



# CHAPEAU MELON ET BOTTES DE CUIR

© 1977 - The Avengers (Film & TV) Enterprises Limited



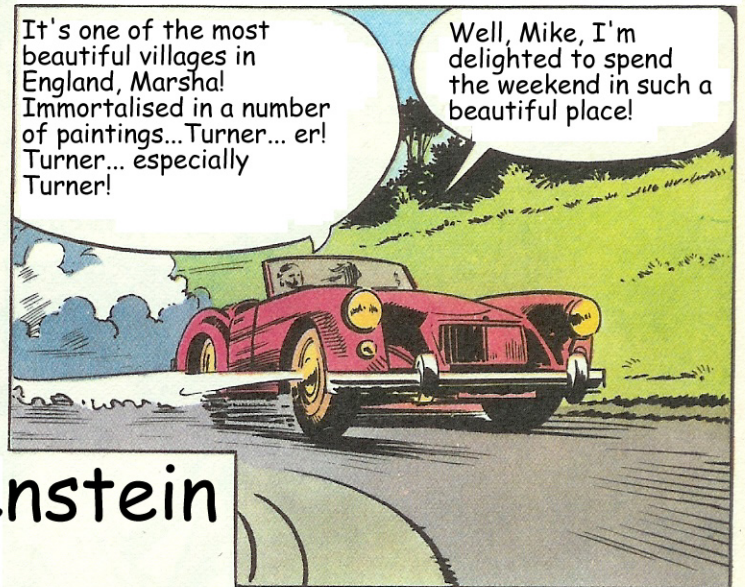
There is no place that is more beautiful to travel through than the Sussex countryside in the late afternoon, with the gurgling stream and wind in the trees, all beneath the red-hot July sun...



Crouching in the Valley of Oshe is the delightful village of Antford, with small homes spread out at the edge of the wood around a church from the 13th century. There is also an inn which is favoured by the inhabitants for its elegance, a well-known destination for a country drive.

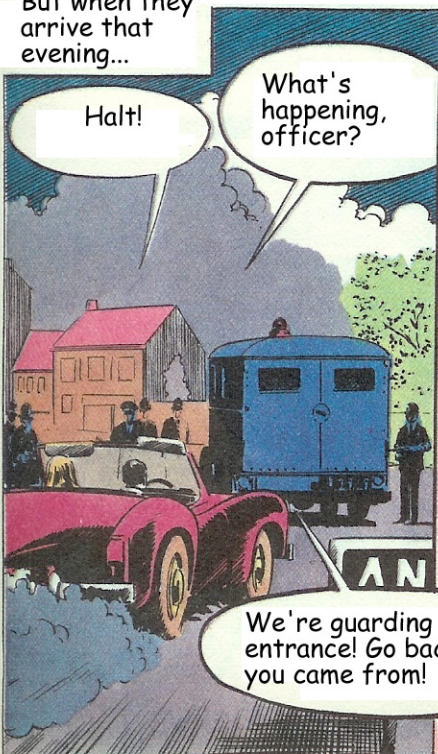
It's one of the most beautiful villages in England, Marsha! Immortalised in a number of paintings... Turner... er! Turner... especially Turner!

Well, Mike, I'm delighted to spend the weekend in such a beautiful place!



## The Curse of Falkenstein

But when they arrive that evening...

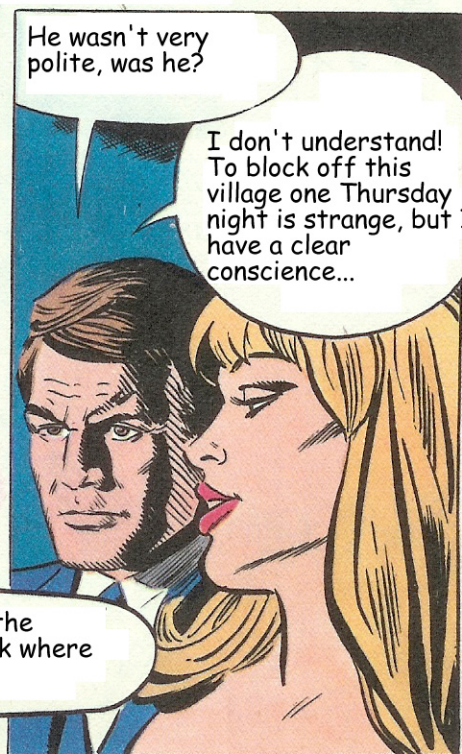


Halt!

What's happening, officer?

We're guarding the entrance! Go back where you came from!

He wasn't very polite, was he?



I don't understand! To block off this village one Thursday night is strange, but I have a clear conscience...

A moment later, having concealed the car on a crossing road, Mike moves toward the forest...

Mike, darling, where are you going?

To see what's happening! Don't worry, I won't be a minute...





Two hours, you hear? Two hours, I waited before going to look for him. Goodness gracious, I thought I was being foolish...



Then, what do you want, Mr. Steed, I resigned myself to returning without him, and since yesterday evening, I haven't found out anything new!

It's very odd...

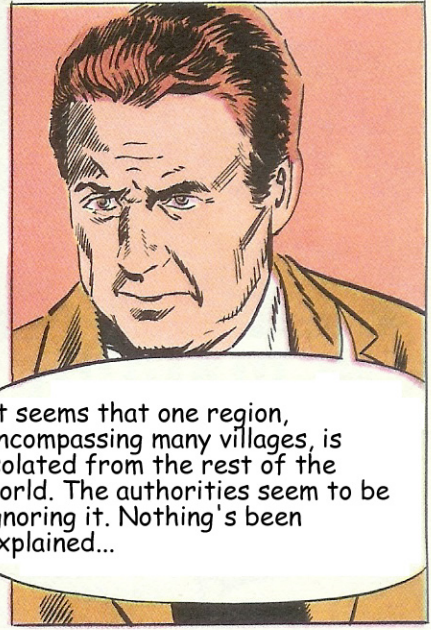


Those policemen looked odd. I beg you, Mr. Steed, we must do something.

Hmmm! What you've told me matches what I've already heard...



Several travellers are hitting these police barriers at the same time on the route to Lewes, just like this one on the way to Horsham!



It seems that one region, encompassing many villages, is isolated from the rest of the world. The authorities seem to be ignoring it. Nothing's been explained...



I'm dead with worry. Thank you for all you can do!

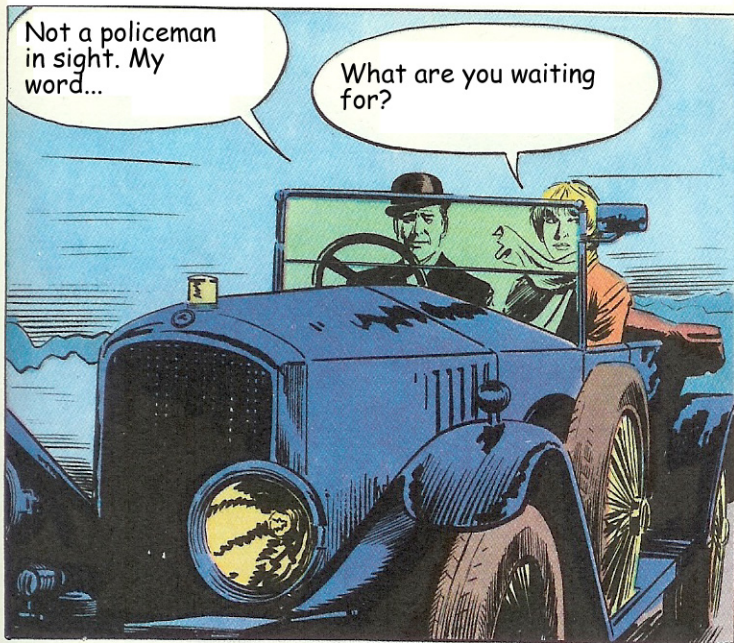


When his visitor has taken her leave, Steed telephones Purdey...

Purdey, is a weekend in Sussex to your taste?

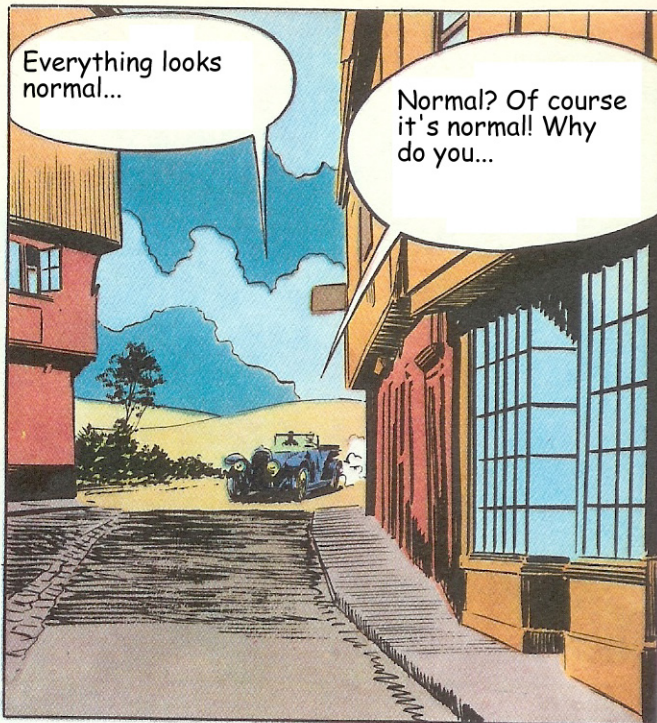
Steeeeeed!! A weekend? I can't believe it! It's marvellous!

The next morning, Steed and Purdey arrive in sight of the village of Antford...



Not a policeman in sight. My word...

What are you waiting for?



Everything looks normal...

Normal? Of course it's normal! Why do you...

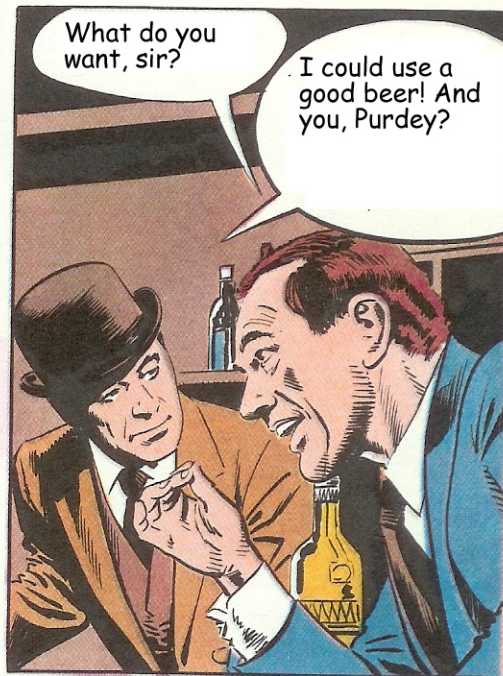


Steed! Answer me! Is this a weekend...or an inquiry, and you've taken me for a ride?



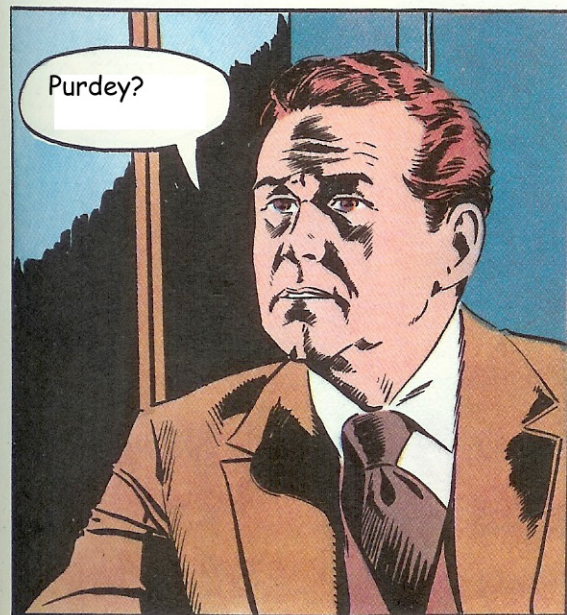
It's necessary to combine business and pleasure!

Monster!



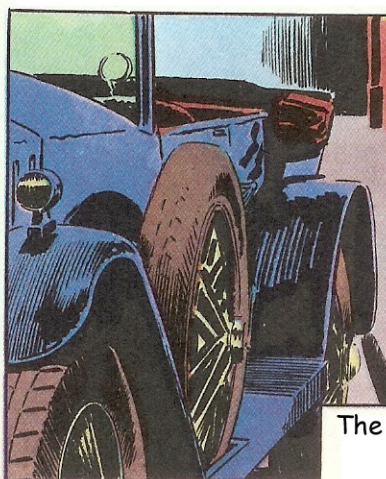
What do you want, sir?

I could use a good beer! And you, Purdey?



Purdey?

There are less than ten metres between the Bentley and the entrance to the inn...



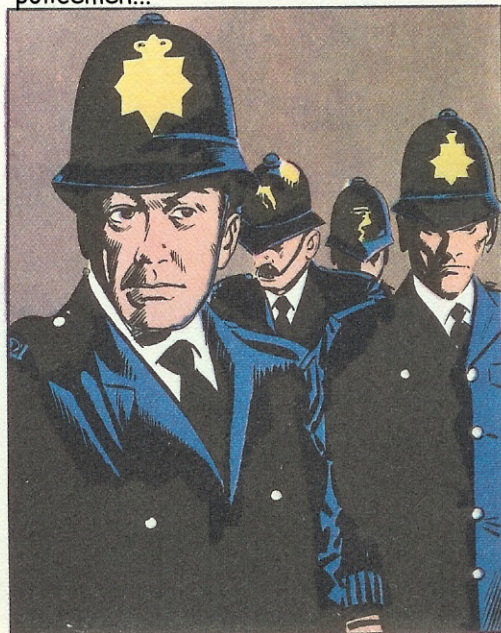
Purdey! For the love of God!!!

The street is completely empty...

Steed informs two bobbies making rounds on the street...

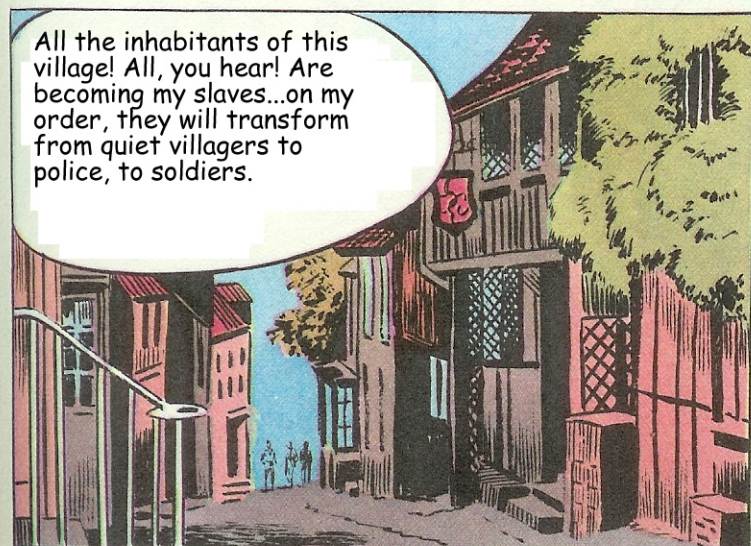
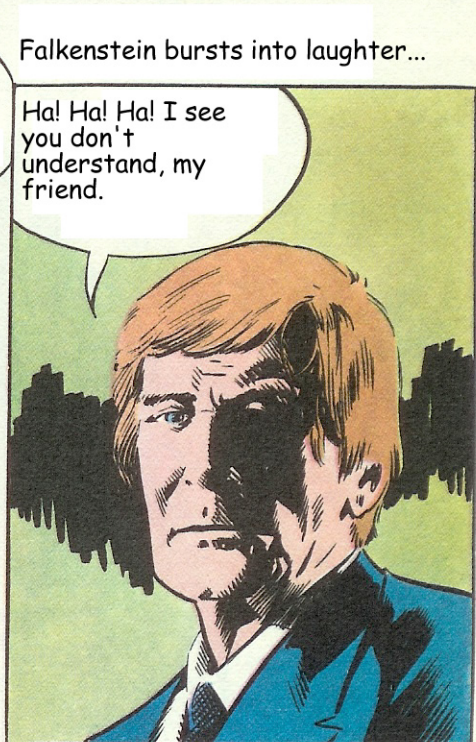
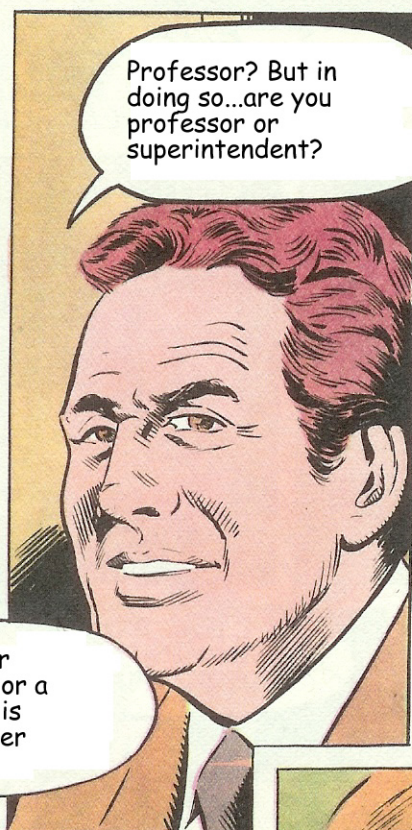


Suddenly, the street seems to be filled with a group of strange policemen...



Shortly after Steed arrives at the station...

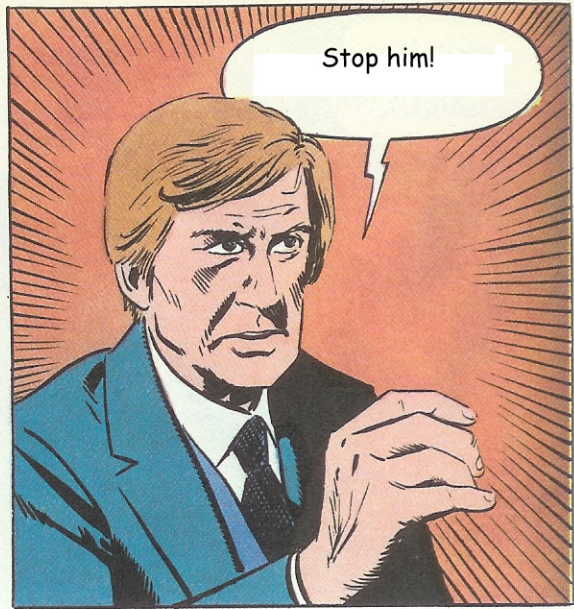






An army of...?? Very interesting, professor. Now, if you'll let me return to my holiday! I came to retrieve my friend, Purdey.

No hope of pulling that off, Steed!



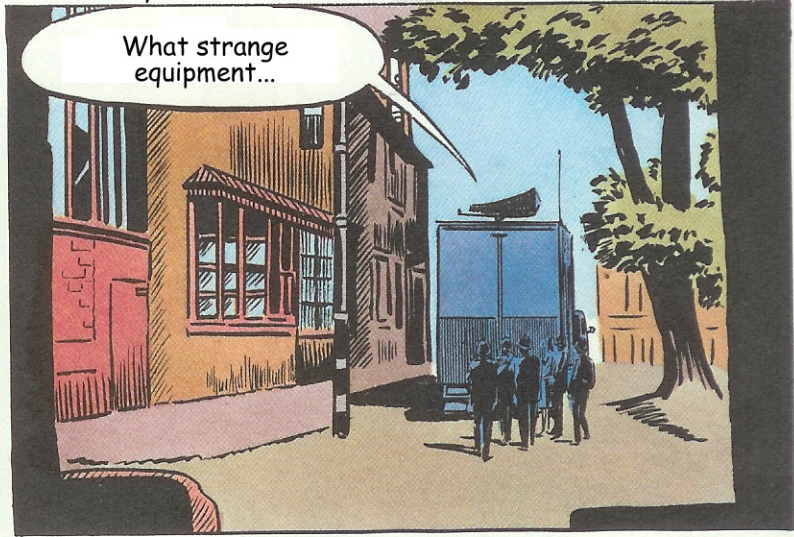
Stop him!

In an instant, Steed is surrounded by a hoard of bobbies...



In that case... never mind!

And shortly after....

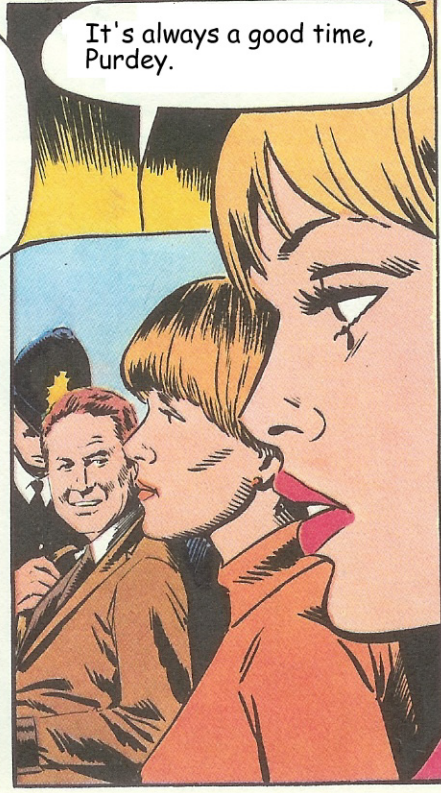


What strange equipment...

Purdey! What a surprise! I was waiting for you.

Oh Steed! You've been taken, too? I can assure you I'm not having a good time.

It's always a good time, Purdey.



Falkenstein enters the strange truck...



Perfect, perfect. I can begin.

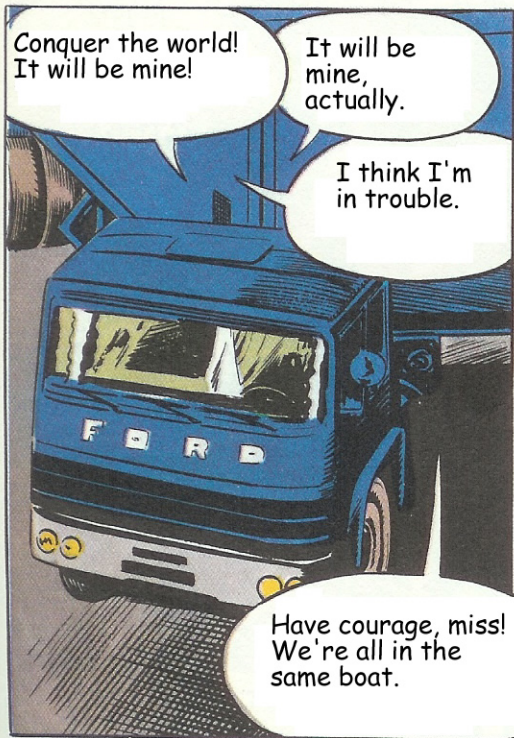


Begin what, my friend?



Hee, hee! Thanks to a brilliant procedure of my own invention, these instruments are going to do to you what I have already done to all the inhabitants of this village: annihilate your will! You are going to become my slaves. That is how I deal with snoopers. Ha! Ha! Ha!

All this is very delightful, wonderful, but... what do you plan to do with this army of slaves?



Conquer the world! It will be mine!

It will be mine, actually.

I think I'm in trouble.

Have courage, miss! We're all in the same boat.



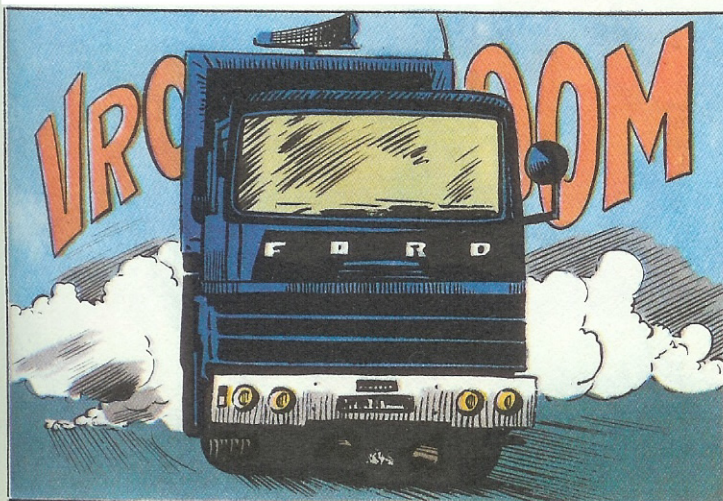
In any case, professor, I'm on you, when I'm your slave, to not order me to assassinate Her Majesty the Queen. It's against my principles.

Silence!

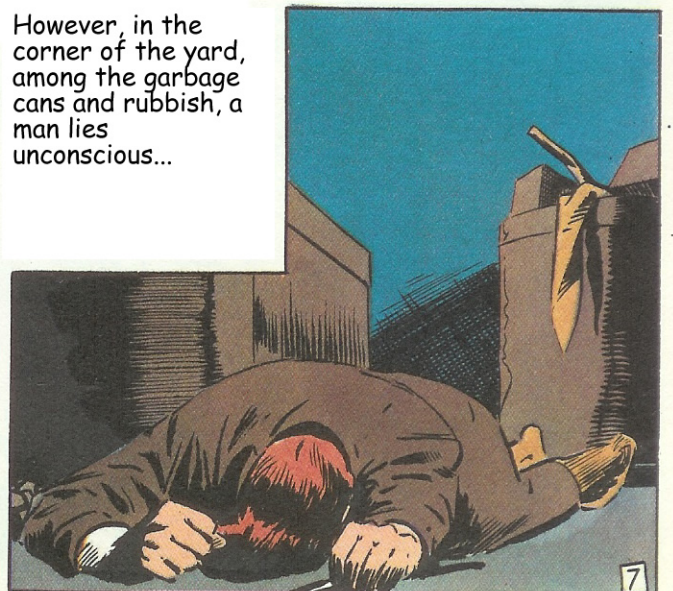


Good, 327, move out! What are you waiting for?

Slowly, the enormous lorry moves off....



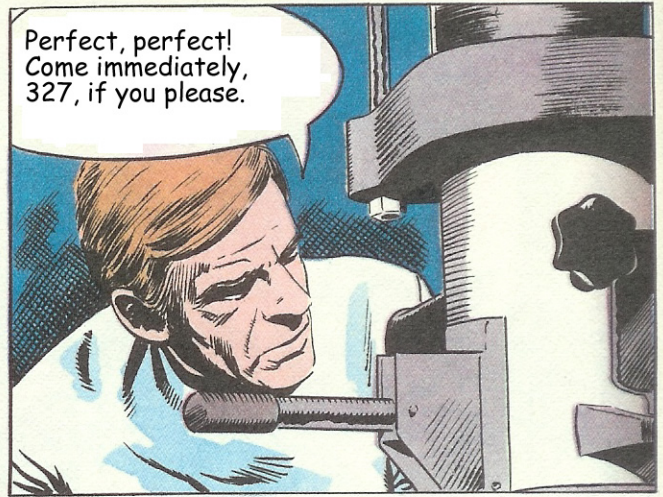
However, in the corner of the yard, among the garbage cans and rubbish, a man lies unconscious...



Shortly after, he truck arrives not far from the nuclear power plant in Horsham....



Falkenstein scans the surrounding village with the help of a powerful periscope...



Perfect, perfect! Come immediately, 327, if you please.

The driver of the truck then makes his entrance into the laboratory...



Mikel! It's Mikel! He's become a robot, too!

Hush!

Fortunately, Falkenstein doesn't hear her...



I hold them in respect, 327. Connect their helmets to the electrodes! Go!

Good-bye, Steed. I liked you a lot.

Bah! In a few seconds, we'll have no more worries, Purdey!

Mikel! Oh, oh, Mikel! Is it possible?

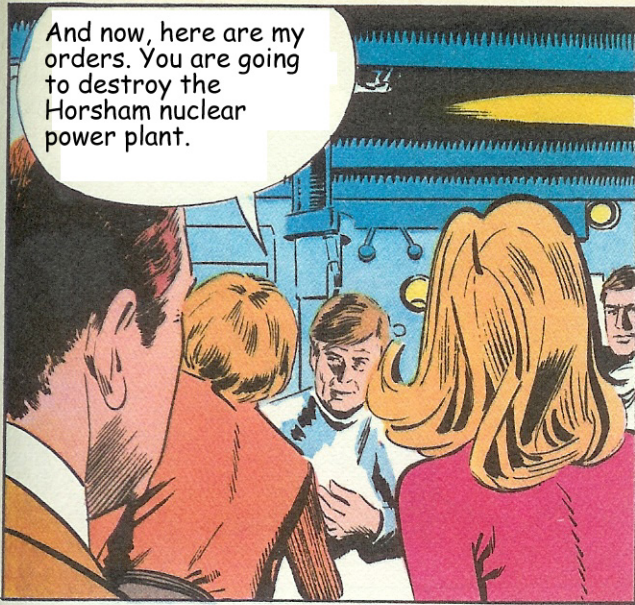


And now, contact!

Ha! Ha! Ha! Three more slaves, no less. Free them, 327.







And now, here are my orders. You are going to destroy the Horsham nuclear power plant.



Here are fake visitor's passes. Pretend to be tourists. Steed will put down this briefcase, which contains a very powerful explosive, inside the plant. I will activate the explosion from here. 327 will oversee the operation and give me the signal. Go!



Ha! Ha! Ha! When they find the bodies of Steed and Purdey among the wreckage, they will blame them for the bombing! Ha! Ha! Brilliant! Scotland Yard will never figure it out! Ha! Ha! Ha!

However, despite their slow speed, our friends approach the plant...



Purdey?

Yes, Steed?



Either I'm fooling myself, or I'm not a slave! What do you think, Purdey?

Yes, indeed! I'm not either, Steed!

I feel perfectly normal.

Attention!



Continue as if nothing's changed! That madman is watching us with his periscope!

But then...you aren't a slave anymore! Mike! What good fortune! Oh, Mike...

It seems something isn't working in the professor's machine.



Good! Steed, drop the briefcase! Run!

Certainly not! I have a very good idea! Continue!

Hello, my friend. We would like to tour your lovely facility!

Hmmm! Open this briefcase for me.



Perfect. All is in order. You can go in. I'll announce you.



Ha! Ha! Ha! I was right to rely on the shrewdness of Steed. I don't know how he's done it, but the guard hasn't seen the explosive! And they are there, entering the plant.



Steed and Purdey are inside. The briefcase has been placed. It only remains for me to signal Falkenstein to set off the explosion.



But...I believe...Mike! Don't do this! For the love of God!

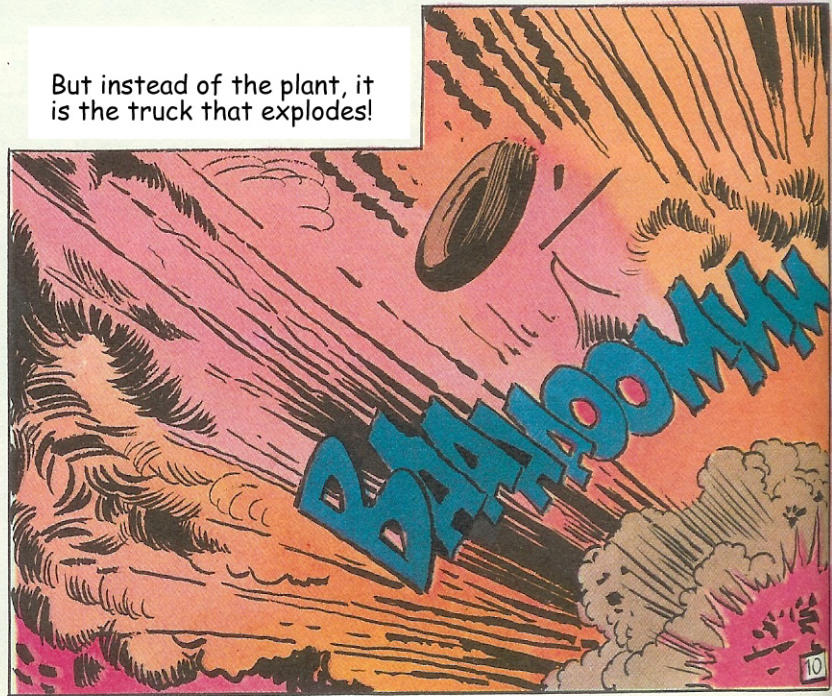
Don't upset yourself, my dear. All is going according to plan.



Ahh! The signal! Fire!



But instead of the plant, it is the truck that explodes!





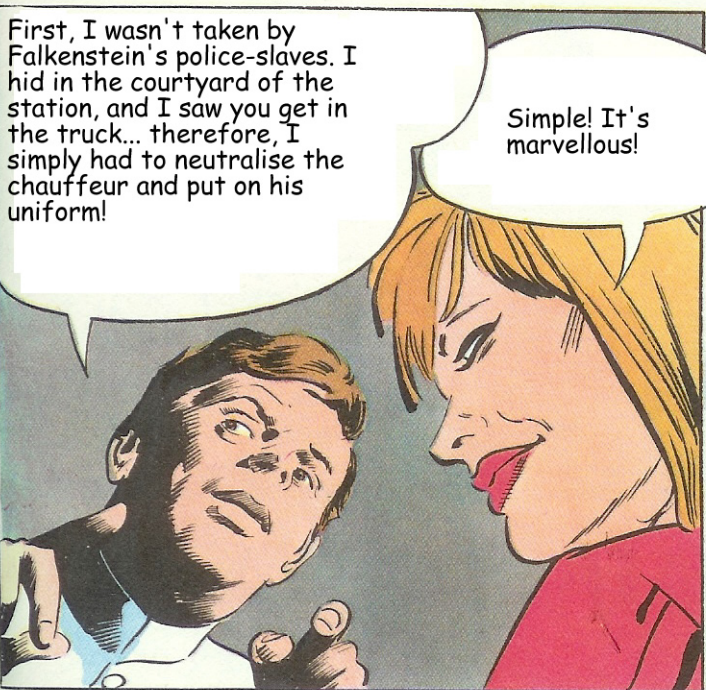
Mike! Oh, Mike dear! I was so afraid!

Well done, I'd say.



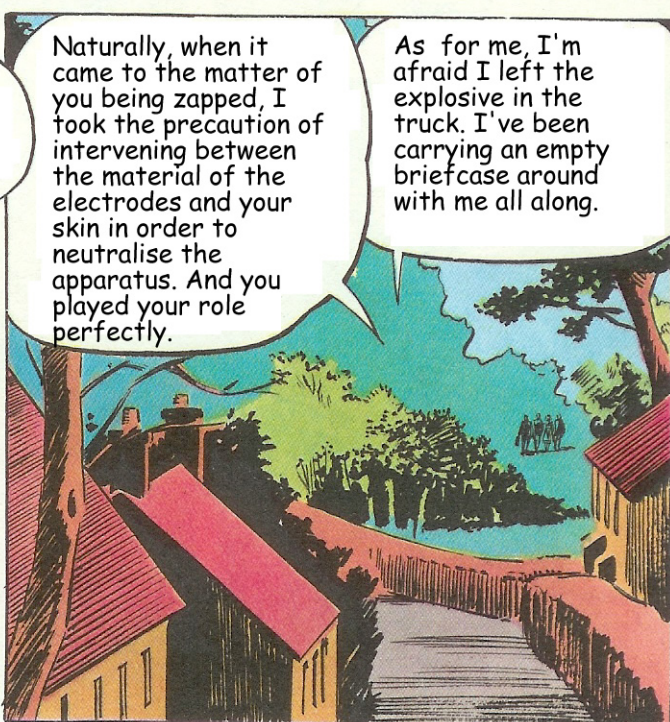
Finally, are you going to explain what's been happening?

It's all quite simple.



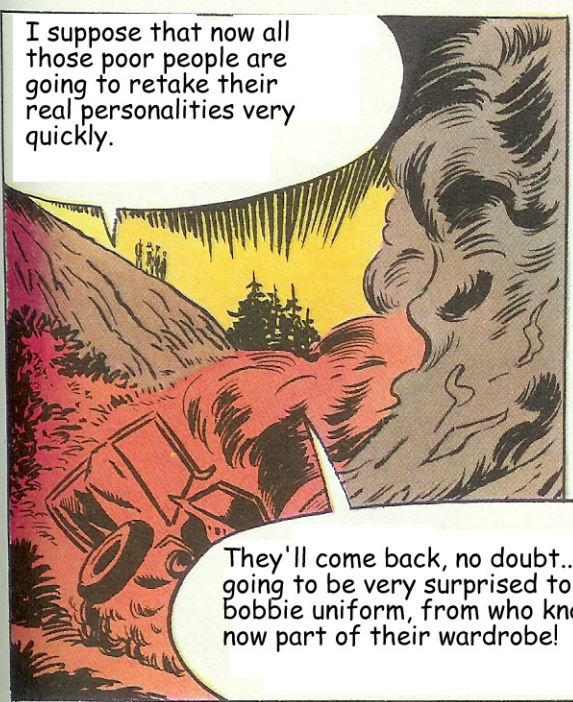
First, I wasn't taken by Falkenstein's police-slaves. I hid in the courtyard of the station, and I saw you get in the truck... therefore, I simply had to neutralise the chauffeur and put on his uniform!

Simple! It's marvellous!



Naturally, when it came to the matter of you being zapped, I took the precaution of intervening between the material of the electrodes and your skin in order to neutralise the apparatus. And you played your role perfectly.

As for me, I'm afraid I left the explosive in the truck. I've been carrying an empty briefcase around with me all along.



I suppose that now all those poor people are going to retake their real personalities very quickly.

They'll come back, no doubt...but they're going to be very surprised to find that a bobbie uniform, from who knows where, is now part of their wardrobe!



It seems that the famous briefcase isn't, in fact, empty! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Steed, you're a magician! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Ha! Ha! Ha!

**FIN** 41