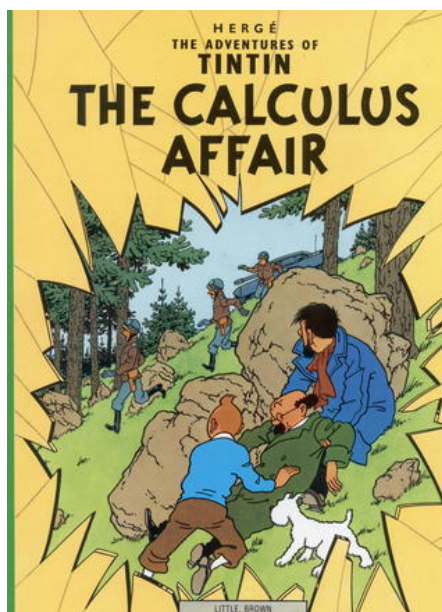




The Calculus Affair

Hergé , Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper (Translator) , Michael Turner (Translator)

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Tintin, the Captain, and Snowy attempt to rescue Dr. Calculus who has been kidnapped by the Bordurians.

The Calculus Affair Details

Date : Published September 30th 1976 by Little, Brown and Co. (first published 1953)

ISBN : 9780316358477

Author : Hergé , Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper (Translator) , Michael Turner (Translator)

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chase narrative to climax the work. And the plot is overarching whilst also using our characters to their fullest. Various dangers loom in and out of the frame, but their motives remain consistent and it never feels as if one villain is simply replacing another in a tired formula. Also, Herge subtracts the comedy of the Thompsons (and even Calculus and Snowy, neither of whom appears for any length of time), but gives us the brilliantly blabbering Jolyon Wagg in their stead. (Wagg instantly proves himself a marvelous foil to the Captain, since - unlike many leading men of comics - Tintin is never annoyed at anyone, so can only be outraged by villainy.) Not to mention a certain infamous piece of sticking plaster...

As always, there are a couple of useless elements, but only a couple, primarily involving the cliffhangers. When the cliffhanger is "how will they survive this?" and the answer is just "oh! they survived!", it's not really good enough. Herge at his best didn't like to show the strings - note his touches of realism in explaining why Tintin and Haddock found disguises so easily, or why it is that Tintin can drive a tank - but on a few of the later pages, this gets lost. (And there is some outright silliness when Tintin drives over some mines in terror, and then we learn that the mines must have been duds. For a three-frame episode, it seems redundant.)

Perhaps this will lose a little something for children of today, who know little of an era of mounting European tensions, but then again I hope not. While Borduria very much relies on comparisons with the central Europe of the time, it comes alive and the politics within work on their own terms.

Artistically, this is an outright triumph. In terms of plot construction and consistency, it is really no more than an engrossing political conspiracy movie, but it stands on an equal footing with the surrounding albums. "The Calculus Affair" is an example of what Herge could achieve when he was working at full creativity and with great resources, and for that it deserves five stars.

Michael Gerald says

One of the best Tintin adventures, Tintin is again swept into a case of mystery and intrigue in another fictional, Balkan-like country, which is a satire on the Soviet Union. Herge draws again on historical events, as Tintin tackles a Stalinist country's theft of a secret technology that can be made into a devastating weapon of mass destruction.

Dan says

The Tintin stories for anyone who has read them and understands their history can't be viewed as anything other than groundbreaking. The beginnings of these stories have been around as long as the Lord of the Rings, the illustration and environments in the Tintin books are accurate and extremely detailed. Anyone who has spent even a little time exploring Herge (Georges Remi) can see the painstaking research and adversity he worked through to compose the world around Tintin. His ideas were ahead of his time (Exploring the moon, Industrialization, South American political conflict, modern slave trade, extraterrestrial life) and he made certain every detail for every object would be realistic (after the third book at least). Herge's work can certainly be cited as an influence for any modern day graphic novel or comic book.

Alireza says

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fraulein says

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Haha pertama. Adegan salah telepon Moulinsart dengan Fillets sampai berkali-kali itu emang ngeselin, sih. Aku bisa ngerti perasaan Nestor (tabahkan hatimu, Pak Nestor *urut-urut dada*). Tapi kemudian, ngga disangka-sangka ternyata Fillets malah jadi penyelamat Lakmus pada percobaan penculikan pertama ketika keluar dari Moulinsart. Pa

Tetty Marlinda says

#59 for 2018
Genre: Adventure Comic

Mahsa_Kh says

Loved it!!! A perfect balance of comedy and thriller!

Paul says

A wonderful balance of comedy and thriller, this is so inventive, precisely-plotted and purely enjoyable. Herge's drawing was at a level of absolute perfection at this stage. I loved this one as a kid, and I love it now.

Manny says

[

More than a passing likeness, wouldn't you say? (hide spo

Maria Carmo says

Incredible adventure in which Tournesol is kidnapped and Tintin and Captain Haddock travel to Borduer and Syldavia to try and rescue him!

Maria Carmo,

Lisbon, 18 January 2015.

Biondatina says

After the storm and the thunders strange phenomena are happening at Captain Haddock's house, as mirrors, vases, glasses are exploding without reason. Someone shots in the garden, an insurance seller comes to the house and suddenly Professor Calculus is kidnapped. Of course Captain, Tintin and Snowy tries to find him but are getting in trouble as usual!

In this issue Snowy is obsessive with the Professor's Calculus umbrella. Snowy picks up, and run with it, climb down the stairs, carries it around, loses it, steals another

Kevin J.J. Carpenter says

There's something to be said about Hergé's particular style of storytelling. It's not just contrived, it's so mind-numbingly convenient that you find your cynicism somewhat nullified that inevitably allows your suspension of disbelief to take over. These stories are crafted in such a simplistic and rather pedestrian fashion that you stop thinking about the chain of events and the tangential way they link together, and just enjoy the fascinating vignettes themselves. Is this intentional? I have no idea. Probably not. But it works!

In a nutshell, *The Calculus Affair* is a fast-paced espionage drama that sees the fictional, Eastern-European countries of Sylvaldia and Borduro attempting to kidnap our humble Professor Calculus to extract from him plans for a super weapon to rival the Hiroshima Bomb. It's a bit convoluted, but not unenjoyable, though definitely one of the lesser Tintin stories. I did laugh quite a lot; my favourite gag was with the sticky tape, that was pure comedy gold.

Sam Quixote says

Professor Calculus invents a sonic machine that shatters china and glass but, if developed and fall into the wrong hands, could topple cities and devastate Earth! When Calculus visits Geneva he is kidnapped by Bordurians (a made up country that is Soviet-like) and its up to Tintin and Captain Haddock to save the day!

I read this when I was a kid and recently came across this at the library and decided to have a look at it again, nostalgia being what it is. What surprised me the most from this book was that despite it being an espionage, James Bond style storyline, theres an awful lot of slapstick humour in it. For example there's an extended sequence featuring a piece of sticky tape and a larger than life caricature of an insurance salesman. I didn't realise how much Haddock was a silent-era comedian (minus the silence) either. He's constantly falling over, hitting his head on things, tripping on things, and bearing the brunt of any physical violence. And then there's overkill on the comedy with Thompson & Thomson who show up every now and then.

What I essentially loved and remembered were still here though: the superb drawings and Herge's clear line style were a joy to see again. The story meanders all over Europe and it's wonderful to see 50s era Europe

depicted on the page, really really excellent drawing. And of course Captain Haddock's bizarre dialogue, his best being "Billions of bilious blue blistering barnacles!" but also including "Bashi-bazouk!", "Ectoplasm" and a "Certified Diplodocus!".

It's a wonderful comic book which, while not being Tintin's best outing, is nonetheless effortlessly charming and entrancing. A great read for all ages.

Rebekah says

I've read ALL the Tintin comics (as well as watched the movie) and I'm a huge fan. :) The characters are awesome, each plot unique, and the villains: unforgettable. A great read for all ages, and the best written comics I have ever seen. For history nerds, mystery solvers, and adventurers alike. A must-read for EVERYONE!!! :D

David Sarkies says

The absurdity of the spy thriller

22 February 2012

Tintin is one of those series of books that you read one and wonder how Herge is going to be able to top it, and sure enough he comes along with a comic that pretty much tops all of the previous ones that he has written. Unfortunately, as the bar gets raised, it becomes more and more difficult to exceed expectations. This, I believe, is the case with The Calculus Affair. Some have suggested that the Calculus Affair is the beginning of the final stage of the Tintin comics. All of the characters have been developed and the style has been perfected, but in a way, The Calculus Affair literally stands out on its own.

This is a spy story where Cuthbert Calculus has developed a device that can be weaponised and as such there is a struggle between the superpowers to obtain this device. In the story the two superpowers are represented by the countries of Borduria and Syldavia, and while in Tintin they are a couple of small Eastern European countries they represent the larger Communist - Capitalist divide. However, Herge is not necessarily labelling them as such, though we see that Borduria is representative of a police state where as Syldavia is not. What is even more interesting is that up until now we were under the impression that Syldavia was a good country, however in this album they become the antagonists alongside Borduria in that both countries want to weaponise Cuthbert's invention against his wishes.

What makes this comic stand out though is not the cold war nature of this spy thriller (and the Cold War was ramping up at this stage, as well as the nuclear arms race) but that there is so much going on that has absolutely nothing to do with the story itself. It is almost as if the spy story takes a back step to the absurd comedy that permeates this story. For instance, we have the introduction of Joylon Wagg, an insurance salesman that seeks shelter in Marlinspike after the windows of his car shatters. He has nothing to do with the plot, but keeps on popping up during the story to act as a foil to Captain Haddock. The story opens with Joylon Wagg, and closes with Joylon Wagg.

Then there is the Sticky Tab. The Sticky Tab has nothing to do with the story, and as the animated cartoon shows, it can be completely removed and we still have a consistent story, however to remove the Sticky Tab is to do a great injustice to this work (and the animated show pretty much does that). We also have the umbrella, which Snowy picks up and carries about with him through half the comic (until he loses it, and tries to take somebody else's). The glass shattering episodes at the beginning are thick and fast, and ends up turning Marlinspike into a comedy of errors and a media circus (as Herge so brilliantly draws in the beginning).

The Thompson Twins make a small appearance in this story as well, and while their entrance has been done similarly in Destination Moon, it is still a shock when they are brought in. We are told that 'two men have been arrested at the bomb site asking questions' and we know that the Bordurian agents were present, so we expect that it will be them. Turns out it is Thompson and Thomson in Swiss clothing, and their little antics in the hospital are to be expected of these two nitwits.

It is interesting that the only character in the Tintin comics that seems to have a family is Joylon Wagg, though there are a number of characters which we don't know much about their background. We know that the Thompson Twins are a couple of detectives and are silly, but we don't know much beyond that. In the same way we have little information on Tintin beyond him being a reporter, though we do know that he is young and unmarried. However, I am not entirely sure that Herge was intending anything with this because Tintin is purely an adventure story, and in the adventure story, we need not worry about such backgrounds.

Harish Challapalli says

Another adventure!! Thoroughly enjoyed the entire episode!! A perfect blend of adventure and comic relief with a new character!!

Tintin is as usual at his best!! Nothing Holmes style!! Snowy is as adorable as always!! Captain Haddock's comedy when he is irritated always evoke laughter!! The detective twins has got a lesser role!! Calculus role is minor though the plot revolves around him!!

The adventure is more scientific!! After the exploration of moon, this involves a bit of science!!

On the whole, one of the best Tintin's work!!

Thomas says

Hey! Guess what ? Another Tintin book and yes I have read this five times already. I always like to re read it because there is more military activity than in the other books. The adventure is as always full of twist and turns and chases. Calculus is sought by many countries and in popular demand!

Cbj says

BY THE WHISKERS OF KURVI-TASCH!

The Calculus Affair is up to its neck in action. It is set mostly in Captain Haddock's mansion Marlinspike, Geneva and two imaginary Balkan countries - Borduria and Syldavia.

Professor Calculus discovers a weapon which can destroy cities with sound waves. Two competing Balkan nations try to kidnap him with the hope of extracting the secrets of the weapon. Tintin and Captain Haddock are hot in pursuit to save their friend from the spooks and the sadistic Generals. An irritating insurance salesman provides the laughs.

One of the best bits in the comic is at the house of a scientist where a thirsty Captain Haddock looks longingly at a bottle of rare wine while the scientist and Tintin ignore him while they discuss Calculus'

disappearance. The expressions on his face are priceless.

Its good fun. It is an out and out action comic with lots of laughs. I prefer the Tintin comics with him and Snowy or him and Captain Haddock solving the case. This one had too many characters and mindless action.

Released in 1956, I wonder how much this comic might have influenced big budget Hollywood action films. I'm sure many Hollywood producers might have borrowed Herge's idea to set comics in beautiful foreign locales, presenting the cultures of those countries as exotica.

Gary says

Strange things are happening at Captain Haddock's estate at Marlinspike.

Thugs are up to something, and all the glass is mysteriously exploding.

Soon Tintin and the Captain discover that Professor Calculus had been kidnapped.

Their investigation leads them to Switzerland and then to Borduria, ruled by the iron grip of the Stalinist Kurvi Tasch regime.

The Bordurians, it turns, out have kidnapped the Professor, to develop nuclear weapons and thus enable them to attain world domination.

This is quite eerily prophetic, being written in 1956, when it seemed quite impossible for a tinpot dictatorship to acquire such weapons of mass destruction, but we now we see these very same devices being developed by tyrannies such as Iran and North Korea.

The Calculus Affair is filled with espionage and gripping adventure
