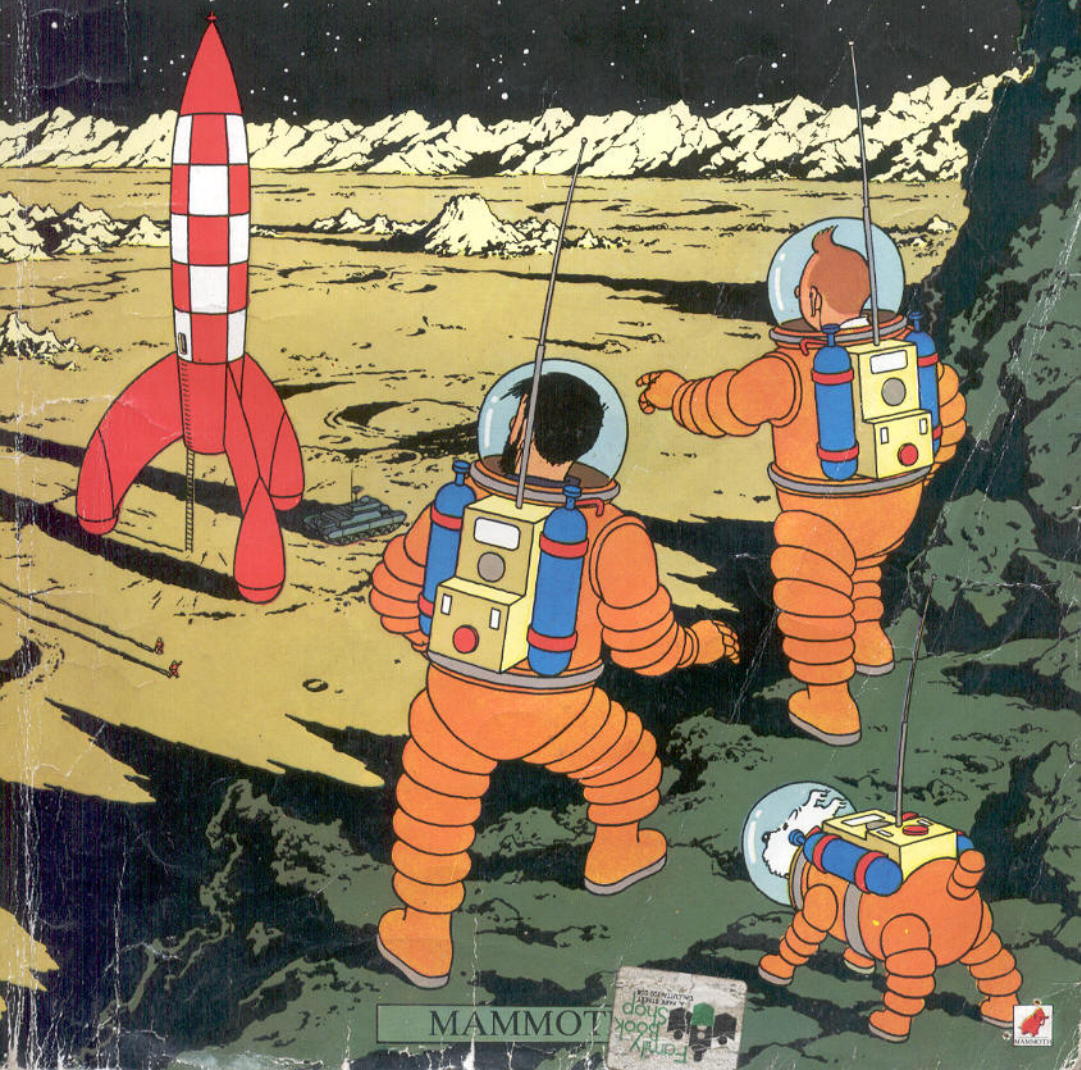


HERGÉ

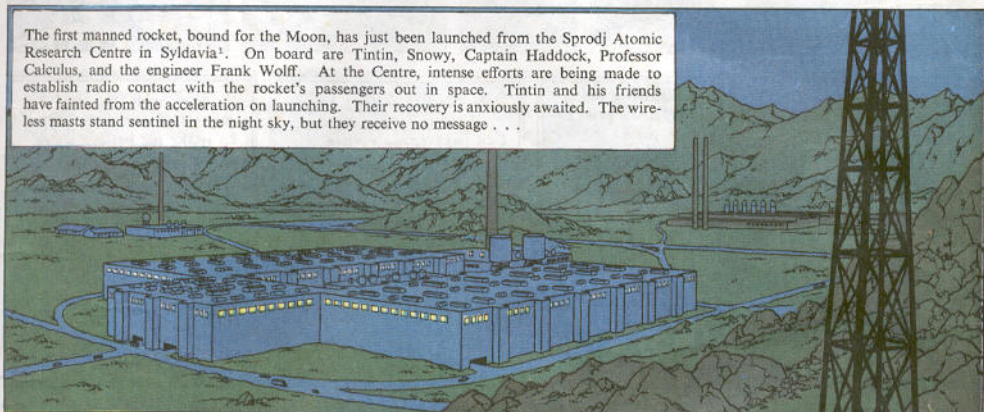
THE ADVENTURES OF
TINTIN

EXPLORERS ON THE MOON



EXPLORERS ON THE MOON

The first manned rocket, bound for the Moon, has just been launched from the Sprodj Atomic Research Centre in Syldavia¹. On board are Tintin, Snowy, Captain Haddock, Professor Calculus, and the engineer Frank Wolff. At the Centre, intense efforts are being made to establish radio contact with the rocket's passengers out in space. Tintin and his friends have fainted from the acceleration on launching. Their recovery is anxiously awaited. The wireless masts stand sentinel in the night sky, but they receive no message . . .

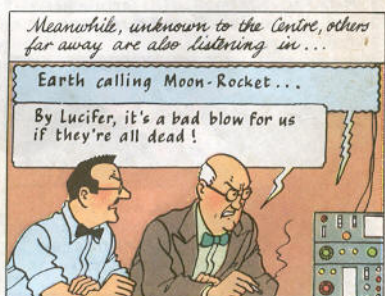


This is Earth calling Moon-Rocket...
Are you receiving me? ...Earth
calling Moon-Rocket...



Suppose we've made a mis-
take in our calculations!...
That would be appalling!

Earth calling
Moon-Rocket...
Earth calling...



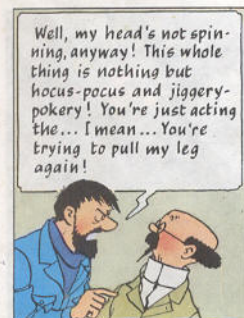
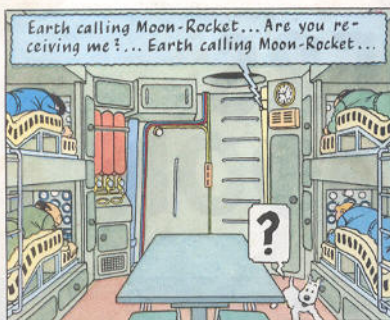
Meanwhile, unknown to the Centre, others
far away are also listening in...

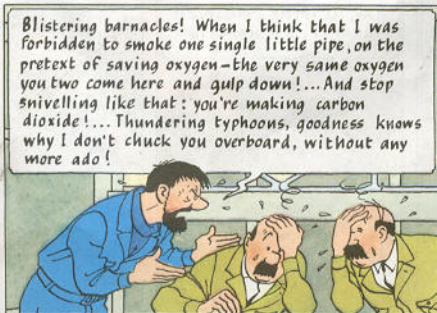
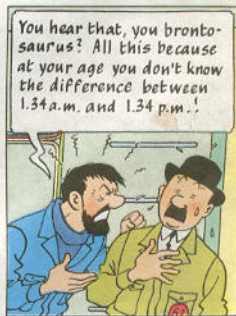
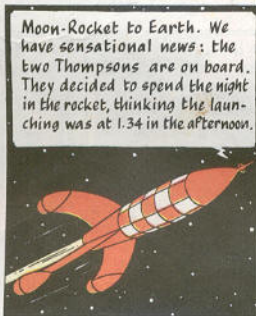
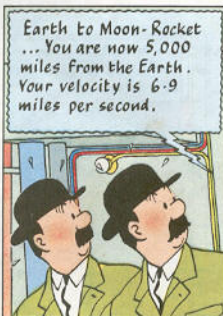
Earth calling Moon-Rocket...

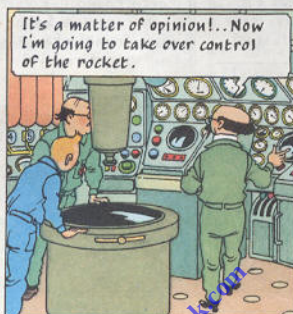
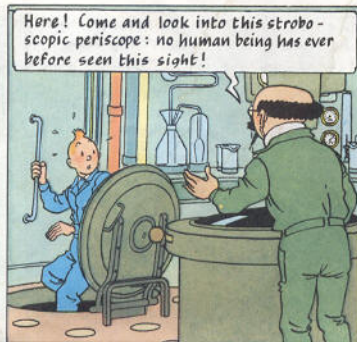
By Lucifer, it's a bad blow for us
if they're all dead!

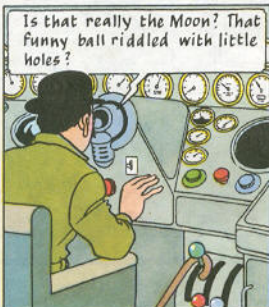
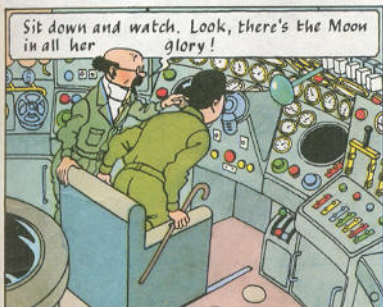


¹ See Destination Moon



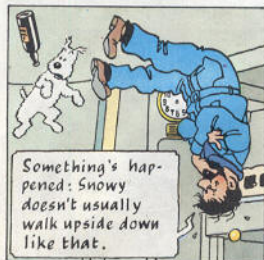








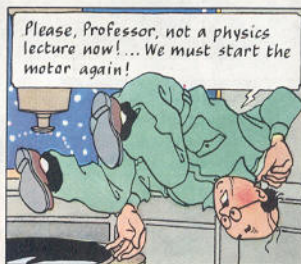
Blistering bar-nacles, what's the matter?



Something's happened: Snowy doesn't usually walk upside down like that.



This allowed us to move about in the cabin as we do on the ground... When the motor stops, we no longer feel the effects of gravity... That's why we're floating like this.



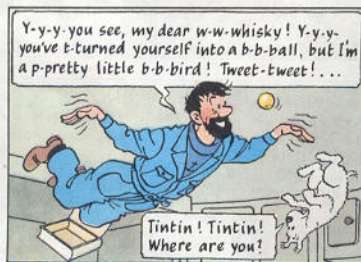
Please, Professor, not a physics lecture now!... We must start the motor again!



Wait... I'll try to get to the controls...



If I touch you, Snowy, you're it!



Y-y-y-you see, my dear w-w-whisky! Y-y-y-you've t-turned yourself into a b-b-ball, but I'm a p-pretty little b-b-bird! Tweet-tweet!...

Tintin! Tintin! Where are you?



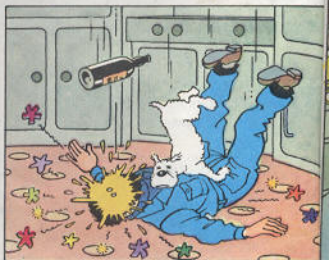
Watch out!... I'm going to restart the nuclear motor!... Hang on!



Carry on... We're holding tight!



L-l-look, Snowy!... I can even glide on my back! Th-th-this is F-Fun!



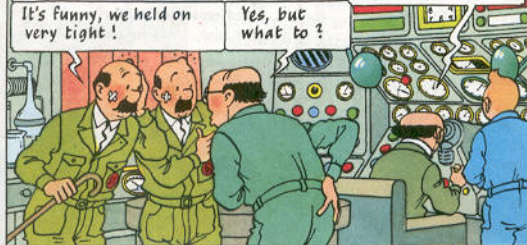
Earth to Moon-Rocket
... What's going on?
... Why have you stopped
the nuclear motor?

Moon-Rocket to Earth... One of the two detectives accidentally
closed the motor throttle... But we've just started her up again.

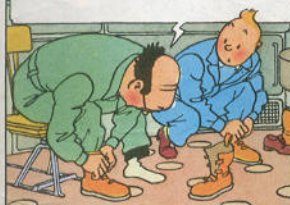
It's funny, we held on
very tight!

Yes, but
what to ?

To be on the safe side I'm
issuing everyone with
magnetic-soled boots...



The Professor's right. If the nuclear motor
stops again for any reason, these soles will
hold us down to the cabin floor. Then we
shan't float about like balloons.



Unless I'm dreaming, there's Adonis!

Who's Adonis? A
friend of yours liv-
ing near here?



The asteroid Adonis is a dwarf planet
which orbits between Mars and Jupiter.
It is a rock-like mass, about a mile in
diameter... Take my place and watch,
while I put on my boots... but for
goodness sake don't touch anything!



There, that's that... But how do
you account for one pair left over?
... Has someone not put on his boots?

Crumbs, it's the Captain...
he stayed below... I'll take
them down to him.



Hello, Snowy boy.
Did you get very
bumped about?

So there you are
Tintin!... If only
you knew what
happened!



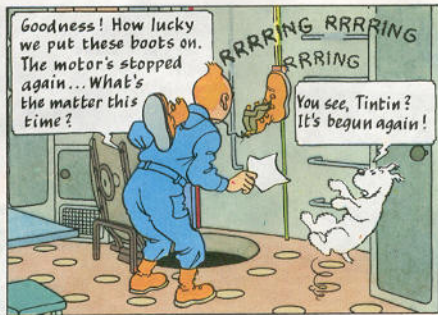
And the Captain? ... Where's the Cap-
tain? ... Hello, what's that piece
of paper, there on the table?



Great snakes! It's
fantastic! ... He's
gone out of his mind!
... Quick, the Professor
must see this...

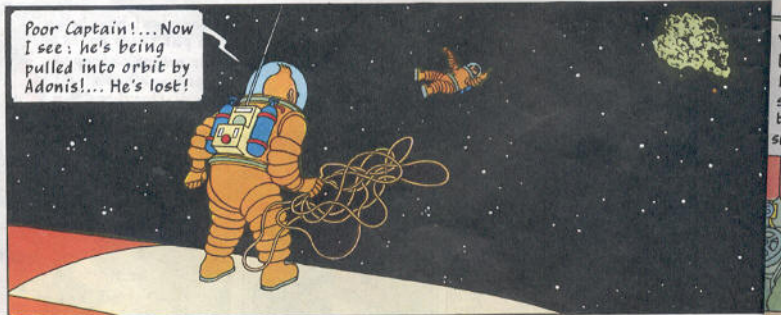
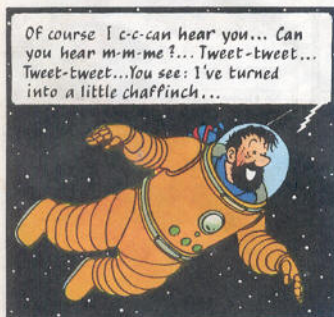
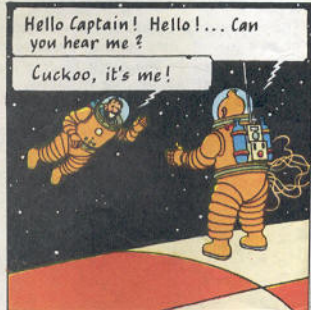
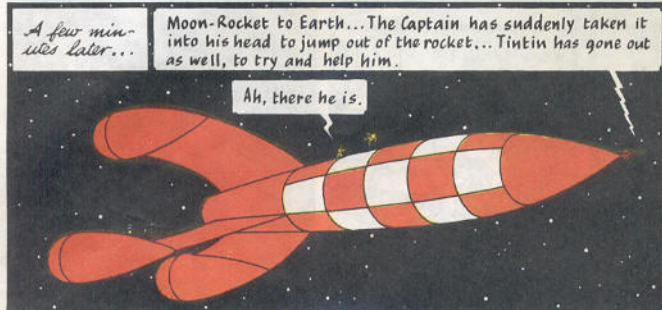
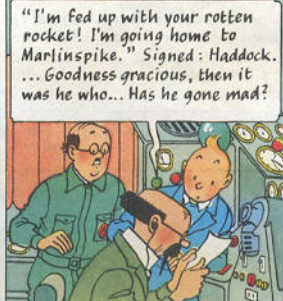


Goodness! How lucky
we put these boots on.
The motor's stopped
again... What's
the matter this
time?



RRRRING RRRRING
RRRRING

You see, Tintin?
It's begun again!



Hello Professor Calculus... Tintin calling... The Captain's getting further and further away... attracted by Adonis.

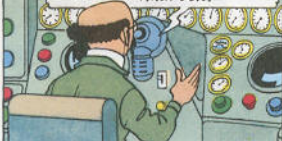


Getting further away? ... That's only to be expected... He's become a satellite of Adonis!



This is terrible!... Surely there must be something we can do?

Of course... We must inform Earth at once, and tell them Adonis has a new satellite by the name of Haddock!



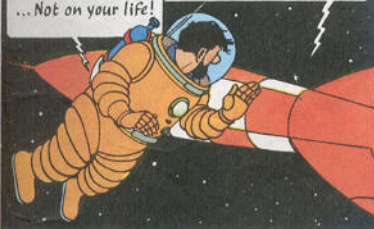
Not so fast! I have a plan: you raise the retractable ladder at once, so that I can anchor myself securely. Then, start up the motor: gently at first, but getting faster and faster...

But what are you hoping to do?



To get close enough to the Captain to throw him a line, and pull him aboard.

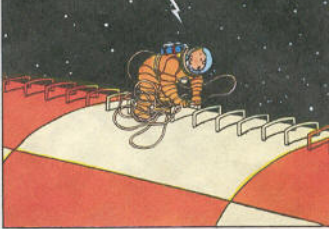
Pull me aboard? ... Not on your life!



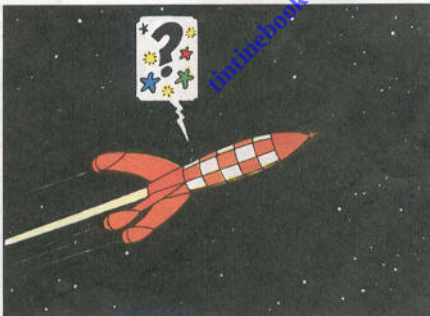
It's sheer madness!... But I admire you for wanting to try... I'll raise the retractable ladder as you said, and wait for your orders...



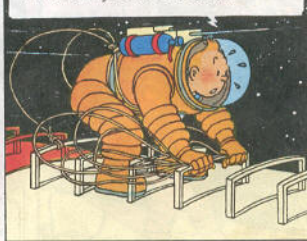
Tintin here... I'm securely anchored... You can start the motor...



All right... I... Tintin, it's terribly risky... But, good luck, anyway! Steady now: I'm starting the motor...



Tintin calling... I got a terrific jolt but I managed to hold on... You are right on course...

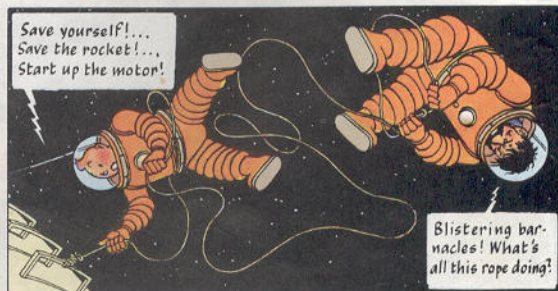
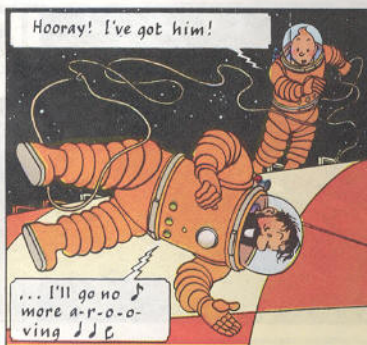
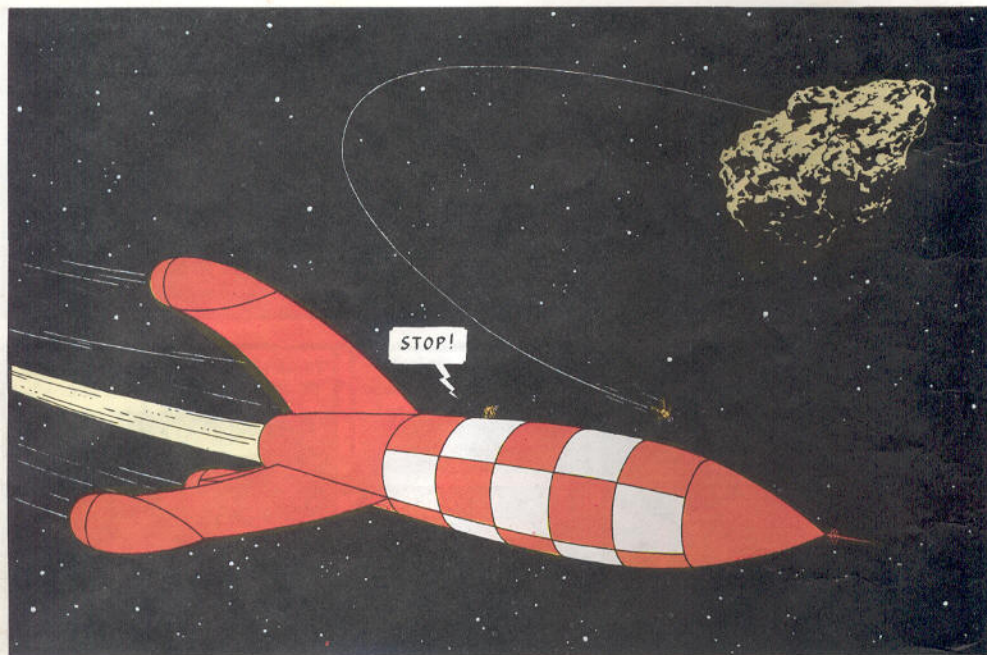


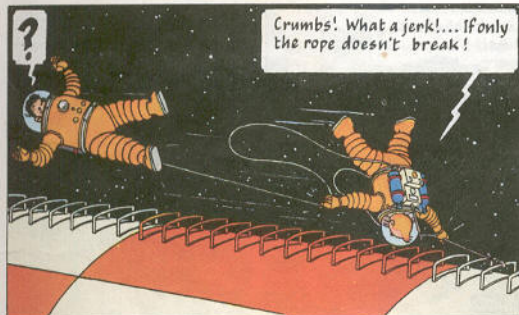
Yes, I can see the Captain... I'll close up to him. But for goodness' sake be quick. As soon as the motor stops Adonis will start dragging us into orbit.



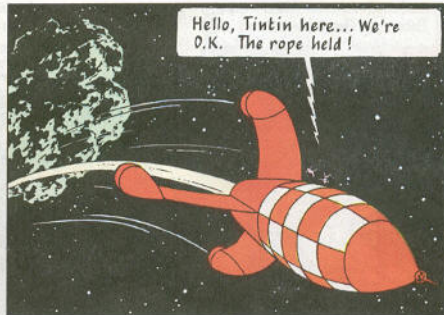
I'll do my best... Steady now! Stand by to cut the motor!







Crumbs! What a jerk!... If only the rope doesn't break!



Hello, Tintin here... We're O.K. The rope held!



And we have put a safe distance between ourselves and Adonis! ... Now I'll stop the motor again...



Saved!... We're just floating freely once more.

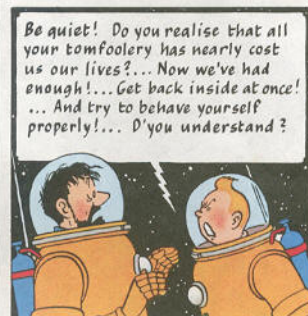


Now then, don't let's waste time... Hurry up and get back on board!

Billions of blue blistering barnacles! Will you let go of me!



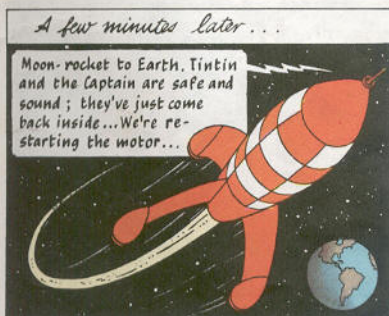
W-w-w-what d'you think you're doing, eh? I'm quite old enough to d-d-do as I like!... I w-want to go home, so there! ... I've had enough of this cake-walk, with whisky rolling up in a ball. We'll all end up smashed in little pieces!



Be quiet! Do you realise that all your tomfoolery has nearly cost us our lives?... Now we've had enough!... Get back inside at once! ... And try to behave yourself properly!... D'you understand?



Now, come along! And if I catch you drinking again, I'll clap you in irons for the rest of the trip!



A few minutes later...

Moon-rocket to Earth, Tintin and the Captain are safe and sound; they've just come back inside... We're re-starting the motor...



I... I'm a miserable wretch ... I had a drink... It's unpardonable... I'm terribly sorry.

That's all right... We'll forget it, but



OH!

Well? What is it this time?



Tintin!... Tintin!... Come quickly!... It's huge yellow caterpillars!

?



For the time being, until your medicine takes effect, I'll cut this shock of hair for you. But first let's go below; it will be easier down there...



Here, give me the scissors. I'll shear these merino lambs myself!

Oh?... As you please...



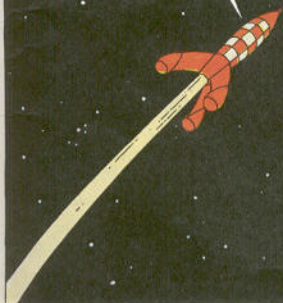
Earth to Moon-Rocket... Attention! ...

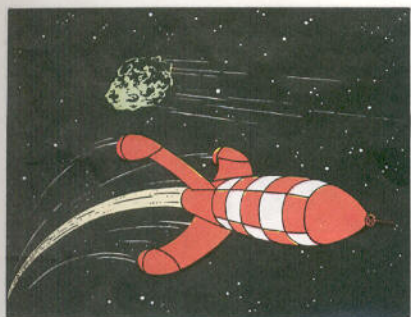


Earth to Moon-Rocket... Stand by... The turning operation will have to be made in twenty minutes' time.



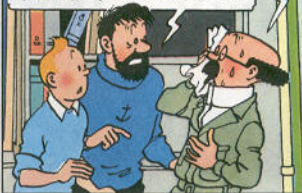
Right... We're waiting for your instructions.





Whew!...The danger's passed!...
I can breathe again. I don't mind
telling you, I was very frightened.

Would we really have been
smashed to smithereens?



Not only that! Far more
serious!...I can tell you
now: if my theories
hadn't worked out, I'd
have had to begin all my
calculations over again.



A few minutes later...

And when anyone asks me later on: "What was
your job in the rocket?" I'll say, "Me? I was
the hairdresser!"



A mop like this doesn't need
a pair of scissors to cut
it...



...it needs pruning-shears, ten
thousand thundering typhoons,
or a lawn-mower!



Whew! There's one cropped! Next gentleman,
please!...What?...Is His Highness not satis-
fied?

Ha! ha! ha!...My
poor fellow! If you
could see yourself!



Go on, laugh! Laugh!...If
you imagine you look more
dignified than your esteemed
Friend, you've got another
think coming!



And none of this would
have happened, thundering
typhoons, if you'd been able
to tell the blistering dif-
ference between 1 p.m.
and 1 a.m.!



There, that's finished!...
Look at my hands now!...
All covered in blisters!



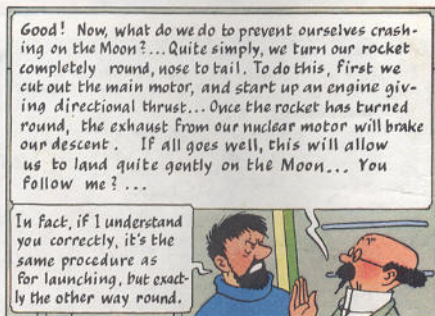
Well, what is it? His lordship
isn't pleased?... What more do
you want?... A shampoo and
set?... Or would you rather I
put it in curlers?



Look!...There!...

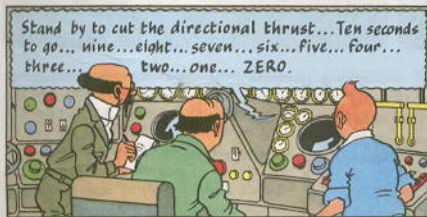
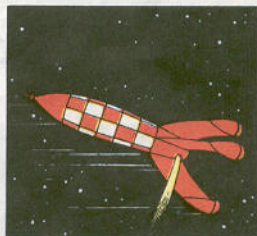


Ha! ha! ha! My poor
fellow! If you could
see yourself!

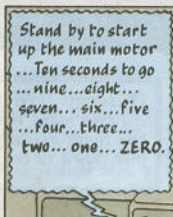




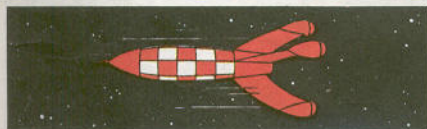
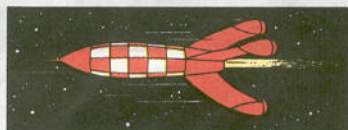
Earth to Moon-Rocket... Stand by to start up the directional thrust... Ten seconds to go... nine... eight... seven... six... five... four... three... two... one... ZERO.



Stand by to cut the directional thrust... Ten seconds to go... nine... eight... seven... six... five... four... three... two... one... ZERO.



Stand by to start up the main motor... Ten seconds to go... nine... eight... seven... six... five... four... three... two... one... ZERO.



Moon-Rocket to Earth... The turning operation...

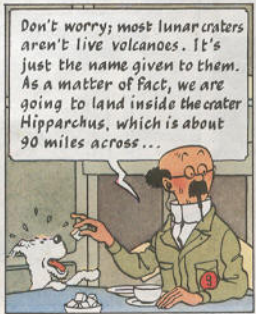
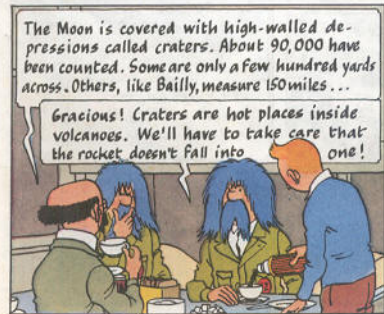
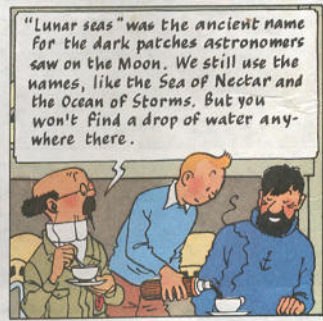
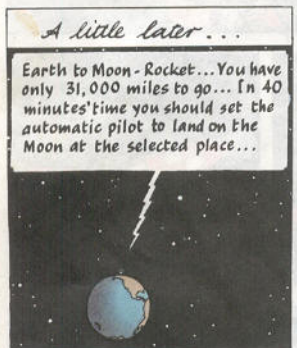
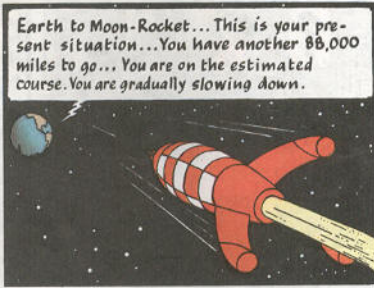


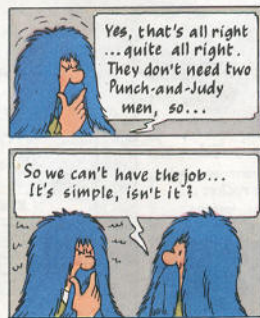
... was entirely successful!



... We are now in a position to reduce our speed gradually, and to land safely on the Moon...

Well, carry on, my Friends! Happy Moon-landing! Ha! ha! ha!





Moon-Rocket to Earth... Right ... We are making final preparations... The Professor is now setting the automatic pilot...

Another seven points East... No, that's too much... One point West, Wolff... There, that's it! The rocket is now heading right for the centre of the crater Hipparchus.



Here, Snowy!



You see, you'll feel much...



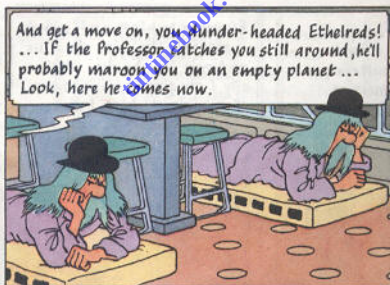
...better here while the rocket... I say! What do you think you're doing?



Us?... We're going to lie down like we've been told to! ... But my colleague and I don't sleep in our clothes.



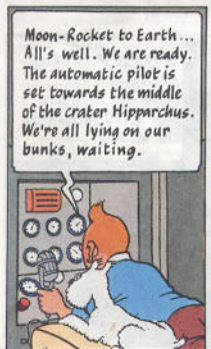
B blistering barnacles! You don't have to sleep, you prize purple jelly-fishes! You were told to lie down. That's all! So jump to it!



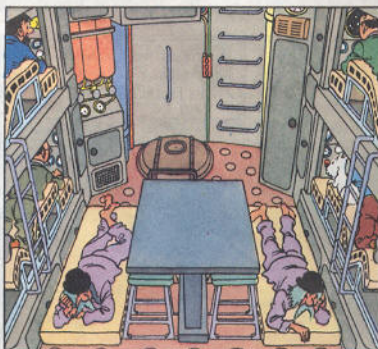
And get a move on, you munder-headed Ethelreds! ... If the Professor catches you still around, he'll probably maroon you on an empty planet ... Look, here he comes now.



Ah, everybody lying down? That's good. You must come now, Wolff.



Moon-Rocket to Earth... All's well. We are ready. The automatic pilot is set towards the middle of the crater Hipparchus. We're all lying on our bunks, waiting.

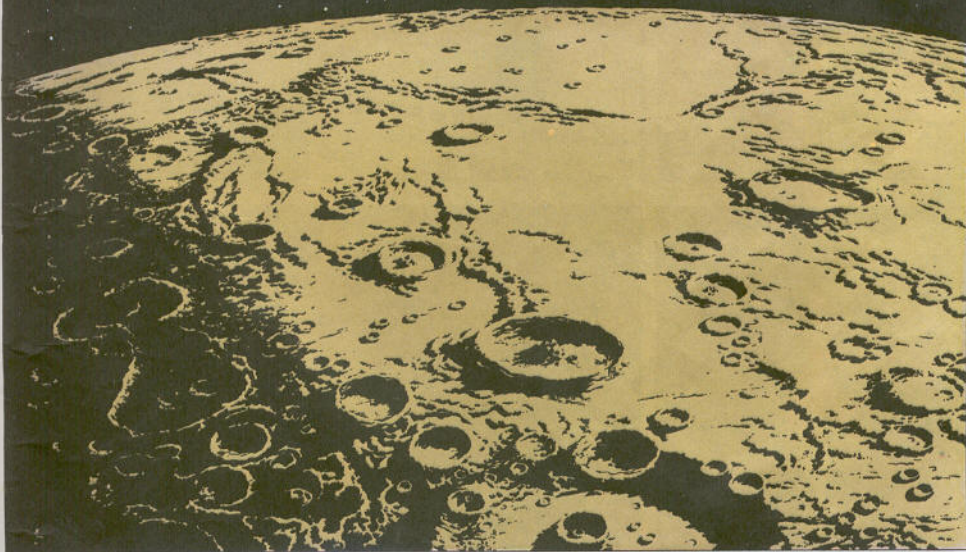


Moon-Rocket to Earth... The nuclear motor has just stopped, and the auxiliary engine has taken over.



It's amazing! ... It's tremendous! ... It's incredible! Just think: in a few minutes' time, either we'll be walking on the Moon, or we'll all be dead. It's marvellous!

Moon-Rocket to Earth...Tintin calling...We are beginning to feel the effects of slackening speed...



The rocket is being shaken by slight vibrations... We are lying flat on our bunks... It's an effort to make the least movement...



Our ears are ringing... The vibrations are getting stronger and stronger... The crushing sensation is worse... It's getting difficult to breathe...

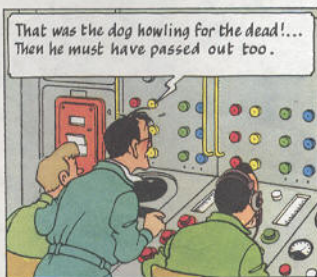
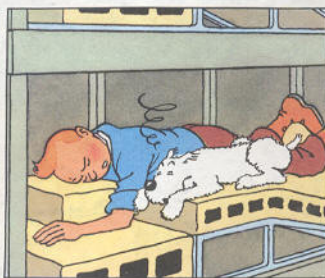


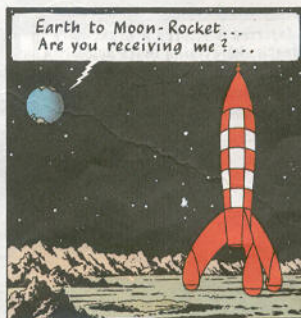
We're being crushed into our bunks... by an intolerable... weight... can't move now... The Professor... blacked out... I... think... I think...

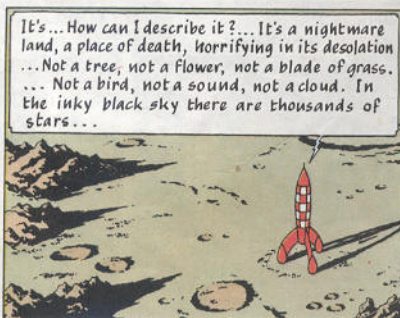
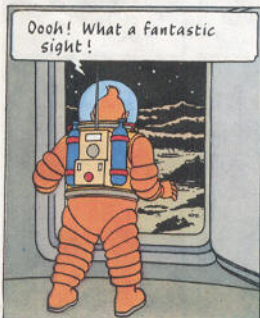
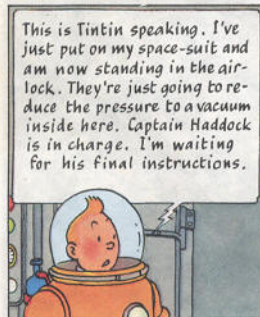
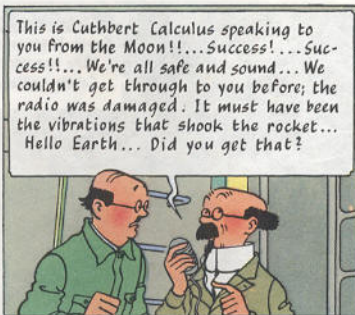


... my head... will... burst! ... My eyes... I... I'm sure ... they'll pop... out of their ... sockets... I... My heart ... Oh, my heart...

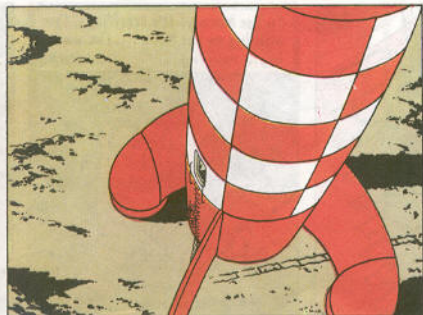
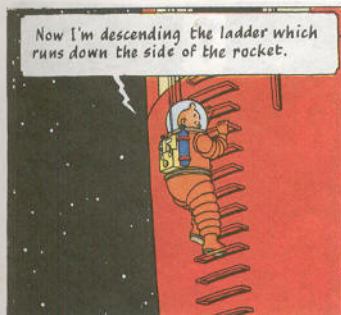








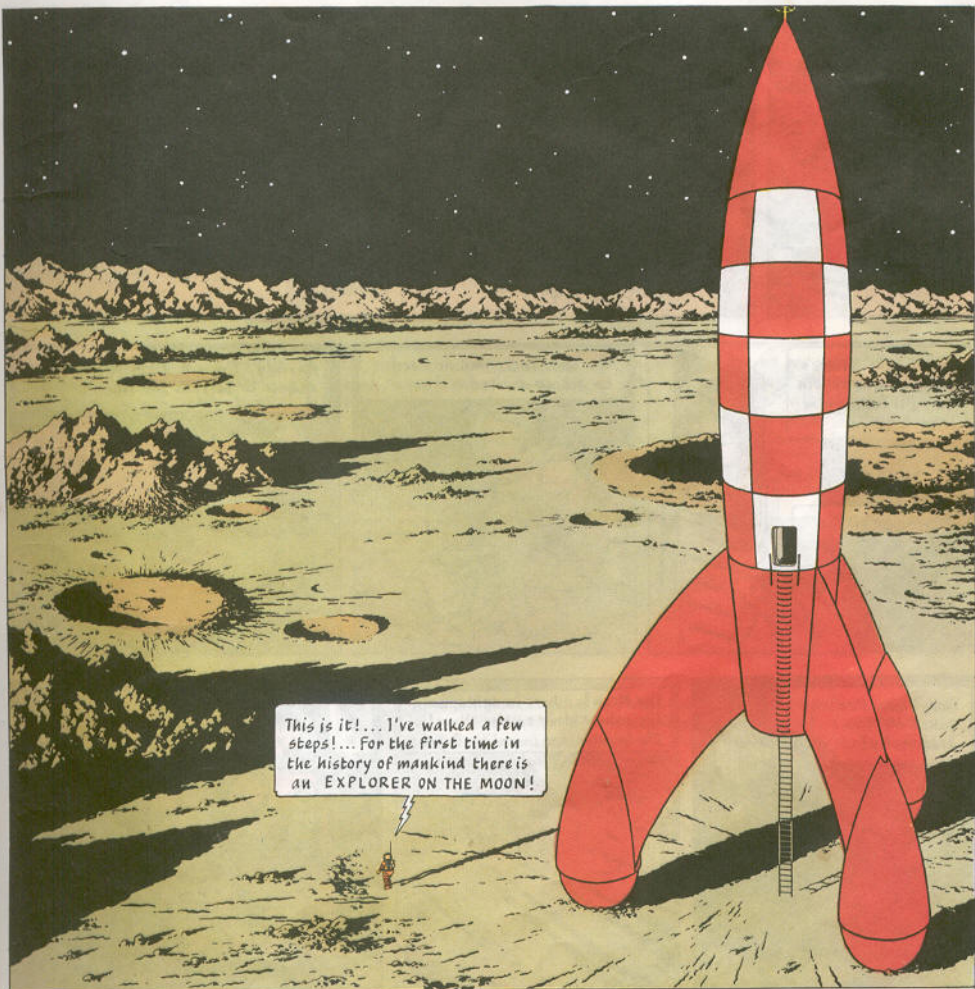
Now I'm descending the ladder which runs down the side of the rocket.

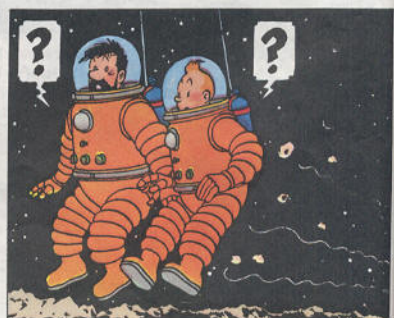
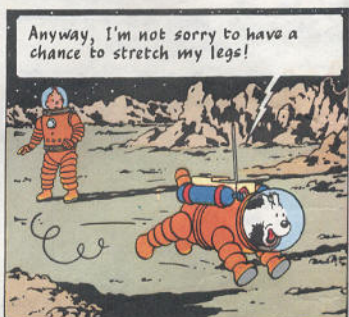
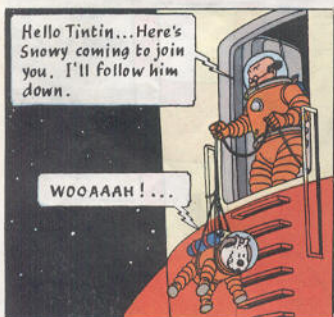
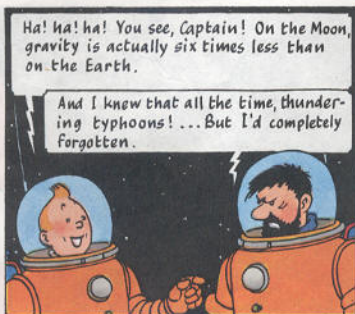
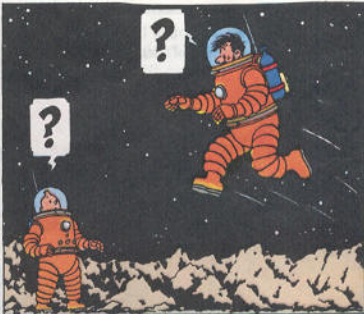


Only a few more rungs... Now three... Now two... Now only one... This is it!



This is it! ... I've walked a few steps! ... For the first time in the history of mankind there is an EXPLORER ON THE MOON!





What happened?... Was that an earthquake?

A Moon-quake, more likely, but...



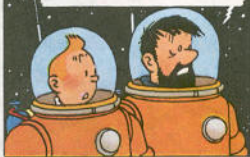
Great snakes!... Look there!

Thundering typhoons! What in the world's that?...



A meteorite! Look, a meteorite! It's just fallen on the exact spot where we were a moment ago... and exploded!

Exploded? But I didn't hear a sound!



Naturally not. There's no air on the Moon, so there's no noise... And that's why the meteorite came down intact, too. Back at home, on the Earth, the friction of the atmosphere would have made it white hot. So it would have disintegrated before reaching the ground, making what we generally call a "shooting star".

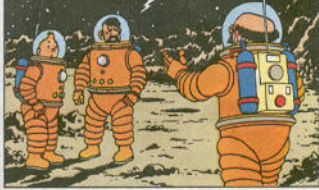


Anyway, if those tycoons on the lunar development corporation imagine that this sort of welcome will attract tourists to the Moon, they'll have to think again.



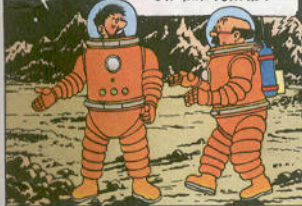
Ah, hello my friends!... This is incredible!... It's fantastic!... We're on the Moon! D'you realise that?

Oh, so there you are!



Just take a look there!... A little bit closer, and you'd have been able to throw away our return tickets!

A meteorite! How marvellous!



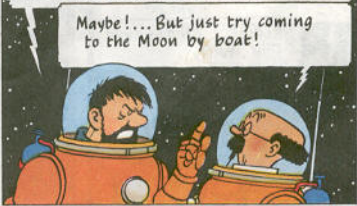
Oh, so you think that's marvellous, do you? When we'd have been as flat as pancakes!

What do you expect? It's an occupational hazard!



Exactly, blistering barnacles! But this isn't my occupation! Thundering typhoons, I'm a sailor!... And on board ship, at least you don't run the risk of bits of sky falling down all over the place, every time you bat an eyelid!

Maybe!... But just try coming to the Moon by boat!



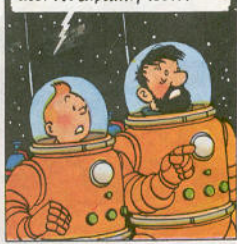
Still, that's not the point. We must set to work. Come along and unload the cargo. We must start at once. Wolff has already got everything prepared.

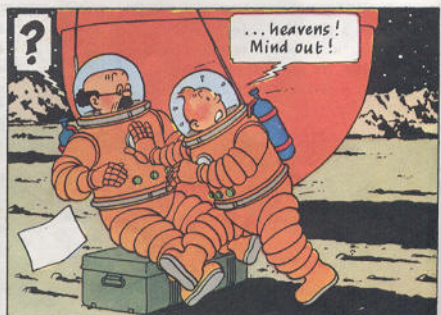
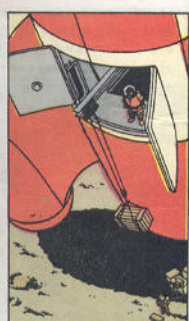
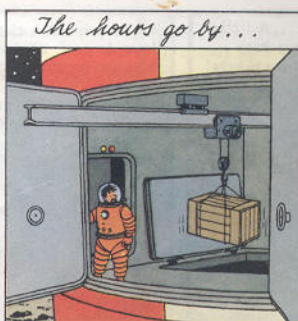
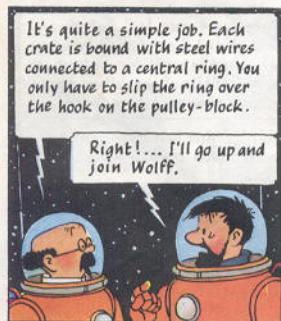
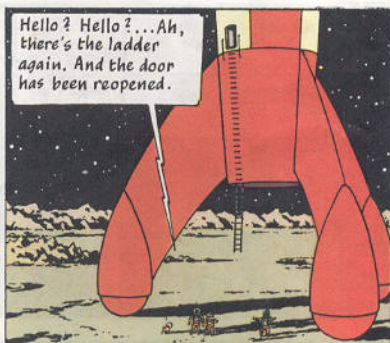
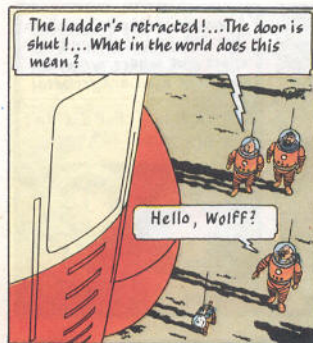


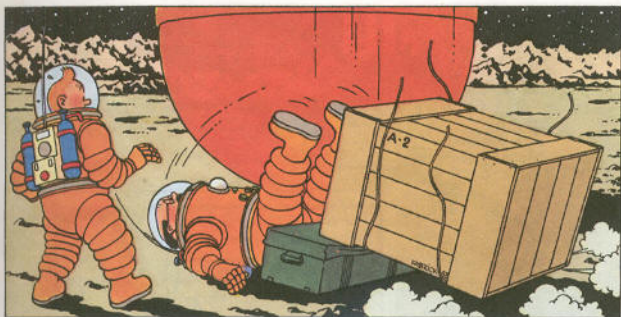
But I wonder what he's waiting for... Hello, Wolff... This is Calculus calling. Can you hear me, Wolff?... Hello?



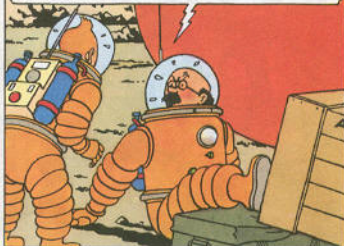
Good heavens, what's happening?... The ladder... The door... Captain, look!







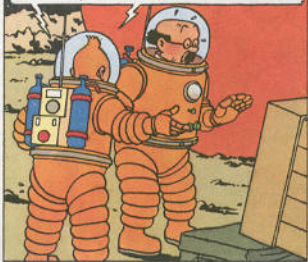
Young man, would you be kind enough to explain the meaning of this ridiculous prank?



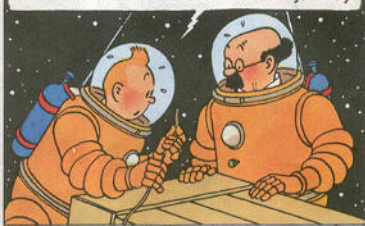
Billions of blue blistering barnacles! I'd thank Tintin if I were you. Without him you'd have been smashed to pulp!



Look, Professor. Was I wrong to push you over?



The wires have parted. Just look there; they've been worn through by friction. It must have been caused by the vibrations to the rocket towards the end of the journey.



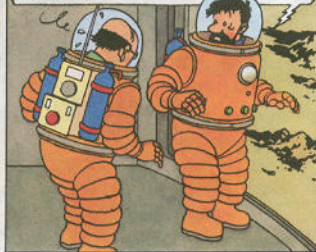
We certainly had a bit of luck! Shall we carry on, Captain? But this time be sure to check the wires.



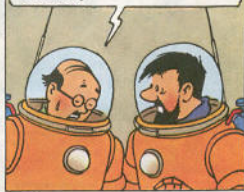
And how! I'll make doubly sure!



I say, Wolff, we're going to carry on... By Christopher, Wolff, what's the matter?



I... I don't know... I felt dizzy... suddenly... I thought I was going to faint. Perhaps it's my heart... I... It'll go! I feel better already.



Don't worry, Wolff; probably it's only fatigue. And perhaps your oxygen supply is badly adjusted. Go and lie down. In fact, we'll all follow suit.



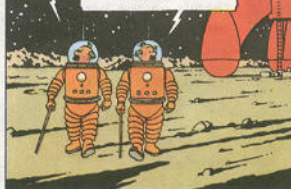
A few minutes later...

Moon-Rocket to Earth. We've just come back on board for a bit of a rest. Meanwhile the two detectives have gone out to have a turn at exploring.

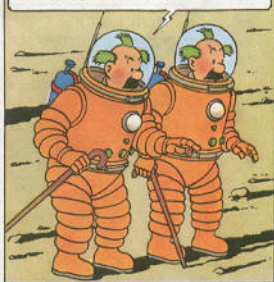


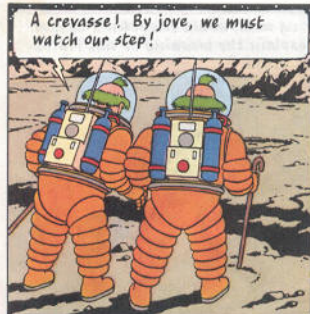
Imagine! Here we are, strolling on the surface of the Moon, where the hand of man has never set foot!

Hm!... Really never?



Stop, my dear fellow! Stop!





A crevasse! By jove, we must watch our step!



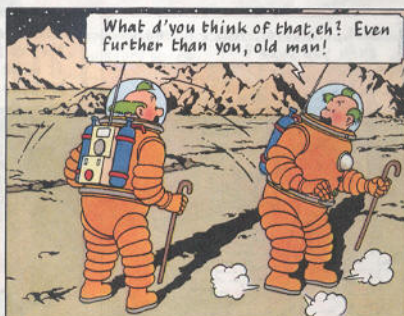
For goodness' sake be careful!



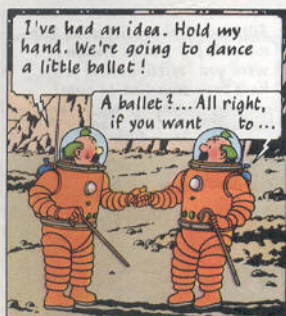
Did you see that? It's amazing! A standing jump, too!



It's your turn now. Come on, don't be scared!

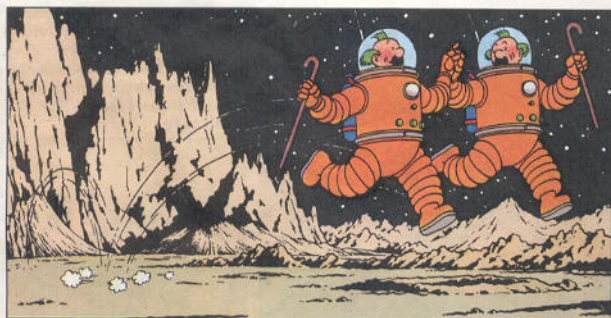


What d'you think of that, eh? Even further than you, old man!



I've had an idea. Hold my hand. We're going to dance a little ballet!

A ballet?... All right, if you want to...



Ha! ha! ha!

Ha! ha! ha!



Ha ha ha!
ha ha ha!

Come on, be serious! Supposing people saw us!



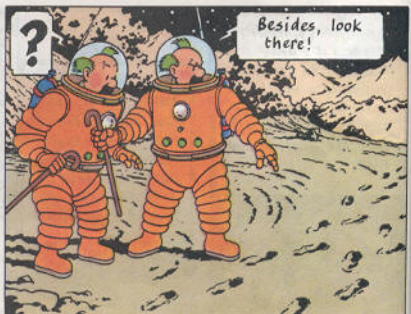
People!... Ha! ha!... PEOPLE!

Well why not?



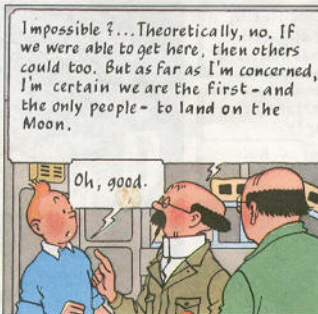
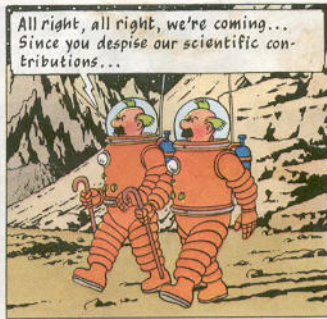
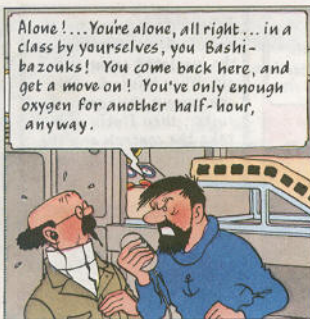
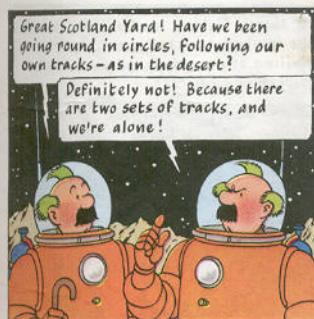
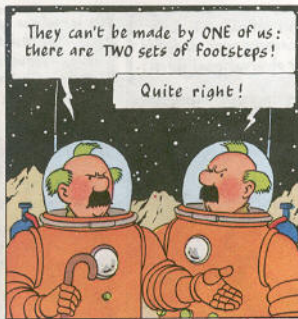
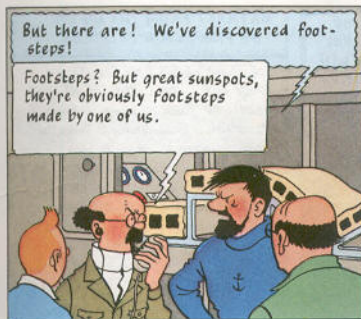
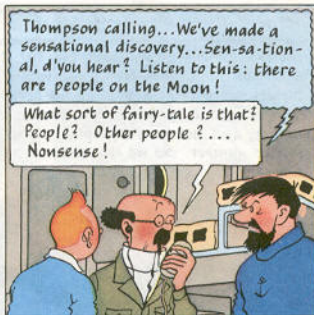
You talk as if we were in a busy street... But there aren't any people on the Moon, my poor friend!

And how do they know there's no one here if no one's ever been?



?

Besides, look there!



A few minutes later...

Gentlemen, our plan was to stay on the Moon for a whole lunar day - that's equivalent to fourteen terrestrial days. But our oxygen supplies were intended for four people and one dog, and not for six people, which is our present number. So we shall have to restrict our stay to six days.



We must therefore hasten our work. While Wolff and I set up our observational instruments, Tintin and the Captain will unload the components of our reconnaissance tank and assemble it. Is that agreed? Right then, gentlemen, let's get to work!



**EXTRACT FROM THE LOG BOOK
BY PROFESSOR CALCULUS**

3rd June - 2345 hrs. (G.M.T.).
Unloading of cargo completed.
Wolff and I have started to install the observatory. Ceased work at 2200 hrs. Captain Haddock and Tintin have begun assembling the tank.
4th June - 0830 hrs. Operations commenced at 0400 hrs. (G.M.T.). Telescope mounted. Camera in position. Theodolite in working order.

Moon to Earth... Calculus calling... The optical instruments and cameras are ready for use. We are beginning our observational work.



Observe away, my friends. You do that! Your discoveries will be vastly interesting... TO US! Ha! ha! ha! ha!



**EXTRACT FROM THE LOG BOOK
BY PROFESSOR CALCULUS**

4th June - 2150 hrs. (G.M.T.).
Wolff and I spent the day studying cosmic rays, and making astronomical observations. Our findings have been entered progressively in special Record Books Nos. I and II. The Captain and Tintin have nearly finished assembling the tank.
5th June - 1420 hrs. (G.M.T.).
Half an hour ago the Captain and Tintin pronounced the tank ready for use.

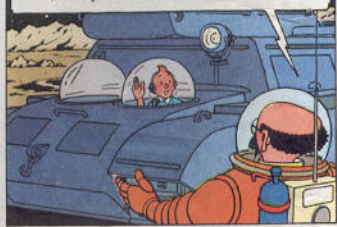
Moon to Earth... Calculus calling... The tank is ready. We're going to make the first trials. Tintin will be in charge. He's just entering the turret.



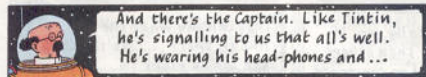
He has just secured the hatch. Now they are filling the insulated cabin with air. When this is done they can remove their space-suits; then Tintin will take the controls and the Captain will act as look-out.



Ah, there's Tintin's head showing through the multiplex cockpit cover. He's smiling at me and signalling that everything's in order.



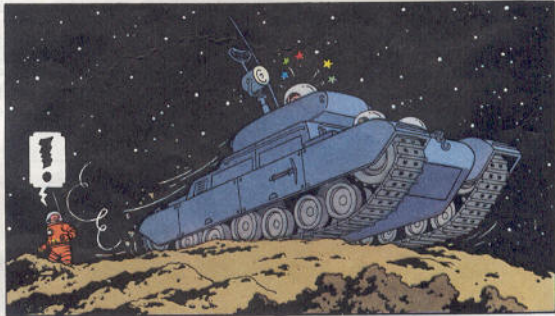
And there's the Captain. Like Tintin, he's signalling to us that all's well. He's wearing his head-phones and...

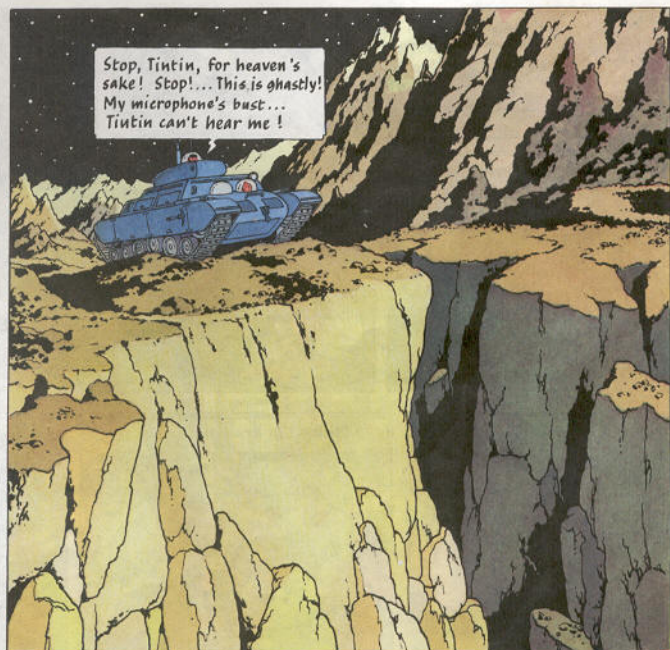


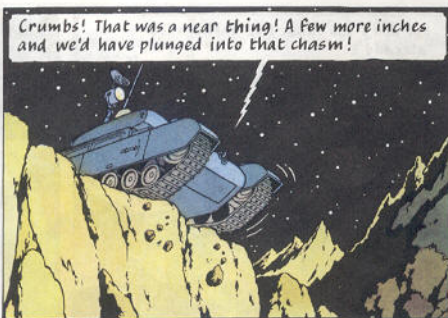
Hello, Haddock calling... Ready for departure... Hello there, Tintin, weigh the anchor!

Good luck!

O. K...
OFF we go!



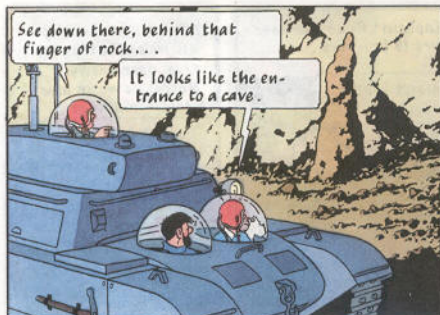




EXTRACT FROM THE LOG BOOK
BY PROFESSOR CALCULUS

6th June - 1340 hrs. (A.M.T.)
This is a day that will go down in the annals of Science. We have succeeded in making direct measurement of the constant of solar radiation, and fixing exactly the limits of the solar spectrum in the ultra-violet. An hour ago, at 1235 precisely, Woffy, the Captain, Jindin and Snooky set off on a reconnaissance trip in the tank, towards the crater Ptolemaeus.





See down there, behind that finger of rock...

It looks like the entrance to a cave.



That's just what I thought. We'd better have a closer look at it.

Right. I'll go across. Are you coming too, Captain?

O.K., I'm with you.



Hello, Wolff... You're quite right. It's definitely the entrance to a cave.



It remains to be seen where it leads to. Come on. I'll switch on my lamp.



Blistering barnacles! I've done a good many things in my time...but never lunar spelaeology!



We're in a proper cathedral!



Stalagmites and stalactites... This proves that at some period there was water on the Moon.



Snowy, Snowy, don't go far ahead. Be careful, and stay close to us.

He doesn't seem to realise that I'm grown up! Honestly! What does he take me for? Granny's little lap-dog!



WOOOAH!



Great snakes! A crevasse! He must have fallen in!

Quick, Captain. Hold tight! I'll try and shine a light down.



The crevasse bends sharply. I can't see far. Snowy! Snowy!



Quickly, Captain! Undo your rope and secure it to a rock.

But you aren't really going to...



Yes, yes. We must do all we can to try and save poor Snowy. Hurry! Tie me an absolutely firm knot.

There... But it's sheer madness...



All right?



For heaven's sake, Tintin, be careful! You know what it'll mean if you smash your oxygen pipe.

Yes, I know.



Ah! I'm standing on a sort of ledge... Snowy! Snowy!



All right?

Tintin, be sensible: come back! It's quite useless. You don't really imagine he could have survived a fall like that?... You must come back!

No, I'm going on. Perhaps he's only hurt.



The crevasse is widening. I'm still going down.



Oh! The rope is too short. I've come to the end. I can't go down any further.



You see, you donkey! Blistering barnacles, come on up!



Captain... Captain... I think I saw something move. I'm letting go of the rope. It can't be far to the bottom.



You're right. I'll come up... Snowy!... Snowy!



You're crazy! Tintin, don't do that!

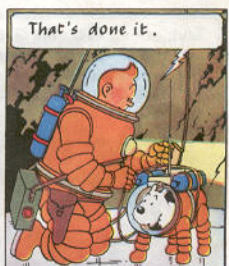
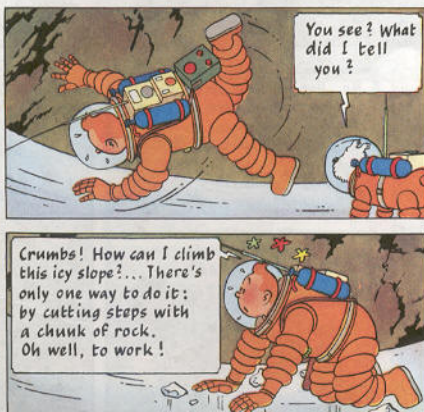


Into the hands of Fate!



Great snakes!... Ice!







Blistering barnacles, what's up? The rope's somehow got shorter than it was just now.



Oh!... I can't feel the weight of the stone any longer... It must have come off, or else it's wedged somewhere. Quick, start again...



Meanwhile...

Hello, Wolff... Well, what news?



Wolff here... Still no sign. It's more than half an hour since they went into the cave. I'm beginning to wonder if... Ah, there they are!



Heavens! Tintin's staggering—he looks pretty groggy. The Captain's almost carrying him. Hello, Captain, is he hurt?



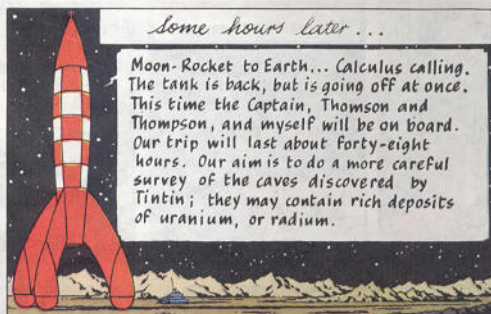
No. But he's just about reached the end of his tether, poor lad.



Saved! My Friends, they're saved!

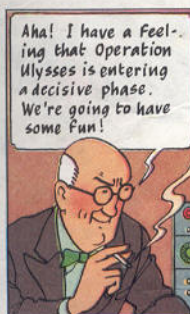


Tank calling Base. The Captain and Tintin are back on board. The Captain's taken over command as Tintin is completely exhausted. We're returning post-haste!

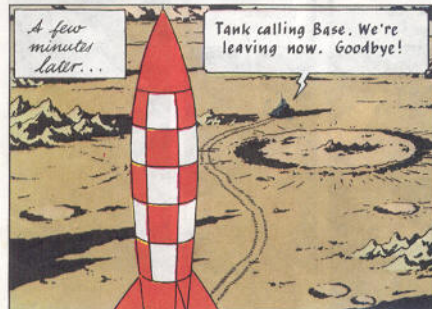


Some hours later...

Moon-Rocket to Earth... Calculus calling. The tank is back, but is going off at once. This time the Captain, Thomson and Thompson, and myself will be on board. Our trip will last about forty-eight hours. Our aim is to do a more careful survey of the caves discovered by Tintin; they may contain rich deposits of uranium, or radium.



Aha! I have a feeling that Operation Ulysses is entering a decisive phase. We're going to have some fun!

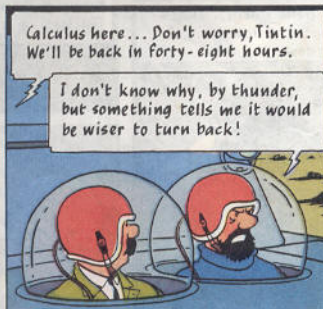


A few minutes later...

Tank calling Base. We're leaving now. Goodbye!

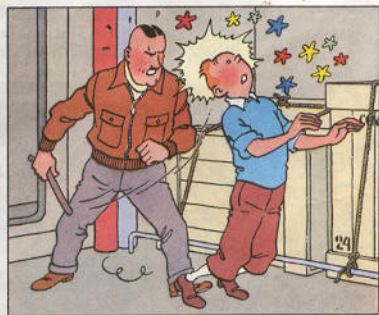
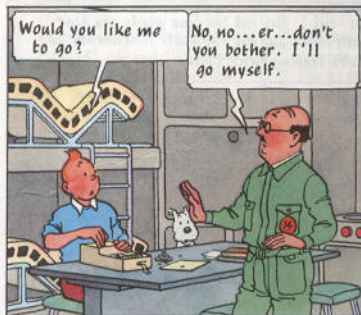


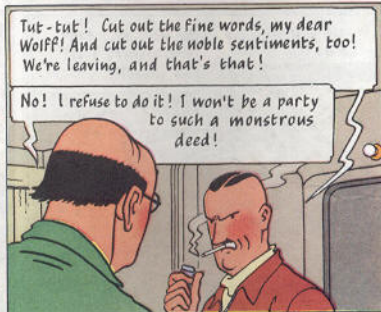
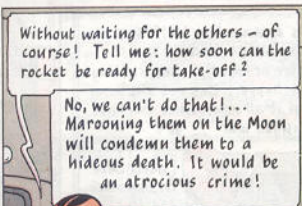
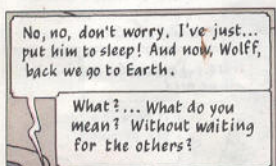
Moon-Rocket calling... Tintin here. Good luck and good hunting!... And don't leave us alone for too long!



Calculus here... Don't worry, Tintin. We'll be back in forty-eight hours.

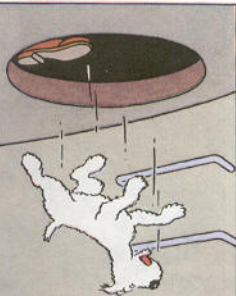
I don't know why, by thunder, but something tells me it would be wiser to turn back!





Why... What are you doing? How can that poor animal do you any harm?

You never can tell, Wolff! This wretched mongrel could make trouble for us later on.



So that's that! And now, my friend, you're going to cook me a nice hot meal. For eight days I've been living on dry sandwiches, and I've had enough of them! ... get moving! ... And don't waste any time!

Then we set off for the Earth. Ha! ha! ha! I'd like to see their faces when they find the rocket's gone! ... Killing!

Is that food coming, Wolff? I'm as hungry as a lion!

In a minute...!... Not long now...

Hello! Tank calling Base!

We've had a breakdown. The motor batteries are flat. A short-circuit, I expect. The Captain is just connecting the small emergency batteries, so that we can get back to Base.

By Lucifer! They're coming back! We must take off immediately! Leave your pots and pans, Wolff... We're on our way, at once!

At once? It's impossible. The motor has to be prepared for at least half an hour.

Fool! Couldn't you have remembered that sooner? Well, hurry! What are you waiting for?

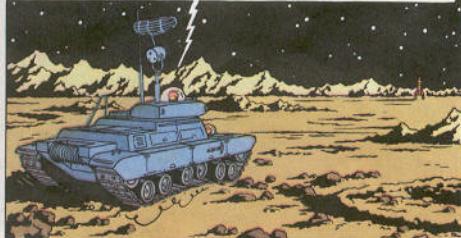
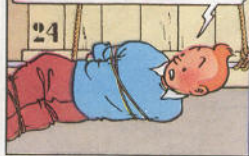
Meanwhile...

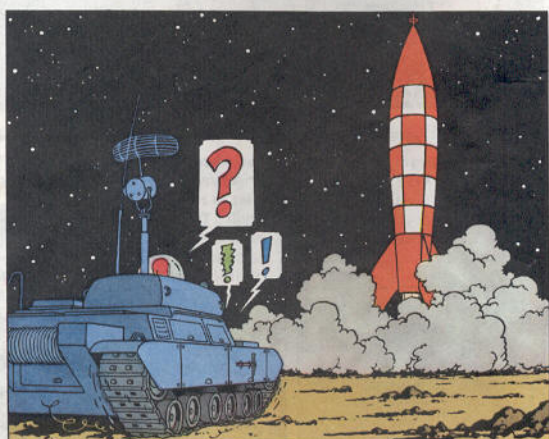
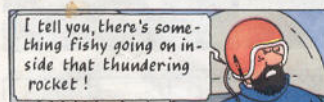
Crumbs, what am I doing here?... And ... Oooh my head! ... But what... I'm tied up!! ... What's happened to me?

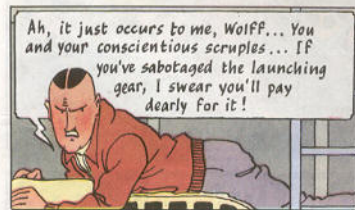
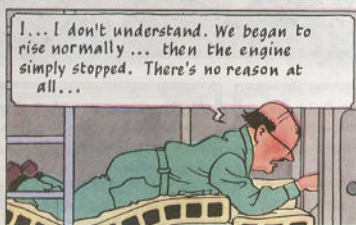
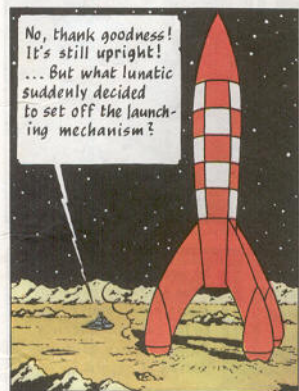
I don't understand at all. I... Why, what's that humming noise? Good heavens! It's the motor... But then... then... the rocket's going to take off...

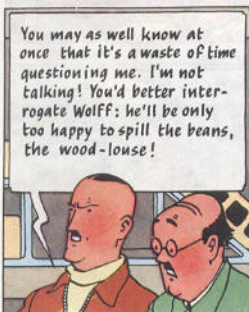
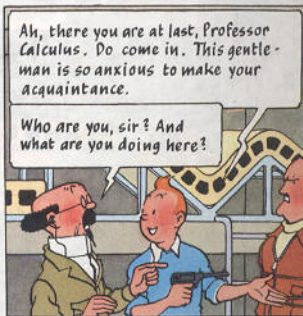
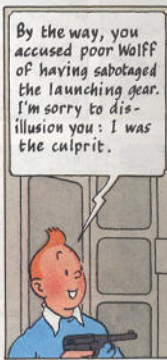
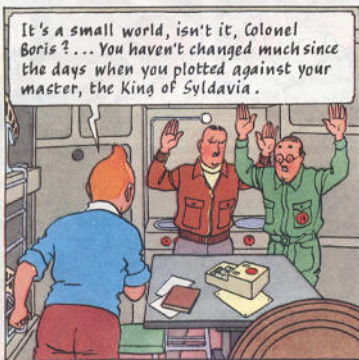
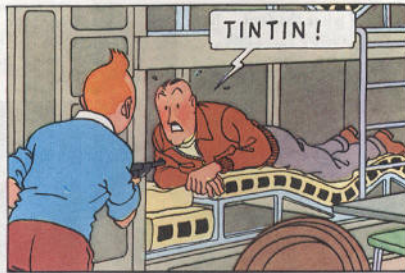
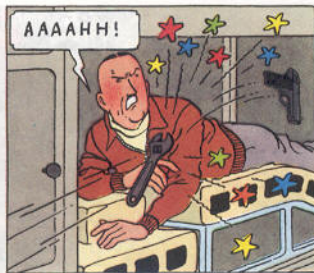
But where are the others? Prisoners like myself? But come to think of it... Poor devils! They went off in the tank... Are they going to be left on the Moon? Wolff! Wolff! HELP!

Tank calling Base... We're returning at reduced speed. We can see the rocket... Can you hear me?...









Quick, quick! I think Snowy's leg is broken!

What? I'm coming at once...



I'm afraid you're right. I saw him lying unconscious a few minutes ago. But there was other urgent work to be done. I'll carry him up to the cabin.



Well?

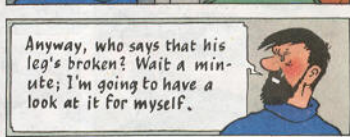
Yes, his leg's broken.



You hear that, you unfeeling monsters?... Vivisectionists!... Torturers!... Cannibals!



Anyway, who says that his leg's broken? Wait a minute; I'm going to have a look at it for myself.



Now then, Snowy boy. Captain Haddock's going to examine you... There... Let's see your paw... Does that hurt? No, not at all, eh?



!?



I... er... you see: I have a way with animals... It's one of my strong points. But I wonder if it wouldn't be better...



A few minutes later...

There we are, Snowy. A few days' rest, and you'll be fine.



Now then, back to these gentlemen. We're waiting for your explanation, Wolff.

Yes... I'll tell you everything.



Three years ago I was working in America at the rocket proving ground at White Sands. None of this would have occurred if I'd not had a passion for gambling... I got into debt... Then one day, in New York, a man approached me. He said he knew my situation, and was ready to settle my debts in exchange for a little harmless information...



...about the nuclear research I was engaged on. But little by little he put pressure on me to reveal real secrets. At first, I refused. But my creditors were hounding me. I was trapped... Finally I gave in... A spy - that's what I had become. But one day I rebelled. I wanted to become an honest man again, and I fled to Europe... In the end I came to Syltavia, where I heard they were building an atomic centre. I got a job there.



When you arrived in Sprodj I was happy, and had forgotten the whole business. Then one day I received a message. They had picked up my trail; they ordered me to furnish them with complete details of the experimental rocket we were just finishing. Otherwise my past would be revealed. Heart-stricken, I surrendered.



So it was you who betrayed all the plans, and all the radio-control data!

It was I; yes, it was I.



Then it was you who nearly stove my head in, too, when I was lying in wait in the corridor at the Centre. Well, you'll pay for that all right!



One moment, Captain. We too have a question to ask the prisoner.

Yes, a vital question!





What about the skeleton, Wolff? Was that you?

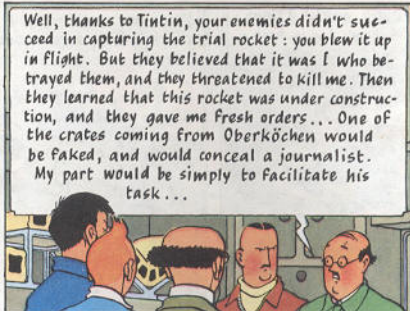
Yes, skeleton, were you the Wolff? Come on, answer up!



Blistering barnacles, this is a SERIOUS interrogation! In other words, anacolutous, you keep out of it!



All right, Wolff. Go on.

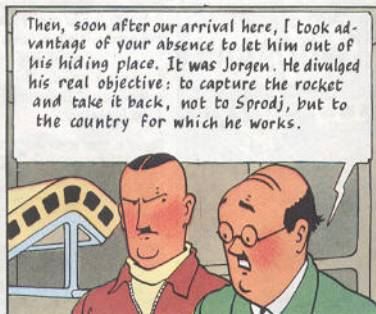


Well, thanks to Tintin, your enemies didn't succeed in capturing the trial rocket: you blew it up in flight. But they believed that it was I who betrayed them, and they threatened to kill me. Then they learned that this rocket was under construction, and they gave me fresh orders... One of the crates coming from Oberkochen would be faked, and would conceal a journalist. My part would be simply to facilitate his task...

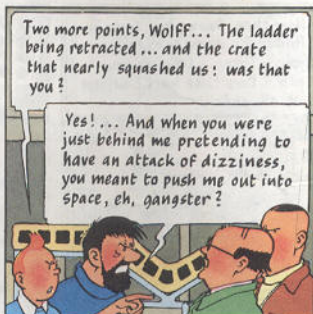


And you believed a fairy-tale like that? You two-faced traitor! A cock-and-bull story! It would make a cat laugh!

Er... they said he'd reveal his presence once the rocket reached the Moon.



Then, soon after our arrival here, I took advantage of your absence to let him out of his hiding place. It was Jorgen. He divulged his real objective: to capture the rocket and take it back, not to Sprodj, but to the country for which he works.



Two more points, Wolff... The ladder being retracted... and the crate that nearly squashed us: was that you?

Yes!... And when you were just behind me pretending to have an attack of dizziness, you meant to push me out into space, eh, gangster?



And I trusted you implicitly... Oh! Wolff!...



Well, go on.

Yes, out with it, Judas!



Today, when Tintin was alone on board and the rest of you had departed for forty-eight hours, the Colonel decided to act. At the given moment, Tintin went down into the hold...

That's to say, you'd been first, to set your accomplice free. Then you managed to arrange that I'd go down myself.



Er... yes... I stayed here, and it was he who knocked out Tintin. It was only afterwards that he told me of his plan to abandon you on the Moon. I tried to stop him... I swear I did!



I believe you. This is what happened then... When I came round I was in the hold, trussed up like a chicken... I heard the humming of the motor, and realised what was going on... Luckily for us, these two worthy characters were never Boy Scouts!



I mean that they don't know how to tie a knot! So I managed to get rid of my ropes without too much difficulty. And none too soon! The engine was just starting. As the rocket was rising, I severed all the leads. The motor stopped immediately, and the rocket fell back to the ground...

And thanks to Tintin, we were saved!



Saved?... Ah, my poor friends, I only hope that you are not rejoicing too soon!

Undoubtedly by cutting the leads Tintin averted disaster... for the time being. Alas, it is only too likely that in falling, the rocket suffered serious damage. And this will probably take time to repair. Meanwhile, there's still the grave problem of the oxygen... But let's hear the rest of your story, Tintin.



Where was I?... Oh yes. Once the rocket grounded, I opened the door of the air-lock and lowered the retractable ladder, so that you could get in. Then, having armed myself with a pistol and spanner, I came quietly up to the cabin... I found myself right in the middle of a family squabble...



This thug accused Wolff of sabotaging the launching gear, and was going to shoot him. My spanner knocked his gun out of his hand. Just in time, wasn't it, my dear Jorgen... as it seems that you are no longer Colonel Boris.



Why, do you know this pithecanthropus?

Oh yes, we met in Syldavia, over that business of King Ottokar's Sceptre. Under the name of Boris, he was aide-de-camp to King Muskari II, whom he shamefully betrayed. I won the first round, but for a while he seemed to be winning the second...



And now we'll dump these two down in the hold.

What?... While we risk running out of oxygen, we're going to clutter the place up with these pirates? They were going to abandon us on the Moon: well, that's the fate they deserve themselves, by thunder!



We must be more chivalrous than they were, Captain... Now, you're the expert, so take them below and tie them up securely.

As you like! But you'll live to regret your noble gesture. Mark my words: you'll regret it!



Anyway, my little lambs, I'm going to knit you lovely little rope waistcoats to keep you nice and warm! Hand-made, by thunder! Guaranteed absolutely perfect!



Do what you like with me. But please be kind enough to stop spluttering in my face-it's wet!



What?... Me?... Wet?... Blistering barnacles, you dare... A man of spirit like me! To hear myself insulted, by this creature, this Bashi-bazouk!

Calm down, Captain, calm down!



Calm down? Calm down?... But you heard him, this little black-beetle! Daring to make out that I'm wet! Calm down! I like that, from you!



To call me wet!... What a nerve!



Calculus has got one.

Yes, I'll fetch it



Come now, Captain, the incident is closed. Go on down to the hold with the two prisoners.

That's right. In the meantime I'll get in touch with the Earth and tell them what's been happening.



Moon-Rocket calling Earth. There have been extremely serious developments here... A traitor, in the service of some unknown Power, was secretly smuggled aboard the rocket.

... Wolff was his accomplice... Yes, Wolff!... Today they went into action and tried to seize control of the rocket. Fortunately we have managed to overpower them, and put a stop to their mischief...



Meanwhile...

There! If you succeed in getting yourselves undone, blistering barnacles, I'll sign the pledge and drink nothing but water for the rest of my days!



A few minutes later...

That's done! Our two chump chops are now on ice!

Good. Now for my news...



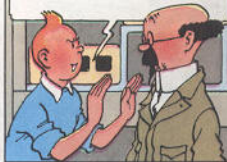
I've just made a superficial inspection of the damage to the rocket. My preliminary estimate is that it will take us at least a hundred hours to effect the necessary repairs.



To that must be added the time for our return journey. We have oxygen supplies for a hundred hours at the most, which means that having used our last resources to re-launch the rocket, we shall run the risk of arriving on Earth as corpses.



Perhaps! But meanwhile we're still very much alive. And we'll start work at once. At all costs we must get everything finished in the shortest possible time!



Moon-Rocket to Earth. We're going to begin the repair work. Give us some music: it will keep up our morale.



Earth to Moon-Rocket. We'll switch on Radio-Klow for you. Keep your spirits up!



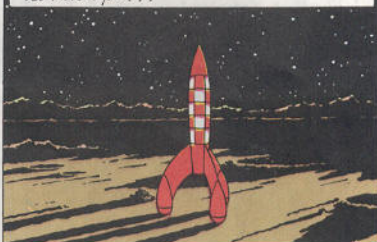
Come on, come on, cry-babies! To work! And none of those gloomy thoughts. We're going to have some music. Thundering typhoons, there's nothing like a bit of music to cheer you up!



This is Radio-Klow. Our programme continues with "The Gravedigger", by Schubert.



The time passes... Slowly, the lunar night falls on the desolate landscape...



Seventy-two hours have gone by...

Moon-Rocket to Earth... The work is well ahead. Barring accidents, we shall have finished by midday... However, we are having to abandon the tank and the optical instruments on the Moon. To dismantle them and then reload them would take too long, in view of the little oxygen remaining.



We are only keeping the recording instruments, the cameras, and, of course, the oxygen cylinders from the tank. They constitute our final reserves. Tintin and the Captain have gone to collect them. I'm switching over now, as I want to keep in touch with them.



Right.



Hello Tintin... Calculus here... How are you getting on?

All right, thanks. But the sun has completely vanished. Only the mountain-tops are still glowing on the horizon...

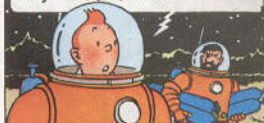


But it's not preventing us from seeing, as there's a wonderful light from the Earth.



Pom Pom Pom ♪ And they danced ♪ by the ♪ light of ♪ the Earth ♪

We have left a message sealed inside the tank for those who may one day follow in our steps. If we are lost with all hands, this message will be a reminder of the fantastic adventures of the first men on the Moon. Now we are coming back on board.



A few minutes later...

Everything's in order, Professor.

Good. Well, I've finished all the repairs. Earth have just given me the result of their reckoning. Take-off should be at 1652 hours. So we have about two hours to go.



I advise you to lie down, to save oxygen. But before doing that, Captain, would you go to the hold and make the prisoners lie down as well, so that they won't suffer too much.

What?? And would you like me to take them breakfast in bed?



Keeping them is crazy enough! But to coddle them like babes in arms... blistering barnacles, that's the limit! Still, I'll go.



Patience! I've not struck my last blow yet! But ssh! Someone's coming...



Two hours later...

Earth calling Moon-Rocket... Stand by... Stand by...



Thirty seconds to go... Twenty seconds to go... Ten seconds to go... nine... eight... seven... six... Five... four... three... two... one... ZERO!



I press the button... and pray that everything works properly! Otherwise, we're condemned to death!





Success!... Wonderful!...
Marvellous!... We're off!



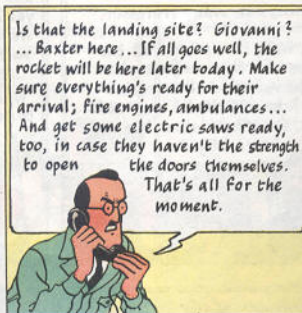
And just for a change, blistering bar-
nacles, we're going to pass out!



*And upon the shadowy world a few
footsteps remain, the only trace of the
first EXPLORERS ON THE MOON.*



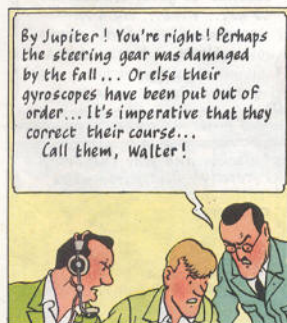
They're on their way! The only thing
that matters now is that they should
have enough oxygen... But whatever hap-
pens, everything must be prepared for landing.



Is that the landing site? Giovanni?
... Baxter here... If all goes well, the
rocket will be here later today. Make
sure everything's ready for their
arrival; fire engines, ambulances...
And get some electric saws ready,
too, in case they haven't the strength
to open the doors themselves.
That's all for the
moment.



I say, Mr. Baxter, there's something
wrong! Look: the rocket is deviating
from the correct line of flight.
I wonder what's happening...



By Jupiter! You're right! Perhaps
the steering gear was damaged
by the fall... Or else their
gyroscopes have been put out of
order... It's imperative that they
correct their course...
Call them, Walter!



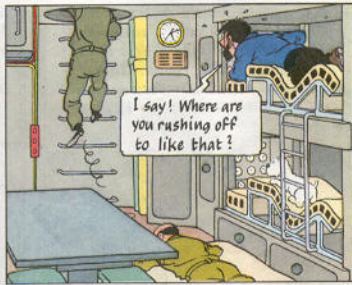
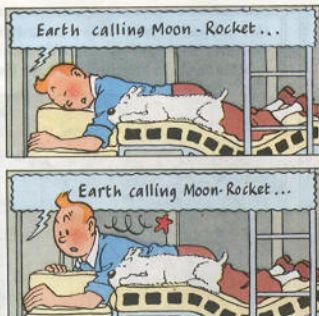
This is Earth calling
Moon-Rocket... Earth
calling Moon-Rocket
... Are you receiving
me?...



No reply!... And they're
getting further and fur-
ther away! The poor devils!
They're going to their death!



Earth calling
Moon-Rocket... Are
you receiving me?



Come on, hands up!... That's right... The boot's on the other foot now, isn't it, gentlemen? Congratulations: you have two brilliant colleagues behind those moustaches!



Ha! ha! ha!... When they came to check on our ropes, they decided that handcuffs would be more secure!... And I'm ready to bet they won't get them undone in a hurry!



But that's enough talk! Gentlemen: you know the position. There isn't enough oxygen to go round. There are too many of us here. You spared my life: but I'm not going to spare yours!



But... but... you gave me your word that they would come to no harm.

And you were silly enough to believe me!... Out of my way: let me finish them off!



No, Jorgen, no!... You shall not do it!... Never!

What's got into you? Let go of me!



Will you get out!... Let go!... Let go of that, you fool!

Hold him, Wolff!



BANG!



Earth to Moon-Rocket... What's happened? We heard something that sounded like a shot...



It's all over, Nothing we can do.



Moon-Rocket to Earth... Calculus here... I... It's terrible... Jorgen managed to free himself... He wanted to kill us... and Wolff intervened... There was a fight... Jorgen had a gun in his hand... and in the struggle it went off... Jorgen was shot right through the heart.



I... I didn't mean to... He did it... himself...

I know, Wolff. You needn't blame yourself for what has just happened... Here are your glasses... Come and take your place among us again: I trust you.

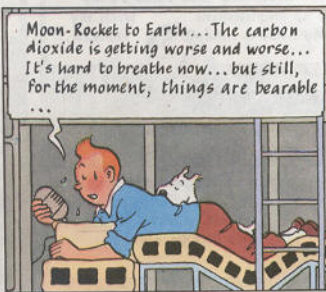
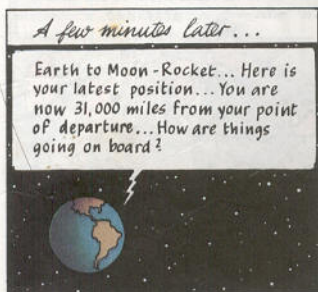
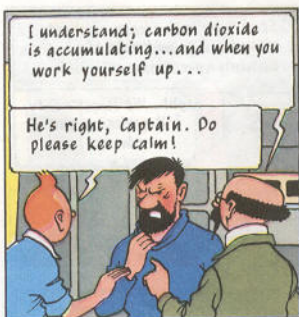


What!! This interplanetary-pirate! This fresh-water-spaceman! Let him go free! Then, at the first opportunity this snake can... can stab us in the back! Into the hold with him, blistering barnacles! Into the hold, and in irons!



But... I... What's... what's the matter with me?





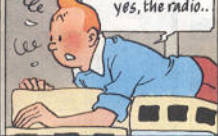
Half an hour later...

Earth calling Moon-Rocket...
Can you hear me?... Earth
calling Moon-Rocket... Can
you hear me? ...



Can you hear me?...
MOON-ROCKET!

What?...What's
that?... Oh
yes, the radio..



Moon-Rocket to
Earth...Tintin
here...

Ah! You
really scared
us!

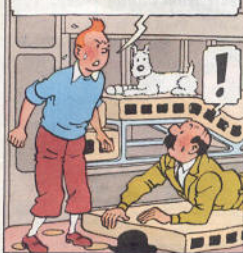


Stand by...You have a quarter
of an hour to go before the
turning operation.

Right. We'll get ready.
I'll wake up the
others.



Wake up!... Everybody on
the alert! Put on your mag-
netic-soled boots. In a
quarter of an hour we have
to turn the rocket round



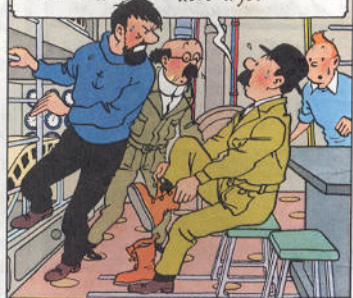
Ugh! More of those confounded acrobatics!
I was just dreaming that I was by my
fireside at Marlinspike,
cat on my knee...and
with my
instead...



WOLFF!... Blistering barn-
acles, where's Wolff?...
His bunk's empty!



Don't worry, Captain, I know where
Wolff is... He went down to the hold a
few min-utes ago.



And you let him go, you nitwitted nin-
pin, you?... Even when I'd told you
to keep an eye on him?

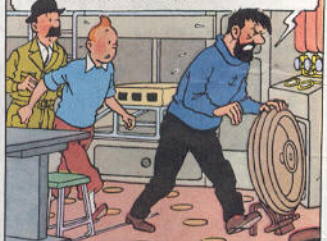
I did keep an eye on him;
he told me himself
he was going to the hold.



And you were so keen to play the
big-hearted hero!... Heaven
knows what treachery that wolf
in sheep's clothing is cooking up
for us!...



Down to the hold, quick! It may
not be too late!



What sitting ducks we'll make if
our friend decides to have a little
target-practice!

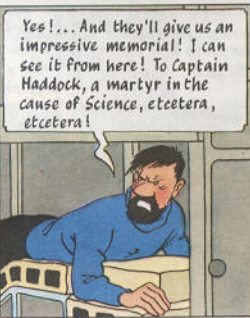
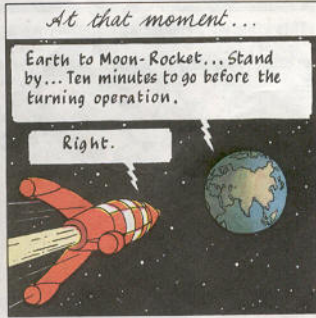
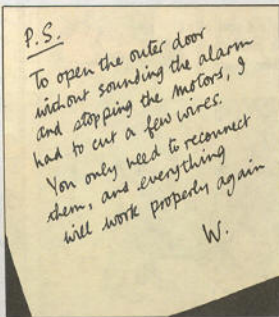
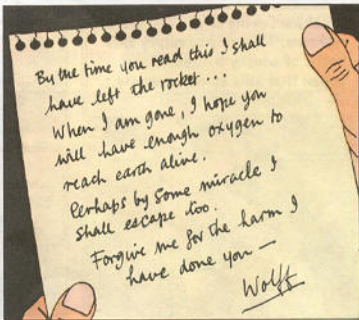
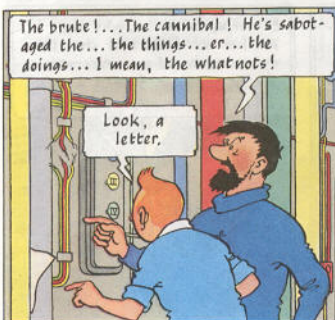


Now, where's he
hiding, the
gangster!



Thousands of thundering typhoons!
There!... What did I tell you?... Look!





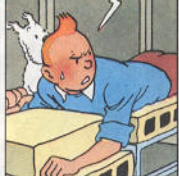
What am I going to do? Thundering typhoons, I'm going to empty this bottle of whisky! Alcohol is a poison that kills slowly, they say... As slowly as it likes...



...so as far as I am concerned! It can take its time. I'm in no hurry!



That's enough, Captain! Go and lie down. This is no time to get drunk!



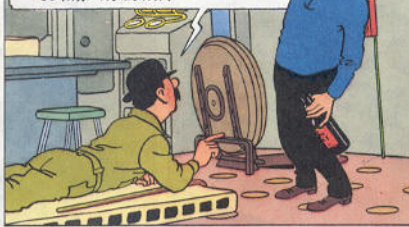
Blistering barnacles, why not? Was I or was I not told that the spirits on board were reserved for an emergency? Well, wasn't I?...



It's a thousand to one that we're going to end up as a crate of kippers! Ten thousand thundering typhoons, isn't that an emergency?!



Captain, I would remind you that drunkenness on the public highway is against the law. Go and lie down!

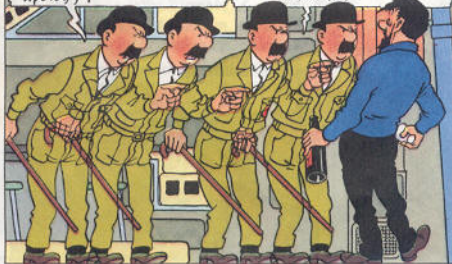


You... you two... ect-ectoplasms!... They needed two P-P-Punch- and Judy men on the p-p-pier... You-you sh-sh-should have stayed there...



This time we demand an apology!

Yes, we apologise on demand!



F-F-four to one... I... I give... give up...



Half-an-hour Later...

Moon-Rocket to Earth... The air's becoming unbreathable... The last cylinder from the space-suits has been used up... The others are already unconscious... I wonder if we can possibly get back alive.



This is Baxter... Hang on, Tintin! You have only about fifty thousand miles to go... just about another hour. Courage, Tintin! Don't lose heart!... All will be well!



Thanks... Mr. Baxter... I'll do my best... to hold on till... the end... but I... I...



I'm afraid... I... shan't have... the strength... Goodbye!... Goodbye!



Goodbye! Yes, it's goodbye! May you all perish up there! Jorgens and Wolff bungled their work. We shall not get your accursed rocket... Well, may you go to the devil in it!...



For nearly an hour the rocket
hurtles on towards the Earth.

Earth to Moon-Rocket... Stand by...
You have only about 8,000 miles
to go... Get ready to set the auto-
matic pilot...

Moon-Rocket... to Earth... Tintin
here... I understand... I'll try...
to rouse... the... Professor.

Professor! Professor!... We're nearly
home... Wake up... We've got to...
set the automatic pilot...

Professor! For goodness'
sake!... Professor please
... It... it's no good... I can't
rouse him... Now what's to
be done?

I've... I've simply got to...
try... myself... There's no
one but me... Oh, I'm
stifling...

I must... I must get to
... to the ladder...

I've done it...
But... shall I ever
have the strength

This... awful...
dizziness!

Earth to Moon-Rocket... Are you
in the control cabin?

Come on... one
last effort...

Earth calling...

I'm nearly
...there...

Earth to Moon-Rocket...
Earth to Moon-Rocket...
Hurry up and set the auto-
matic pilot... Earth to Moon-
Rocket... Can you hear
me?

Moon-Rocket...
Can you hear me!
... Moon-Rocket!

Earth to Moon-Rocket... Can you hear me?... For
heaven's sake answer!... There's not a moment to
lose!... You are plunging to disaster!



Earth to Moon-Rocket! In heaven's name, Tintin, answer!



It's hopeless. He must have passed out. Quick, Walter, make a tuning signal, as piercing as you possibly can... It's the only way to bring him back to his senses.

Yes, we can try.



What?... Yes... yes... I... the... automatic pilot...



I... Hello... Tintin here... Stop... the whistling... I'm... I'm just setting the automatic pilot... I... think that's done it...

Ah, just in time!



Well done, Tintin... Go and lie on your bunk now... Have you the strength to do that?... Hello Tintin?... Hello!

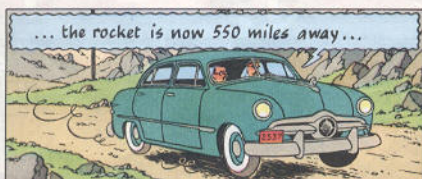


He must have fainted again... Never mind, he's done the essential thing... I'll dash over to the landing site now.

Right. We'll keep in touch with you by radio.



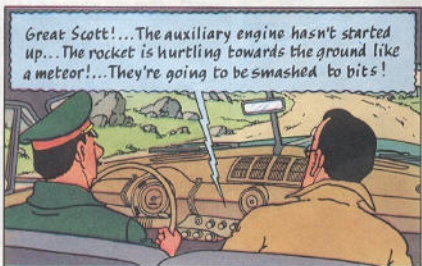
Observatory to Control... The rocket is only 900 miles from the Earth. In a few moments the auxiliary engine will take over from the nuclear motor.



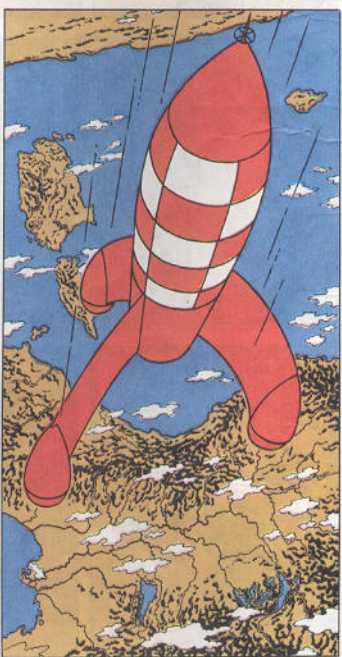
... the rocket is now 550 miles away...



That's it... The nuclear motor has just cut out. The auxiliary engine will start up in a moment or two... But what's happening?



Great Scott!... The auxiliary engine hasn't started up... The rocket is hurtling towards the ground like a meteor!... They're going to be smashed to bits!



Hooray! The auxiliary engine has just started up at last! ... In twenty minutes the rocket will touch down!

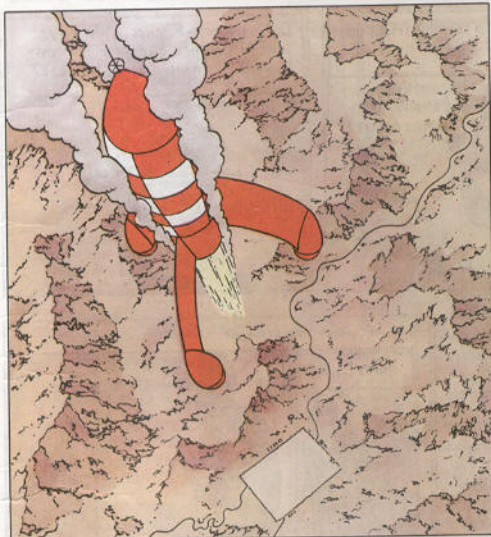
Let's pray they may still be alive!



Meanwhile at the landing site, observers anxiously search the sky for a sight of the rocket.



Look! There she is!



By Jupiter, look! ... There's a car just setting off across the apron!



By thunder! It's Mr. Baxter's car! They obviously can't have seen the rocket coming! They'll risk it falling right on top of them ... they'll be flattened ... or roasted!

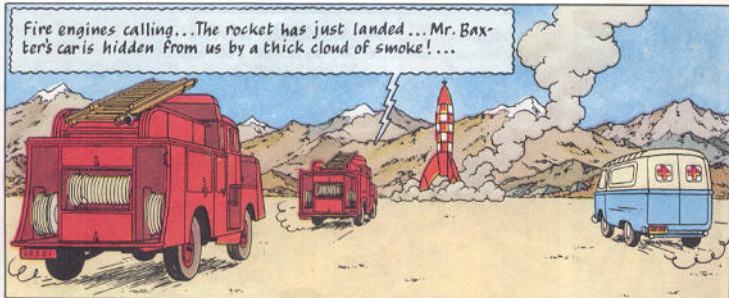


Help! The rocket! Stop, driver, stop!! ...

Hurry up, driver... We must be well under cover before the rocket lands!



Fire engines calling...The rocket has just landed...Mr. Baxter's car is hidden from us by a thick cloud of smoke!...



I'm afraid the car must be burning and its occupants... No! no!... There they are!

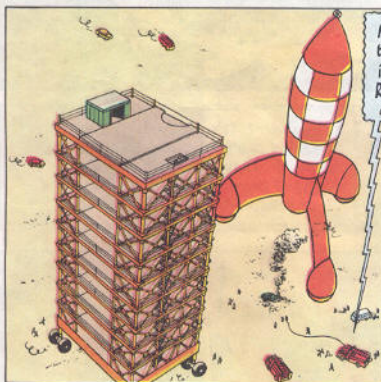
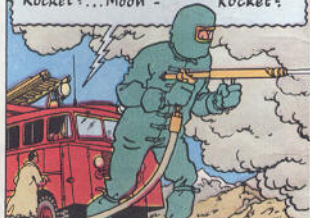


Ah, Mr. Baxter! What a terrible fright you gave us!... Not hurt?... No burns?...



No, nothing... But the rocket... Call the rocket!

Calling Moon-Rocket... You have landed!... Open the door... Moon-Rocket?... Moon - Rocket?



Moon-Rocket... The gantries are being moved into position... Moon-Rocket, I repeat, open the door!

No answer... We must cut open the hull... Bring the electric saws.

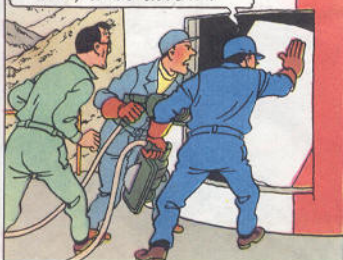


A few minutes later...

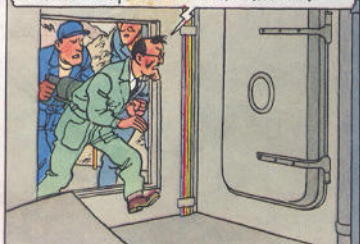
Hurry!...Hurry!



There, that's done it!

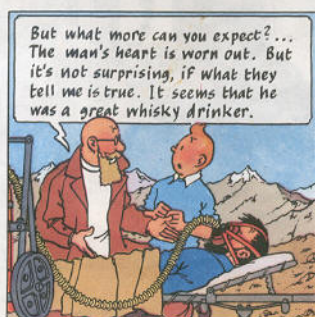
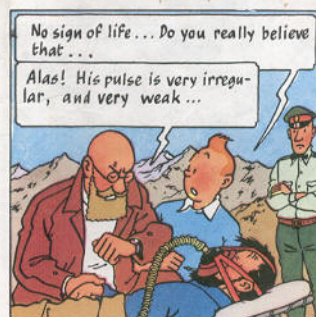


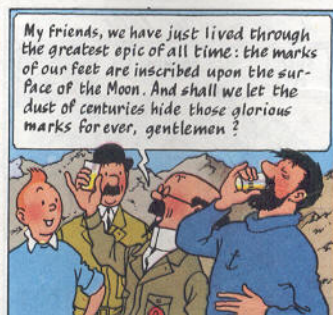
Now for the door of the air-lock! This one can be opened from the outside!



There... Heavens, not a sound! I feel as if I'm entering a tomb...







THE END