



L'Affaire Francis Blake

Jean Van Hamme , Ted Benoît

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Le scandale éclate dans la presse londonienne : il y a une taupe à l'Intelligence Service ! Et voilà que sur une photo prise par les agents du MI 5, la taupe a, sans l'ombre d'un doute, le visage de Francis Blake ! Stupeur générale !

Mortimer s'acharne à croire que son ami a été forcé d'agir contre sa volonté, mais les premiers éléments de l'enquête balayaient cette hypothèse : Blake a ouvert, sous un nom d'emprunt, un compte alimenté par des versements venant des Bahamas, d'où il a retiré 30 000 livres sterling en quelques mois, plus de dix fois sa solde annuelle ! Pour tout arranger, dans l'appartement que partagent les deux amis, Mortimer retrouve les 30 000 livres cachées dans une reproduction en terre cuite d'un "chacmool" toltèque du 11ème siècle...

Les agents du MI 5 ayant pour projet de juger Blake pour haute-trahison, ou de l'abattre s'il le faut, Mortimer décide de retrouver son ami avant eux - avec un seul minuscule indice : lors de leur dernière rencontre au Centaur Club, Blake lui a parlé de manière anodine d'un "endroit idéal pour échapper à ses soucis" : le cottage d'une cousine dans le Yorkshire...

Une longue traque commence, qui nous mènera de Londres aux Hautes Terres d'Ecosse - où Mortimer retrouvera Blake à la tête d'un troupeau de moutons - et finira à Ardmuir Castle, pour un dénouement orchestré par l'ignoble colonel Olrik...

L'Affaire Francis Blake Details

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Nickname says

Altro albo che vuole tornare al ritmo de "Il marchio Giallo" e ci va parecchio vicino. Bei paesaggi, colpi di scena, un intrigo che tiene fino alla fine, che chiedere di più?

Drew says

First of the modern *Blake and Mortimer* series, although still set in that mid-20th century milieu, which I approve of.

No sci-fi tropes here at all. This is just a good, solid spy tale. There's a mole in the intelligence service, and evidence points to Captain Blake, whose behavior seems to confirm all suspicions.

(Is there a car chase? But of course! There's also a motorcycle chase for good measure.)

Though answers may come a little too soon in the narrative, there are still plenty of exciting moments and surprises along the way. (view spoiler)

The Scottish Highlands setting of the closing action seemed to me to be an homage to Hergé's *The Black Island*. Whether intentional or not, it certainly helped add to my enjoyment of the book.

For the first time (at least, in the currently-available English translations) we see a female character in the story -- one who takes an active part in the plot. That's certainly one indication that this is part of the new Blake and Mortimer adventures, which previously seemed set in an entirely male universe.

Jean Van Hamme and Ted Benoît not only get the Blake and Mortimer formula right, they improve upon it. There are fewer Giant Blocks of Exposition here, and the pacing is pitch-perfect. I may have missed the slightly sci-fi plots that feature in other Blake and Mortimer stories, but a spy drama is just as cool.

Green Jazz Blues says

This is the volume taken over by other authors - and let me say, they did an excellent job of this one! Can Blake really have turned traitor to his country? Mortimer can't believe it despite all the evidence stacked against his friend so he takes desperate action to find Blake before it's too late!...

Devero says

Francis Blake un traditore della corona britannica? impossibile. Lo sappiamo noi come il suo socio Mortimer. Appurato che alcuni colpi di scena sono telefonati per un lettore di lungo corso come me, devo

dire che la trama è decisamente ben scritta e la storia, nel complesso, decisamente godibile e ben riuscita.

Marcel Uljee says

‘Ik geef me aan je over, Virginia. En hoewel ik m’n koffertje kwijt ben, heb ik gelukkig mijn pijp nog. Dus de rest komt ook wel goed...’ (p. 42)

Solveig says

Fun adventure tale of Captain Francis Blake, head of MI5, and his flat mate the physicist Professor Philip Mortimer. In this volume there is a spy-ring in Britain with a suspected mole in the intelligence service. It seems that mole is Francis Blake, but Prof Mortimer wonders if everything is as it appears. He sets out to investigate...

Michael says

Clearly inspired by John Buchan's *The Thirty-nine Steps*, this adventure sees Captain Blake on the run, accused of being a spy and a murderer, whilst Professor Mortimer pursues him across the north of England and into the Scottish Highlands in an attempt to aid and exonerate him.

Rather than one finger too few, as in the case of Hannay's nemesis, Blake and Mortimer must beware the man with six fingers!

When will Colonel Olrik learn *not* to stand so close behind Mortimer when covering him with a gun? It always ends with an elbow to the solar plexus and a right cross to the chin! Despite some predictable elements, the plot delivers some deft misdirections regarding the identity of the mole in the upper echelons of the intelligence service.

Mark says

Edgar P. Jacobs, was a Belgian comic book creator (writer and artist), born in Brussels, Belgium. He was one of the founding fathers of the European comics movement, through his collaborations with Hergé and the graphic novel series that made him famous, Blake and Mortimer.

Jacobs finally published in 1970 the first volume of "The Three formulas of Professor Sato", which was staged in Japan. He then wrote the scenario for the second episode of "Les Trois Formules du Professeur Sato", but the artwork remained unfinished at the time of his death, 20 February 1987. Bob de Moor was drafted in to complete the album, which was published in 1990.

In 1996 a new team came up with a new story with a new creative team. The stories that were published after the death of its original writer and drawer Edgar P. Jacobs by the various comic illustrators were made, are more situated in the late '50's and the beginning of the sixties. These stories contain in comparison with the stories written by Jacobs himself more thriller aspects and less sciencefiction.

The first of the new series is proof of this, it is basically a story about a mole in the secret service and an attempt to kidnap the smartest scientist the British have to be used by hostile governments for their own vile purposes. Of course Mortimer the inventor of the Swordfish would be such a candidate and of course Blake will go undercover to find out more about this secret network that operates on the British isles. He and Mortimer will be branded a traitors during the course of this story even if they themselves have to stop this complot that is being overseen by nobody else than their original arch-foe Olrik.

Jacobs' style varies greatly from one album to another. There are however many common threads, such as the theme of subterranean descent and the consistent Ligne claire drawing style. And that can be seen in the newer albums as well with the Voronov comic being the worst of the new ones so far.

As it turns out the newer albums of B&M have gathered their own new fans and continue to satisfy an old group of fans like me and a newer generation that likes this kind of story. While the Blake Affair is a spy story in the style of "the thirty-nine steps" Novel by John Buchan it does contain so much B&M elements that is unmistakable a great addition to the growing series of Blake and Mortimer comics.

Helmut says

Ein Freund, ein guter Freund, das ist das beste was es gibt auf der Welt!

Das ist schon gemein - nun gibt es einen Band, der "Die Affaire Francis Blake" heißt, und eigentlich spielt wieder mal Mortimer die Hauptrolle. Man sollte trotzdem froh sein, wenn man so einen Freund hat; trotz ein paar Zweifeln zu Beginn, die man jedem zugestehen muss, glaubt er fest an seinen alten Kumpan Blake, obwohl der in einen schlimmen Verdacht gerät...

Van Hamme und Benoît übernehmen die Reihe hier von Edgar Jacobs. Dies ist auf allen Ebenen spürbar: Die Zeichnungen Benoîts sind einheitlicher und eine Spur eleganter als die Jacobs, ohne die Ausreißer an Hässlichkeit, die mich früher ab und zu zur Verzweiflung brachten. Und auch das Szenario ist nun frei von diesen Absurditäten und seltsamen Einfällen, die Jacobs manchmal haarsträubend präsentierte.

Ein vielversprechender Neuanfang also. Wenn den beiden "Neuen", die ja eigentlich alte Hasen sind, nun noch eine Spur mehr Mut zufliegt, mit den beiden Charakteren etwas spannenderes anzufangen als die altbekannte James-Bond-Kiste runterzurattern und altbekannte Bösewichte einzubauen...

Wie man sieht, kann man es mir nicht recht machen. Ich bin schon ungerecht, meckere bei Jacobs an, dass er zu abgefahren war (Dinosaurier, Zeitmaschine, Außerirdische, alternative Weltkriege), und nun meckere ich bei Van Hamme an, dass er zu konventionell ist. Vielleicht würde die Mischung es machen? Ich bin gespannt.

peter marshall says

Traditional thriller

Beautifully draw, and the dialogue is thrilling. Especially the old English term. For fans of tin tin. A nice comic book which is also educational

