

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org) at <http://download.archiveofourown.org/works/4628598>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Tintin (Comics)
Character:	Tintin - Character , Archibald Haddock , Milou Snowy
Additional Tags:	Canon Compliant , canon typical exclamations of discovery , Mythical Beings & Creatures , Ghosts
Collections:	The Exchange at Fic Corner 2015
Stats:	Published: 2015-08-22 Words: 5950

Tintin in the Maze of the Minotaur

by Anonymous

Summary

Tintin takes Haddock with him on an assignment in Greece. Complications crop up immediately.

Notes

Thank you to [Snacky](#) and Rav for their excellent jobs as betas.

I read some interviews with Herge as part of my research for this story and he said Tintin starts at about fifteen and ends at nineteen, so I put him nebulously between those years. I also made a sort of vague noise when I had to specify where Tintin lived because I was never really sure if he lived in the city or Marlinspike Hall. Or both.

Brush used for the background of the separation graphic by leichnam.deviantart.com.



It was summer. Belgium was sweltering in it. This was, in fact, very unusual for Belgium's mild weather. Captain Archibald Haddock was having none of it.

The sweltering humidity left water the temperature of soup in seconds, the lakes sad and shrunken, and the shower only providing hot and hotter. His plans to beat the extraordinary heat were getting more elaborate by the failure. The morning saw a cold bath, lunch was ice in the bath, and then ice cascading in the corners like smashed glasses, and finally, he was on the roof with an invention of Calculus' to catch the wind.

Tintin had decided that returning to the country early was in his best interests, as surely the weather would be fairer than in the city. He was proven wrong as soon as he got off the train, but was in good spirits despite. He was walking up the path to Marlinspike Hall just in time to see Haddock's canvas wings get caught in the wind and send him off into the sky like a kite.

"Captain!" yelled Tintin, rushing to tree where Haddock landed with a loud thump and cry. Behind Tintin, Snowy chased along, merrily barking.

"Blistering barnacles! Blithering branches! Get me down from here!"

"I'm trying, Captain," said Tintin as he grabbed the lowest branch and pulled himself up. "Are you all right?"

"I've got leaves where no man should have leaves, of course I'm not all right!" The branches shook as the Captain struggled. Tintin managed to grab onto the Captain's arm and started the process of disentangling him from the torn canvas.

"What were you doing up there?" he asked, pulling a sharp looking branch out of a hole in the 'wing.' At the bottom of the tree, Snowy gave an ongoing commentary of barks and rumbles.

"Calculus said it would help him monitor the weather and I thought it'd be a decent way to cool down. I'm a blasted fool for even touching one of his inventions!" said Haddock. "And he's the bigger fool for coming up with this! Tintin, I can't take another moment of this damned heat. It's driving me to madness!"

"You're in luck then, my dear Captain," said Tintin, getting Haddock's other arm free. "I've just got an assignment to go to Greece from my editor. We can be gone by tomorrow if we're quick enough."

Haddock scowled at him, then fell out of the tree.

"Captain!"

"First of all," said Haddock, face down in the grass, "it is hotter in Greece than it ever gets here. Second of all, we're going because I'd rather be sweltering somewhere interesting."

"I'll go set up the tickets right away then?" said Tintin, looking down from his perch in the tree.

Snowy licked Haddock's face as the Captain struggled up, still swaddled by Calculus' invention. "Yes, yes. And tell Nestor to pack our bags. I'll be having an ice bath. For my back."



"Mm," said Haddock, digging into his meal on the train. "I just realized something. I've gone and forgotten an important detail."

Tintin swallowed his bite of chicken and looked curiously at Haddock. "Forgot what, Captain?"

"You never told me what your assignment *was*. It's not something that's going to get us into more trouble, is it?" Haddock squinted accusingly. He stabbed his fork down and missed. The broccoli skittered to the side of the plate. Another stab skittered to the side, betrayed by the lip of the plate. The broccoli flew off the plate and Snowy snapped it out of the air. The little dog realized what it was, and spat it out with a disgusted look.

"It's just an archaeological dig, Captain," said Tintin, cutting up another slice of chicken. "It'll be nice and easy. You can rest by the seaside and I'll write my story."

Haddock nodded approvingly. The whole Greek seaside would see his pale hairy Belgian legs as he gallivanted in the surf. He could already picture it. It sounded worlds better than melting at Marlinspike Hall, even if it was burningly hot in Greece as well.

Not that he trusted Tintin to actually stay out of trouble.

"Snowy, stop begging, I'm not feeding you from the table," said Tintin, bopping Snowy on the nose. "It's on the Island of Crete, they found a trove of ancient vases and bodies!"

"You're taking me to a murder scene! I knew it!" accused Haddock loudly. Everyone in the dining car turned to stare at them.

"Very *old* bodies, Captain. Thousands of years old."

"Oh," said Haddock. He hunched down to work on his food. "You can all stop staring!" He snapped at the other diners. People forced themselves to turn away from them.

"Maybe you should keep Snowy with you while I'm at the dig site," said Tintin. "You know how he gets around bones."

"Foul beast," said Haddock fondly.



Haddock, striped suit happily adorned and legs bared, strode into the surf. It was perfect. It was, against all odds, actually cooler in Crete than it was in Belgium. He'd never been this lucky to get a cool day visiting Greece in his sailing days, but he was enjoying it now.

At the edge of the water, Snowy barked angrily at a crab that was making threatening moves at his tail.

"You leave that bloody crab alone, you blasted hound. Get in here if you're going to," called out Haddock, wading deeper.

Snowy sat on shore and looked disapproving instead of joining. Haddock supposed it was for the best. After Tintin, Snowy was the worst for trouble. The little dog would probably be taken by a kraken and Haddock would have to fight it barehanded before Tintin discovered it was part of a widespread plot to topple the government.

Haddock felt an ache to drink and ignored it.

"This is it, dog!" he said. "Sand and surf! Just the right vacation!"

Snowy barked.

"Leave that crab alone!"

Snowy barked louder.

Haddock turned around to give Snowy a piece of his mind just in time to see a large trench coated man grab the small white dog and run.

Ah, thought Haddock. It begins..



To understand what was happening with Snowy and Haddock, we must go back three hours to when Tintin arrived at the dig site. When he got there it was nearly abandoned, with none of the archaeologists, diggers, or students that Tintin was expecting.

Instead there was a group of armed men leaning against the digging equipment sharing a green bottle between them.

One of them spotted Tintin and lifted his rifle, cocking it and pointing it at Tintin. He shouted in Greek.

"No, don't run! Come here, we'd like to speak to you!"

"I must have taken a wrong turn," answered Tintin in passable Greek. "This isn't my hotel at all." He started to back up slowly.

A bullet fired into the ground by his feet.

"You. Come now," said the man. He reached with his other hand to take the green bottle and took a long swig. By now the other men had their guns trained on Tintin. "We're just going to talk, right? No need to run."

Tintin put his hands up and let himself be led away.

His mind was working furiously. Where were the workers? Where was Doctor Xenos, his contact for the story? She hadn't contacted him to say that anything was amiss and they'd talked just that morning over the telephone. The dig site was huge, had the gunmen managed to spirit away everyone?

His answer to that was given immediately when a chunk of rock sailed into the head of the gunman at the head of the group. He went down with a cry. The other men went into a frenzy, trying to find the source of the rock and Tintin took his chance, pelting away towards a nearby cave. Hopefully it was deep enough that he could get far enough away from the gunmen and could escape to find help.

There was a flicker of red from a rock above him and a woman with a scarlet scarf landed at the entrance of the cave from a hiding spot, and gestured at him to follow.

"I'll bet anything," said Tintin, "that I've just met Doctor Xenos!"

And into the cave he went.



Haddock was chasing after Snowy's kidnapper, yelling at the top of his lungs. "You dog snatcher! You almanac! You tripod!" There was murder in his voice. It joined with Snowy's panicked howling.

Haddock wasn't that fast on his feet and was falling behind when the dognapper made a sudden loud stop by crashing into two very familiar sunbathers.

"I say!" yelled the first one, curled mustache bristling.

"You watch yourself!" yelled the second, straight mustache bristling.

It was Thompson and Thomson. Snowy took the chance to give the dognapper a sharp bite to the wrist and escaped towards Haddock.

"Land's sakes, you blistering fools," yelled Haddock, "GRAB THAT MAN!"

The dognapper, gripping his wrist, managed to pull himself up and flee just as the detectives' arms whiffed on thin air.

"You let him get away!" panted Haddock, hands on his knees. "He was right in your laps!"

Snowy looked reproachfully at them.

"It's all very well and good for you to go around throwing blame," said Thompson, "but the matter is we were woken from a sound sleep."

"To be precise," said Thomson, "we slept our way through the whole capture!"

"You did not capture anyone," said Haddock. "Arrest that man. Find him and arrest him."

"Oh we will, Captain. In fact, that's why we're here. There's been a spate of dognappings as of late and even the prime minister's dear little borzoi has been whisked away. We were asked to come in personally to do what we could."

"Borzoi aren't--" began Haddock, only for Thompson to step in.

"We're to leave no stone unturned!"

"No bush unchecked!"

"Then how did he steal Snowy from right under your noses?" demanded Haddock.

The detectives looked sheepish.

"We were undercover and well, we must have dozed off."

"To be precise, we dozed off when we went under covers," corrected the other detective, gesturing at their beach towels they'd been under for their nap.

"Hmph," said Haddock, picking up Snowy protectively. "A fine day at the beach ruined. You're as much of a trouble magnet as Tintin!"

"Whooa whoooooaa," whined Snowy as Haddock carried him off.



When Tintin caught up with his rescuer, she had stopped to catch her breath. She had curly black hair barely contained in a bun, a Grecian nose, and the scarlet scarf was being used to wipe her brow.

"Keeping on the run from those men is hard work!" she said. "They won't come this far in. We're safe."

"Thanks for the rescue. Doctor Natasa Xenos, I presume?" He held out his hand.

"You've got me dead to rights, yes. I hope you're Tintin," she said, shaking his hand. "I don't need *two* teenage boys to rescue."

"I was just on time for our appointment," he said. "What happened here? Where is everyone?"

"Those fools have them locked up on the other side of the camp with a bunch of dogs. I managed to get overlooked because I was deep inside the old labyrinth looking at some remains. They're a superstitious lot, I learned that fast. I hope my assistant is filling their heads with tales of ghosts to keep them that way. There *is* a ghost, but it's no good to us if they don't believe in it!" said Doctor Xenos.

"Labyrinth? Ghost?" asked Tintin.

Xenos grinned widely. "Labyrinth. It's amazing to just say it, but we've found the maze of the Minotaur!"

Then she added:

"And it's haunted."



By evening, Haddock realized something had gone wrong. Tintin hadn't called or sent word from the site that he'd been delayed and there was no sign of him. Snowy was starting to whine and sniff the door, looking for his master.

"You cut that out, you blasted canine," said Haddock. "He's not going to come back any sooner from your bellyaching!"

Snowy looked at the Captain reproachfully.

"Well, he won't. He's probably just caught up in writing up his notes. You know how he can get," Haddock said. He couldn't even convince himself, let alone Snowy.

Snowy started howling.

"Fine!" said Haddock. "I'll see if I can get us transport to the island, now shut it!"

Snowy looked smug.

An hour later Haddock was piloting a small motorboat with a mounted lamp through the darkness to the remote area of the dig site. Tintin had left behind his detailed directions, much to Haddock's luck.

Snowy stood with his paws on the helm of the boat, droplets of saltwater and wind whipping through his fur. He looked determined.

"You're just trying to get at those bones, you mangy thing," said Haddock.

Snowy did not dignify that with a response.

Haddock noted, as he docked the boat, that where there should be lights everywhere there were maybe one or two, as if they were left on by carelessness.

That, Haddock realized, did not bode well. He hushed Snowy and began to make his way towards where the camp should be further inland. Snowy crept along beside him, hackles raising the closer they got to the camp. They could hear the whining of dogs and the low rumbling of voices.

He pulled Snowy to his chest when he saw the men at the camp. They were sitting around a fire. Rough looking fellows with guns, and a very angry short man yelling at them. The short man wore a fine suit and held a cigar. The other men wore utilitarian clothes, and smoked small cigarettes if they were smoking at all.

There were two sets of prisoners. Dogs in cages (and indeed there *was* a magnificent huge borzoi in one), and the others were chained-up people in clothes suited to working at an archaeological site. Haddock gave a start. If the archaeologists and their workers had been captured, what had happened to Tintin?

The small man was ranting. "You let both of them get away! I want you to get in there the moment it's dawn and force them out! I need her if we're going to get anywhere with this! You

idiots, what if they'd managed to call for help?"

"Boss," said the largest of the rough looking men, who had a bandage around his head, "it's not like there's any other way out. We just have to wait."

"What I want to know is why you didn't just go in after them," said the small man, pointing an accusing finger. The grunts shifted uncomfortably.

"You don't want to just go into a place like that," said the largest man, who Haddock deduced must be the leader of the grunts.

"And why not? It's just an old cave!"

"It's not just a cave, it's where the Minotaur lives," said the man. "And there's ghosts. Vicious ones that'll tear you apart. They're probably not even alive in there anymore."

Ha, thought Haddock. Ghosts! What glorified gibberish.

"Ghosts! You and your stupid ghosts!"

"Then what killed Pavlos, huh? He died screaming. You don't pay us enough to go in there," said the large man.

Haddock went still, suddenly reconsidering his ideas about ghosts.

The small man glowered, but offered no further argument except to tell them to guard the entrance.

The grunts nodded and two split off towards a dark opening to the far side of the camp.

The cave, thought Haddock. He'd have to get past them to get to Tintin.

"Tomorrow," said the small man, "We're going to use the dogs. And you'll see there's no ghosts then."

The large man snorted. "We know why the dogs are safe. The diggers told us. Hecate, the goddess of ghosts, has chosen all hounds as hers. No, they'll be safe but we'll die like Pavlos!"

"Not another word of your damned superstitions!" yelled the small man as he stormed off. Shortly the engine of a car started and the rough men all relaxed as one and started gossiping amongst themselves. The young man who'd escaped and the bedamned doctor who'd walloped their leader were the topic of the night.

Haddock crept off with Snowy. He had to find means to rescue the diggers.



Doctor Xenos finally stopped to give Tintin a rest an hour into the labyrinth.

"How do you know where we're going?" asked Tintin, sitting on part of a collapsed wall.

Xenos tapped her red-tinted glasses. "I've painted a path along the walls that only people with the

right lenses can see. It's our own ball of yarn. I needed a way through without visibly damaging the ruins, you see."

"How close are we to the centre?" asked Tintin.

"I don't know," admitted Xenos. "This place is as fiendishly clever as the legends say. This is the two line path, that leads to close to where we believe the heart is, but we were attacked at lunch! I'd hoped to find the center before you arrived for the article. Those thugs are trouble in more ways than one, Tintin."

"So those remains you told me you found..." Tintin trailed off, noticing old dark stains on the walls.

"All throughout the maze. All youths. I don't know what we're going to find in the middle, but it'll be the talk of the century, Tintin. And you're here to cover it."

"Doctor Xenos, your workers have been captured by gunmen! This isn't time for an article!" said Tintin, flabbergasted.

"It's not like we can rescue them right now, can we?" she replied. "So on with the show. I need to know." Her red lenses glinted in the lamplight.

"No, we have to go back. Stop them. Why did they do this?"

"They want what's inside as much as I do. They believe that the maze contains an ancient weapon, not some mythical monster. But what would have torn apart those children? No, those weren't the tooth marks of some wild dog," said Xenos. "I heard them interrogating the workers. They want to know if Daedalus' inventions are littered around the site like garbage. They wouldn't recognize Daedalus' work if it was staring them in the face!"

At least, Tintin thought to himself looking at the walls and the mess he and Xenos were in, Snowy and the Captain are safe back on the mainland.

He got up and followed Xenos further into the maze.



"Filth encrusted Malibu vacation yachts!" whisper-yelled Haddock as he once again stubbed his foot hard in the dark. The lamp he'd managed to find in the abandoned equipment inside the entrance was weak at best, useless at worst.

He threw it away and waited for his eyes to adjust to the faint moon behind the clouds. Yes... yes! He could make out where the phones were, finally. Unfortunately they were near the camp. He'd have to go back. Snowy, a dot of white in the darkness, was creeping along beside him.

"You're no stealth dog, but I appreciate the effort," said Haddock softly. "Stay behind me if things get dangerous. I'm not Tintin, I won't hold with you rushing off and making a mess of things."

Snowy huffed and kept creeping.

They came upon the camp, careful to stay out of sight, and then they listened. They could hear the

gunmen talking, dogs whimpering - at that Haddock had to put a hand on Snowy to keep him from joining in - and the sounds of chains clinking. If he could just get to the phones on the other side unseen and call the authorities!

"Please, sir!" a man's voice cried. "Let us go! We know nothing about what is inside the cave."

"Shut it, or it'll be another round of interrogation for you," said a rough man, then came the sound of someone spitting on the ground.

"You idiots, what do you even hope to gain?" said a third voice, a woman's.

"Money, my dear girl," said a voice that Haddock recognized as the small man's. He must have returned from his snit. "Imagine recreating Greek fire? Or something even more powerful! Daedalus was a genius! We have not seen his like since DaVinci and I intend to claim his legacy for myself and my backers. A weapon by Daedalus himself could be worth millions to the right man. Or country."

"Will you let us go? If you find something?" said the first man.

"If you had been more helpful, maybe I would have considered that. But you have been less than forthcoming, so I am afraid... well, you still have time to redeem yourselves," said the small man in an oily tone.

The first man gave out a short choked sob.

"Ignore him, Dimitri!" said the woman's voice. "He was never going to let us go. We will never give you the satisfaction, you little rat!"

"Young lady, what *are* they teaching you in university? When I attended school, they taught etiquette."

"They're teaching us not to bow down to warmongers like you!" shouted the woman.

Haddock chuckled approvingly as he made his way around the camp, until she cried out.

"That's enough of that!" said the small man. "And that goes for the rest of yo--"

"That slithering salamander! That magenta malarkey!" snarled Haddock, losing his head and charging out. "Why don't you pick on someone your own size, you little run--"

He stopped. He was in a circle of very surprised, large rough men with guns pointed at him, the small man with a pistol in his hand, and a group of shocked prisoners chained together. They were all staring at him.

"Er, ahem," said Haddock.

Snowy burst out a moment later and sunk his teeth into the small man's leg. Then all hell broke loose.



"Doctor, what do these marks mean?" asked Tintin, tracing his hand over an unusually deeply

carved set of ancient letters.

"That's a maker's mark. They're scattered throughout the labyrinth. They say," Doctor Xenos paused for a moment, studying the carvings, then continued. "They say Daedalus."

"Daedalus! You weren't being hypothetical at all, were you!" said Tintin, pulling out some paper to make a copy of the mark in the sputtering light of the lamp.

"We're just missing the skeleton of the beast itself to prove my theory. Everything fits, Tintin. The enormous labyrinth, the skeletons of the sacrifices, Daedalus' signature itself! Imagine, finding this at all," she said. She held the lamp closer to Tintin.

It was with the light so close to him, that Tintin noticed flicker of light off to the side, where the lamp shouldn't reach.

"Doctor Xenos..." He began. She hushed him harshly.

"Do not acknowledge it. Do not look at it."

Despite this, Tintin still began to turn his head, only for Xenos to grab it and force it to look forward, away from the light. Eventually the soft glow went away.

"What was that?" Tintin said, rubbing his neck. "You didn't need to do that, Doctor."

"I certainly did. It appeared when those men came here to seize the site. Well, that's when I saw it for the first time. My diggers say they saw it before. It killed the man who tried to touch it, so you'd best leave it alone."

"You've taken me from gunmen to ghosts, Doctor!" Tintin craned his head around, looking for signs of what had been there. Maybe footprints in the dust? But there was nothing.

"They say it's all manner of things. The goddess Ariadne guarding her old labyrinth, Hecate and her ghosts, the ghost of the Minotaur itself. Or one of the countless children that died here," Doctor Xenos explained, sitting on a fallen in piece of labyrinth. "I don't know what it is. I'm a woman of science, Tintin, but I've come to learn from this dig that there is more to this world than I knew a month ago."

"It's so cold where it was," said Tintin with a shiver.

"One of the diggers had an old mutt. Prideful thing, it acted like it was the king of Greece! The digger said that when the ghost would appear, his dog would scare it off with a bark. I could use a dog now," said Xenos. "It's been appearing near me since I escaped."

"I hope my own little dog's okay," said Tintin. He stepped away from the cold spot and sat down beside Xenos. "I don't think they're going to find us all the way in here. Are you sure you know the way out?"

"As long as I have my glasses, I can see the path," said Xenos.

"It's ingenious," said Tintin, getting up and starting to follow Xenos.

"We're near the end of the mapped out area now. I don't know what we'll be, besides safe. I'm sorry, Tintin. I meant to put this story of discovery out into the world, but it's become a horror story."

Tintin touched her arm gently. "It's not the end. I have friends out there who know I came here.

Maybe all this is, is a nice tour of the labyrinth and it's already safe!"

Xenos laughed, then her foot slipped on some loose pebbles. As she fell, there was the sound of shattering glasses.



Captain Haddock had had the good sense to punch out the biggest man when Snowy launched his attack. And keep punching. He would have been dead if he'd been further away and an easy target for shooting - as mixed in as he was with the men he was fighting, they were as likely to kill their fellows as him if they fired.

It still wasn't looking good for the Captain but then! As one the chained up prisoners surged up, for if they moved together the chains couldn't hold them back, and threw themselves onto the men.

The small man was screaming insults and curses, and suddenly one thing was clear: He didn't care if he shot one of his men trying to restore order.

The bullet lodged into the ground right beside Haddock's ear, where one of the rough men was holding him to the ground and strangling him. He couldn't curse with the hands around his throat, but the intention was there.

A moment later the man throttling Haddock was gone after taking a flying Snowy to the face.

"All of you! I'll have all of you destroyed for this!" yelled the small man. He fired again, hitting a prisoner in the arm and grazing one of his men.

"Shut up, Vasilis! If you shoot at me again I'll have your head, no matter how much you're paying us!" roared the leader of the men, forgetting about the prisoners in the face of his own survival.

The small man, Vasilis, held out his gun to fire again, heedless of the warning.

That was when a white glow appeared behind him and enveloped him.

He screamed.

The rough men abandoned the prisoners and ran, leaving Haddock and them on the ground watching in horror as Vasilis screamed and struggled.

Snowy hopped out in front of Haddock, who tried to grab him, barking furiously. The white light vanished instantly and Vasilis fell to the ground.

Haddock reached out to touch Vasilis' neck, feeling for a pulse.

"Stone cold dead," whispered Haddock.



"I've found the lamp!" shouted Tintin as he worked to get it on again.

This did not cheer Doctor Xenos, from the sounds she was making.

"We're lost! We're lost and we're going to die in here!" she said. "My glasses didn't survive the fall, Tintin. I can't see the marks anymore."

"We'll figure it out," said Tintin. "You made it in here in the first place. It's just a matter of finding our way back. We can look for tracks."

Xenos pulled herself up and brushed bits of glass off her front. In the flickering lamplight, her face held a determined expression.

"You're right. I won't die to my own discovery. Maybe... yes, I think we came this way!" She held her hand along the side of the wall and began leading.

But it wasn't the exit they found themselves at.

Shortly after more twists and turns than Tintin thought could be in one area, they came into a large open area. And in the center a misshapen skeleton, with a head like a bull's and a frame larger than even the biggest man Tintin had ever seen. In its chest was a rusted sword, barely holding together. It rested on a pile of bones, human bones. Much smaller than it. Tintin realized with a start those were the skeletons of children.

"The Minotaur," whispered Doctor Xenos, creeping forward.

"We're in the center of the maze, Doctor!" said Tintin. He held the lamp closer to the remains.

"This creature... it ate all those children. All those bodies we found. Cursed beast," said Doctor Xenos.

Tintin crouched at the skeleton layered in centuries of dust, reaching out to touch one of the horns. "Poor thing. It was a monster, but it never really knew anything else, did it?"

"I'd pity it more if I hadn't seen the bodies. Those children were put in here for it to feed on. Imagine their terror, Tintin, as it hunted them."

Tintin shuddered and pulled his hand back from the horn. "Perhaps you're right. But still, it never had a chance to be anything else but a monster."

That was when the ghost reappeared.

Or ghosts. In the darkness that seemed to grow, swallowing the light of the lantern, they could see what they thought was one ghost was in reality a multitude. Faces of individual children would flicker in and out of focus in an instant. Xenos and Tintin both reached out at the other at the same time to push the other back to safety

The ghost moved towards them.



"They went into that blasted maze?" said Haddock, waving his arms angrily and muttering outlandish curses. "Of course! Of course he goes into the inescapable maze! The one place Tintin shouldn't go and there he goes!"

The authorities had arrived, as well as medics for the captured diggers and the far-beyond-help Vasilis. Haddock had 'interviewed' the gunmen, which mostly meant yelling at them, to find out what had become of Tintin.

"There's nothing for it," said Haddock when he was done. "We have to go in there after him."

As one, the diggers refused. Xenos' assistants looked just as unwilling.

"You cowards!" snapped Haddock.

"They smashed my bag when they tied us up, sir," said the woman that Vasilis had been yelling at. "That had my red glass to let us see the path we painted. We can't go in until I've got more."

"We don't have time for that. Who knows how long he's got left in there!"

"Doctor Xenos wears glasses of the red lens, sir, I'm sure if she's with him, he's safe."

"And if that damned ghost gets him? I won't believe he's safe until he's in front of me telling me what an easy time he had and how I shouldn't worry!"

Behind him, detectives Thompson and Thomson approached the dognapped canines.

"Oh I say, haven't they been feeding them?" said Thomson.

"Well, maybe we should wait until we let them out, Thomson," said Thompson.

"Excellent idea, Thompson!" Thomson replied.

The dogs started howling, so close to freedom and lunged at the door, startling the detectives into running off. The cage door broke and they streamed out.

Snowy, oblivious to all this, had started sniffing the air. Then, going stiff as he seemed to catch what he was seeking, he let out a howl.

The other dogs stopped and stared at him.

Snowy raced off towards the cave, where he could still just barely smell Tintin. The dogs raced after, they needed to stretch their legs after their confinement.

"You blasted dog!" yelled Haddock, grabbing a flashlight and chasing after. "Wait for me!"



"Hello," said Tintin cautiously.

The ghost continued to flicker.

"We're sorry this happened to you," said Tintin. Beside him, Xenos nodded.

"You were never buried properly," she said. "No passage to the afterlife."

She sounded thoughtful.

The ghost howled and vanished.

"Did that go well?" asked Tintin.

"I don't know," said Xenos. "But I don't like it."



The ghost reappeared in front of the dogs, giving Haddock such a start he fell over backwards with a loud yelp. But the dogs barked louder, charging ahead.

The ghost vanished, and reappeared further on. The dogs chased.

Haddock pulled himself up and started following. "Stop! We're looking for Tintin!"



"Doctor, do you hear howling?" asked Tintin. He and the Doctor had been assembling skulls found around the Minotaur's lair. Xenos said at the very least these children deserved not to be mixed up with the bones of their killer.

"We might as well get work done, if we're not about to die," she'd said.

Now they had a nice assembled line up.

"Children! They were just children. Seven girls and seven boys, every year. Imagine it. I can still fulfill my duties to science and help these children, Tintin," she said. She touched the top of one. "I know how to help you."

"I hope we can help ourselves," said Tintin.



Haddock's legs burned, but he kept up the pace behind the dogs. He didn't want to end up lost too. He was so intent on following the pack that he didn't notice when he'd run into a large rounded area, not until Tintin happily called his name.

"Tintin!" exclaimed Haddock. "There you are! That confounded ghost didn't catch you!"

The dogs had stopped chasing and were surrounding the skulls and child skeletons that Tintin and Xenos had assembled, where the ghost had finally been cornered. As the group watched, small wisps looking like children broke off the main ghost and floated into the skulls. And then other wisps broke off and flew down the passageways until there wasn't a trace of the white light left.

Xenos clapped her hands together to get dust off.

"Well! As I hoped! Everyone hates being sorted wrong and God knows I'd give people a good haunting if they'd mixed me up with that little beast Vasilis!" She turned to Haddock.

"Oh, well. It seems that there's been a death. Small man. Unpleasant. Thought there was some sort of ancient invention by that Daedalus fellow in here," said Haddock gruffly. "Was going to use it for evil, I expect."

"There is one, yes," said Doctor Xenos, "but I have no idea how you'd weaponize a maze. We should get going, I need fresh air and the sky more than you can imagine"

She paused.

"At least, if our new friend knows the way out." She looked at Haddock significantly.

"I, er," said Haddock.

"Oh come on," said Xenos.

Snowy nuzzled Tintin's leg, then walked to the exit of the Minotaur's den.

"I think Snowy knows," said Tintin with a smile. And they all trooped out, Tintin, Haddock, the Doctor and all the dogs to the exit.



Epilogue:

"You didn't have to find homes for all those dogs, Haddock," said Tintin as they got off the train, finally back home after their adventures.

"Of course I did. Those hounds were heroes," said Haddock.

He stopped.

He inhaled.

He opened his arms wide.

"Tintin, do you feel it?" he said gleefully.

"Feel what, Captain?" asked Tintin.

"The weather, Tintin! It's back to normal!"

"No more kites then."

"You bet your barnacles no more blasted kites," said Haddock, grabbing his bag and making way to a taxi.



Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!