noting that they each embody " love , both maternal and romantic " . Haddock and Wagg were also paired together , both being " driven to succeed , but the former is happy with playing out his success in private lie , whereas the latter tries to aggrandize himself everywhere " . Finally , he paired together Ridgewell and Tintin , noting that while in The Broken Ear they had a father @-@ son style relationship , at this point they have become equals .

= = Adaptations = =

In 1991 , a collaboration between the French studio Ellipse and the Canadian animation company Nelvana adapted 21 of the stories into a series of episodes , each 42 minutes long . Tintin and the Picaros was one of the stories included in the television series . 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 .