

THE SARCOPHAGI OF THE SIXTH CONTINENT

PART 2

BATTLE OF THE SPIRITS

Script: Yves Sente

Drawing: André Juillard

Colour work: Madeleine DeMille



Based on the characters of
EDGAR P. JACOBS

The authors wish to thank Mrs Jacqueline Moens de Fernig, Miss Marie-Laure Rippel, Mr Daniel Van Kerckhove, Grégoire Costa, Etienne Costa, Daniel Ceppi, Nicolas Vadot and Patrick Jusseume for their invaluable help in the search for documentation.

SUMMARY OF PART 1

Early 1958. To the future pleasure of millions of visitors, Brussels is preparing to receive delegations from the most prestigious countries in the world. They are coming to present their cultures, their most advanced scientific discoveries and their most audacious social projects—as part of a sumptuous Universal Exposition.

It's this international event that a third-world terrorist movement—led by a mysterious Indian emperor risen from the dead after 2,000 years—has chosen as the theatre for his first actions aimed at destabilising Western countries.

Professor Philip Mortimer has been chosen by his nation to head the “British Industry” pavilion, within which Great Britain is proud to present its scientific knowledge and technological accomplishments.

Throughout the entire Exposition, the pavilion will be linked to the Halley scientific base in Antarctica. That way, visitors to the British pavilion in Brussels can discover in real time the heartbeat of the sixth continent.

What Mortimer doesn't know is that, from their secret base in Gondwana, neighbour to Halley, the terrorists are going to use the Halley-Brussels radio wave link established by the British to invade and attempt to destroy the Universal Exposition, using a deadly new type of weapon.

Mortimer is also unaware that the Machiavellian Indian emperor poised to destroy the Brussels Exposition is none other than Ashoka. Ashoka the sorcerer, whom a handful of Indian fanatics believe to be immortal, and who had accused a teenaged Philip Mortimer of killing his daughter many years ago. Ashoka the Eternal, who had sworn to him that he would one day take revenge on him...

As the tragic events that perturb the preparations for the Universal Exposition threaten to rekindle the Cold War, Blake, Mortimer and their old friend Nasir head to Antarctica to try to derail the terrifying machination...



Original title: Les sarcophages du 6ème continent tome 2
Original edition: © Editions Blake & Mortimer / Studio Jacobs (Dargaud – Lombard S.A.) 2004
by André Juillard & Yves Sente - www.dargaud.com - All rights reserved

English translation: © 2011 Cinebook Ltd

Translator: Jerome Saincantin

Lettering and text layout: Imadjinn

Printed in Spain by Just Colour Graphic

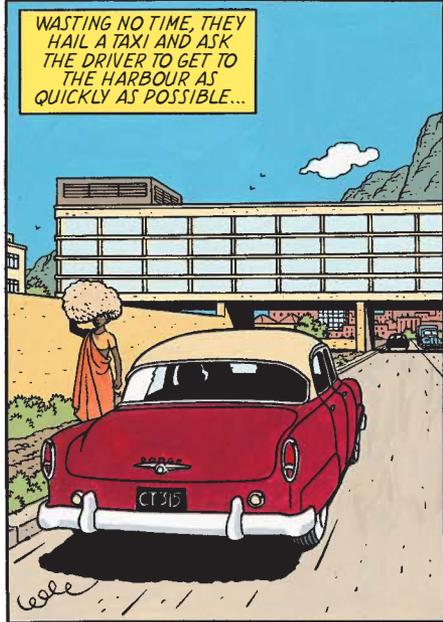
This edition first published in Great Britain in 2011 by
Cinebook Ltd - 56 Beech Avenue - Canterbury, Kent - CT4 7TA
www.cinebook.com

A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library
ISBN 978-1-84918-077-1

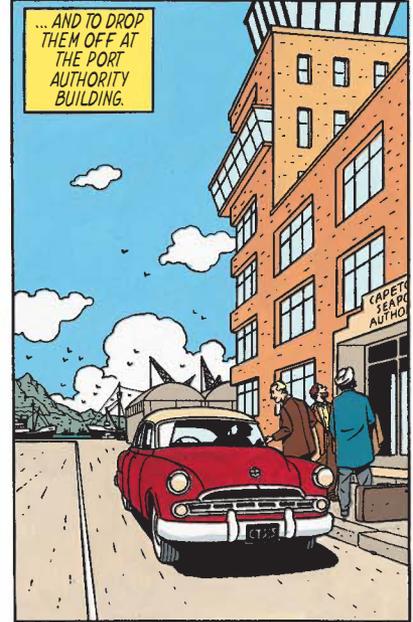
AFTER A LONG BUT UNEVENTFUL FLIGHT, THE SABENA'S DC6 HAS DROPPED OFF CAPTAIN BLAKE, PROFESSOR MORTIMER AND THEIR OLD COMPANION NASIR ON THE TARMAC AT CAPE TOWN AIRPORT.



WASTING NO TIME, THEY HAIL A TAXI AND ASK THE DRIVER TO GET TO THE HARBOUR AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE...



... AND TO DROP THEM OFF AT THE PORT AUTHORITY BUILDING.



A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE THREE MEN ARE SEEN BY A PORT OFFICIAL. THEY QUICKLY ASK WHERE THE SHIP IS MOORED THAT IS TO TRANSPORT PROFESSOR LABROUSSE AND HIS MYSTERIOUS ICE SUBMARINE TO ANTARCTICA.

Alas, gentlemen, the *Madeline* cast off over... over eight hours ago now.
Blast! Flying all this way to miss it by such a short time! How infuriating!



Isn't there another ship in harbour bound for the same destination?

Sorry, sir, but the next cargo ship to Antarctica will only call here in about 10 days.



If that is so, we will follow your kind suggestion. Don't hesitate to call us in case you hear of a new departure towards this destination. We're really very eager to get to Halley.

You can count on me, Mr Mortimer. But don't get your hopes up. Surprise departures for the South Pole are rather rare.



Well, it seems that all we can do now is be patient and start looking for a nice hotel...

I'd suggest the *Alexandra's Nest*. It is quite popular with European guests, I hear.



EVENING...

What would you say to a nightcap before we go get some rest, my friends?

Capital idea, old chap!



Captain! Do you see that man with the dark glasses over there, next to the man with the white hat?



He was already looking us over at the Harbour Master's. I'm certain he's still spying on us.

If they're spies, they're really not very discreet! They even seem to be coming towards us...



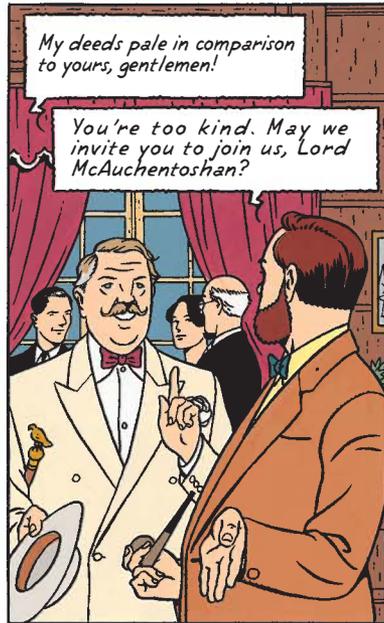
My dear Philip, it looks like we have visitors...



Professor Mortimer, Captain Blake, sir, allow me to introduce myself. I am Lord Archibald McAuchentoshan, and this is Captain Costa.

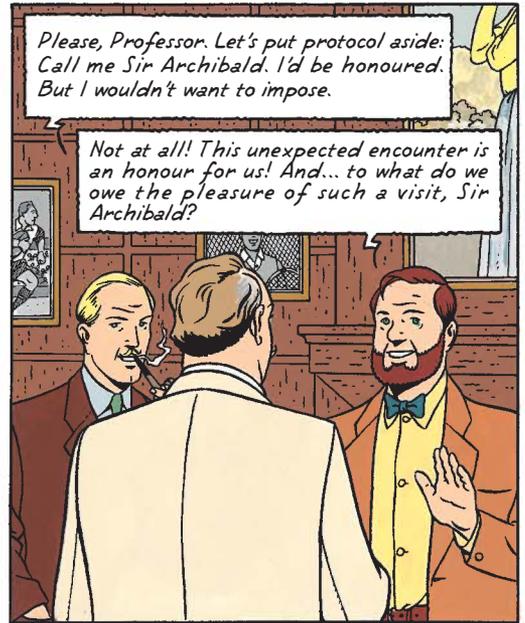
Lord McAuchentoshan?! The famous billionaire, protector of our planet's wildlife?...

... who's already made the front page many times for his spectacular actions!



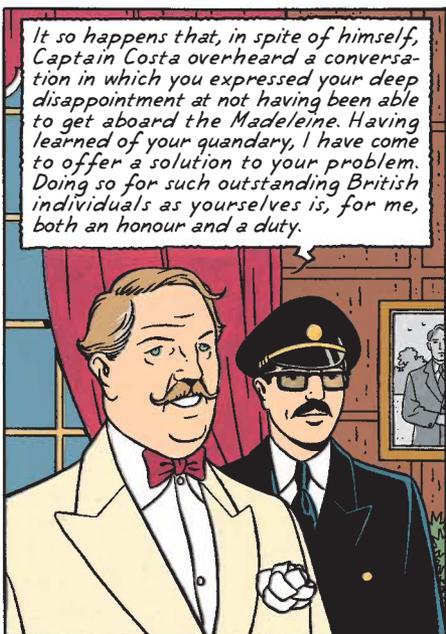
My deeds pale in comparison to yours, gentlemen!

You're too kind. May we invite you to join us, Lord McAuchentoshan?



Please, Professor. Let's put protocol aside: Call me Sir Archibald. I'd be honoured. But I wouldn't want to impose.

Not at all! This unexpected encounter is an honour for us! And... to what do we owe the pleasure of such a visit, Sir Archibald?



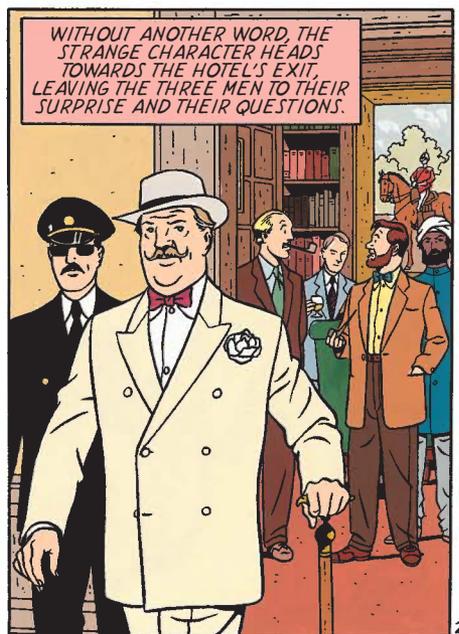
It so happens that, in spite of himself, Captain Costa overheard a conversation in which you expressed your deep disappointment at not having been able to get aboard the Madeleine. Having learned of your quandary, I have come to offer a solution to your problem. Doing so for such outstanding British individuals as yourselves is, for me, both an honour and a duty.



Well... This is a happy surprise. But...

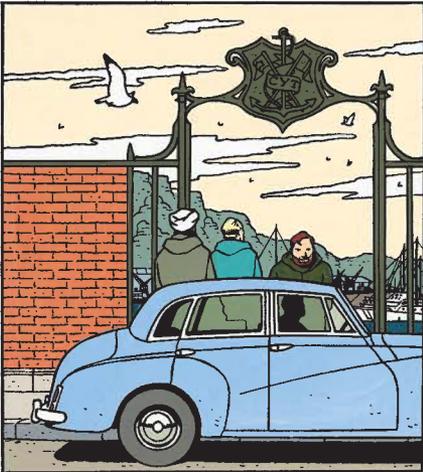


Well, then, I will brook no "buts!" Meet me tomorrow at nine at the Yacht Club, and bring your luggage, gentlemen. I wish you a good evening!



WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, THE STRANGE CHARACTER HEADS TOWARDS THE HOTEL'S EXIT, LEAVING THE THREE MEN TO THEIR SURPRISE AND THEIR QUESTIONS.

THE NEXT MORNING, A TAXI DROPS BLAKE, MORTIMER AND NASIR OFF IN FRONT OF THE YACHT CLUB'S ENTRANCE AT THE TIME GIVEN BY SIR ARCHIBALD.



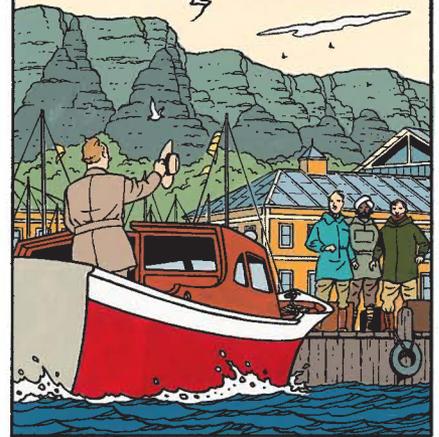
What?!... I don't see any ships suitable for ocean-going here!

Indeed! Could this strange billionaire have wanted to play a trick on us? I was once given the opportunity to read an MIS report on his eccentricities, and believe me, he...

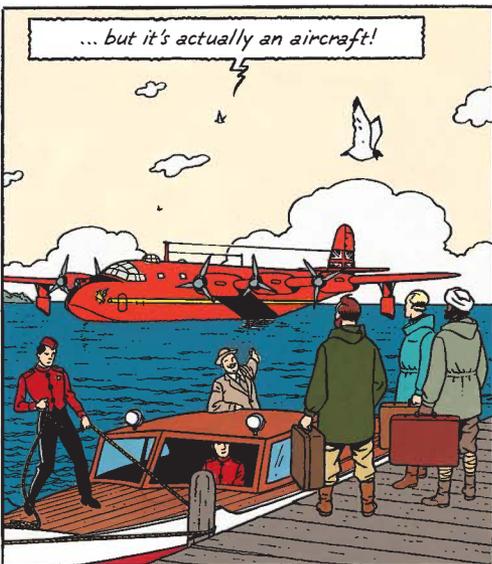
Good day to you, gentlemen!...



If you would be so kind as to climb aboard this launch, you shall see that I do, indeed, have a craft able to brave the open ocean...



... but it's actually an aircraft!

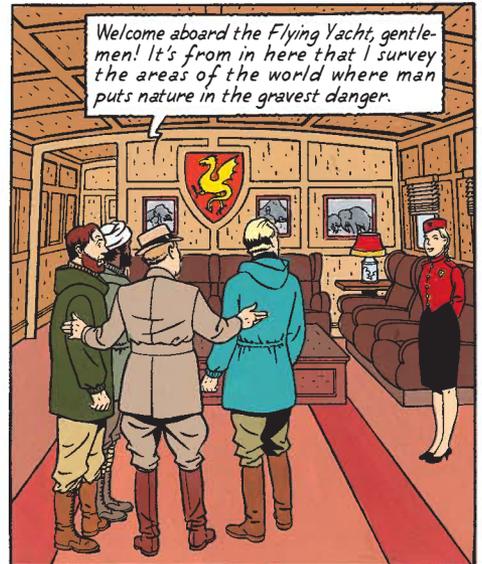


SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, SIR ARCHIBALD'S GUESTS ARE BOARDING THE IMPRESSIVE SEAPLANE.

It's a Blohm & Voss 1 "borrowed" from the Germans during a commando raid in Norway, towards the end of 1943.



Welcome aboard the Flying Yacht, gentlemen! It's from in here that I survey the areas of the world where man puts nature in the gravest danger.



It's also in here that I compose the reports that will be distributed as widely as possible amongst those who govern us. Lately, I have begun looking into the alarming problem of Antarctica's shores; they are det...

Pardon me, gentlemen...



... a radio emitter or beacon?

Oh... I think that might be I... I have a small, new type of emitter.* I must have turned it on in my pocket by mistake...

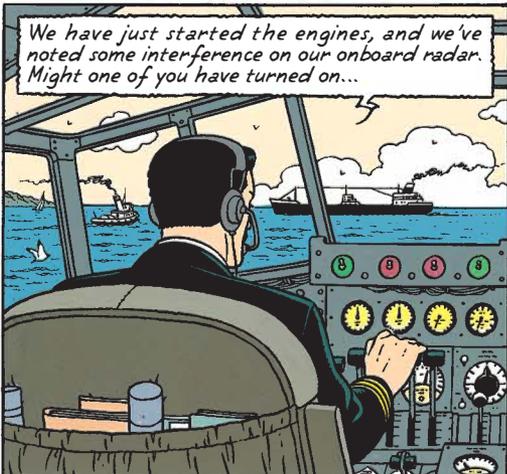


There, it's off.

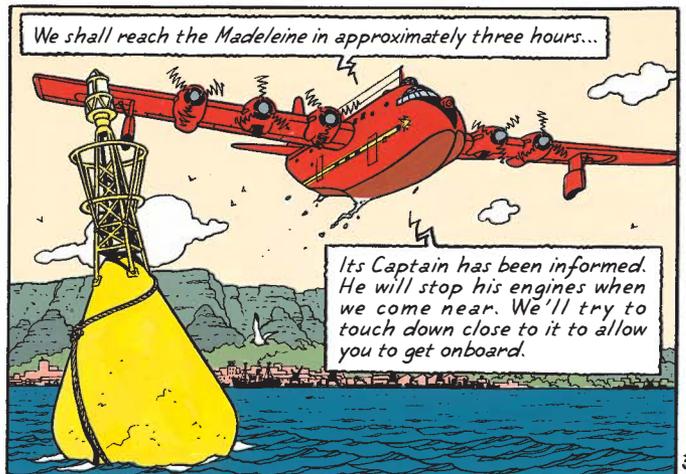
Good. With this problem solved, I invite you to take your seats for take-off.



We have just started the engines, and we've noted some interference on our onboard radar. Might one of you have turned on...

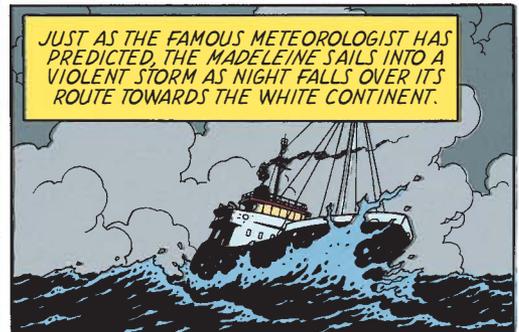
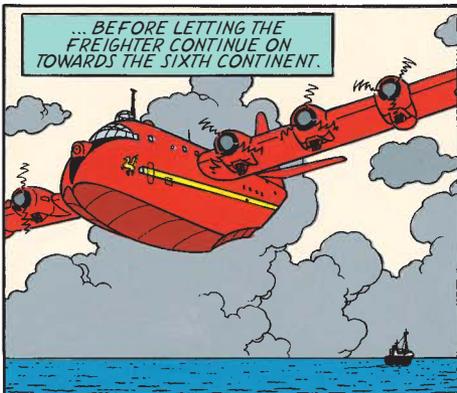
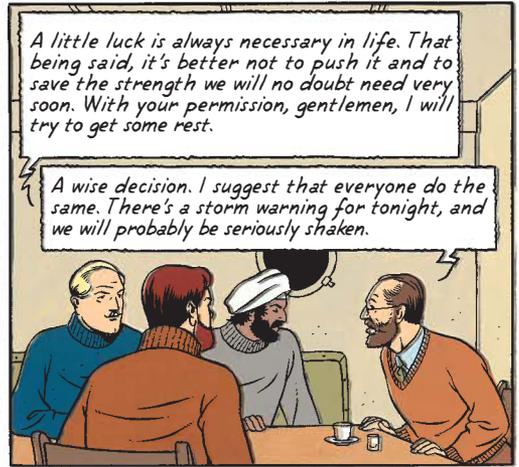
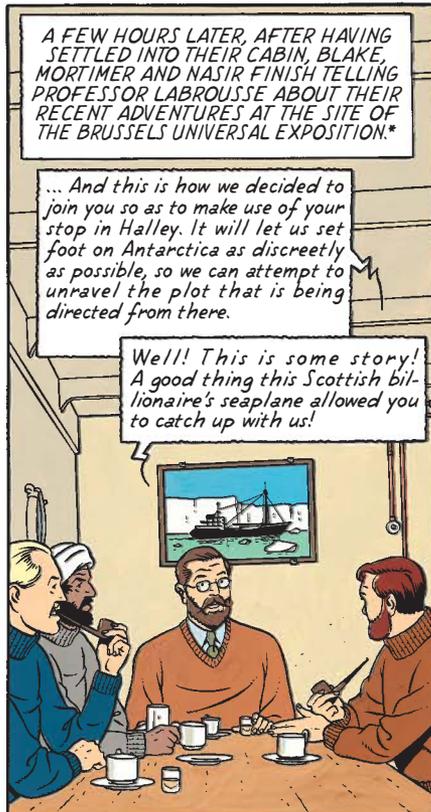
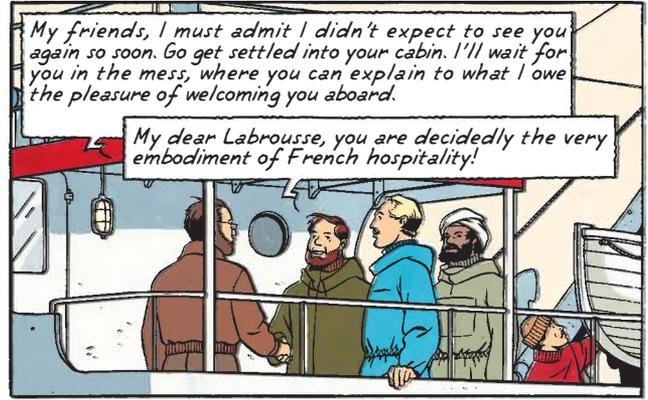
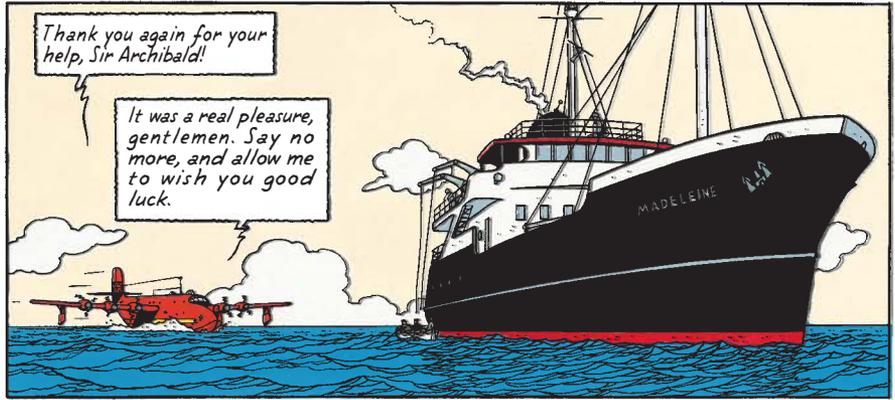
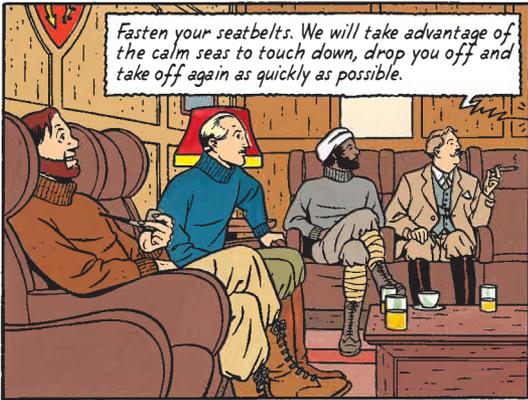
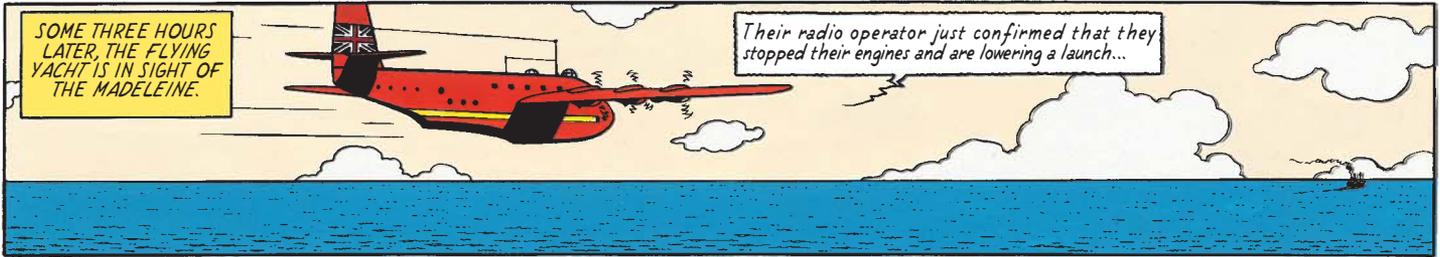


We shall reach the Madeleine in approximately three hours...

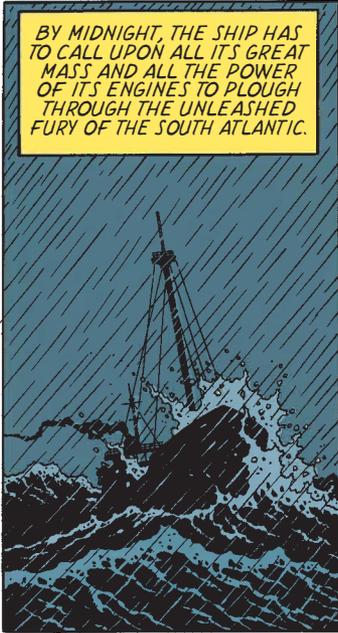


Its Captain has been informed. He will stop his engines when we come near. We'll try to touch down close to it to allow you to get onboard.

*SEE PART I OF THIS STORY.



*SEE PART I OF THIS STORY.



BY MIDNIGHT, THE SHIP HAS TO CALL UPON ALL ITS GREAT MASS AND ALL THE POWER OF ITS ENGINES TO PLOUGH THROUGH THE UNLEASHED FURY OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC.



It feels like it's getting worse...
If we're going to be awake, we might as well get dressed and see if we can be of some help.



TEN MINUTES LATER, BLAKE AND MORTIMER HAVE MADE THEIR WAY TO THE BRIDGE. AWESTRUCK, THEY DISCOVER THE TERRIFYING SPECTACLE OF THE OCEAN'S WRATH.



GOOD LORD!

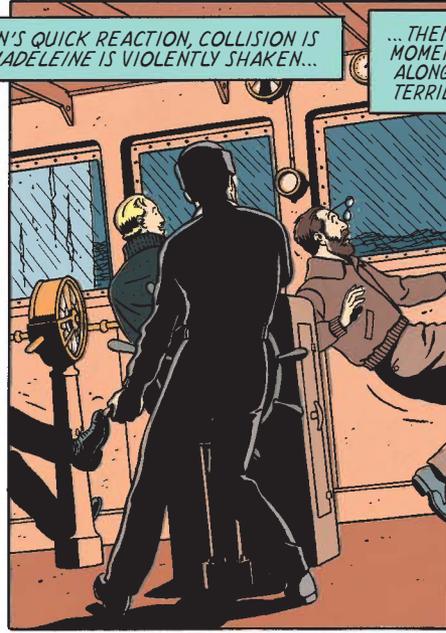


LOOMING SUDDENLY OUT OF A CURTAIN OF DENSE RAIN, A GIGANTIC MOUNTAIN OF ICE APPEARS ONLY A FEW HUNDRED YARDS AWAY FROM THE MADELEINE...

Good heavens! An iceberg! Hard to starboard!!!



DESPITE THE HELMSMAN'S QUICK REACTION, COLLISION IS INEVITABLE, AND THE MADELEINE IS VIOLENTLY SHAKEN...



... THEN, CARRIED FORWARD BY ITS MOMENTUM, IT GRAZES ITS FLANK ALONG THE ICY COLOSSUS WITH A TERRIBLE SOUND OF TORN METAL.

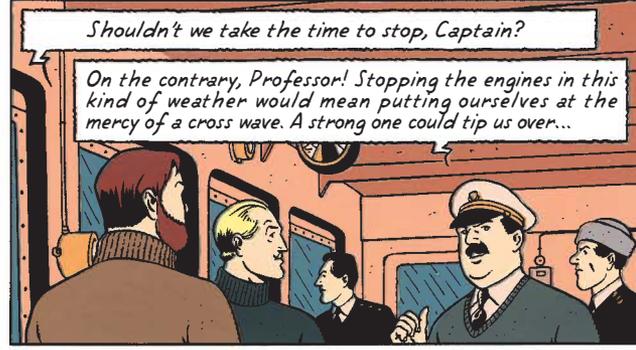


KRRREEEEEEEE



Resume previous course! I'm slowing us down. We can't afford to be surprised by any friends this monster might have around here!

I'll go check if the cargo is fine. I'll be back as soon as possible to report on the damage to the ship, Captain.



Shouldn't we take the time to stop, Captain?
On the contrary, Professor! Stopping the engines in this kind of weather would mean putting ourselves at the mercy of a cross wave. A strong one could tip us over...



... And let's hope we don't have a hull breach below the waterline...



THE NEXT MORNING, THE OCEAN IS CALM ONCE AGAIN, AND THE SAILORS OF THE MADELEINE ARE ABLE TO ASSESS THE DAMAGE CAUSED ON THE PREVIOUS NIGHT BY THE GIANT ICEBERG.



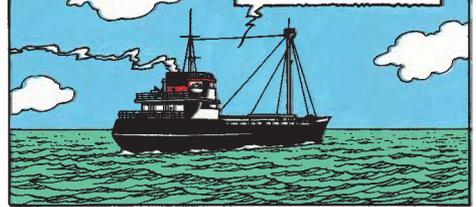
Good news, Captain. The damage looks worse than it is. The hull is badly scratched, but there's only a small breach over the waterline, and we can plug it. It'll hold until the Europole base.

Very well. Report to me when you're done.



A FEW HOURS LATER...

Professor! Professor Mortimer!



Could you come to the deck?!



It's the Ravi Kuta!

This is too good to pass up! We have to try and neutralise Mr Singh and his uranium parcel before he gets to Halley.

It would be ideal, of course. But... how to do so?



I have an idea! Let's transmit an SOS to the Ravi Kuta. We can say that one of our engineers was gravely injured in the collision with the iceberg, that he needs urgent care and that the ongoing repairs to the hull are preventing us from leaving immediately. Let's imagine that the stricken man...

...is our good Nasir!...
... The laws of the sea would compel them to take him onboard until they reach Halley...

... A trip during which I can attempt to neutralise Mr Singh and recover the uranium! Let's see what the captain thinks of this...

An idea as brilliant as it is... illegal, Captain! I'm with you.

But... Isn't this plan dangerous for Mr Nasir?

It's no more than my duty demands, Professor. Besides, I'm the only one who has a chance of not standing out too much amongst all those Indian sailors—not to mention understanding their speech.



There isn't a moment to lose. We have to send our SOS now.



HAVING CHECKED THAT THERE AREN'T ANY OTHER SHIPS IN THE VICINITY, THE RADIO OPERATOR TRANSMITS HIS DISTRESS CALL AS THE MADELEINE STOPS ITS ENGINES.



They answered! They're coming!
Hurray!

Perfect! The engineering crew must have finished explaining to Nasir how to sabotage the Ravi Kuta...



... All we have to do now is slap some fake but credibly serious injuries onto him!