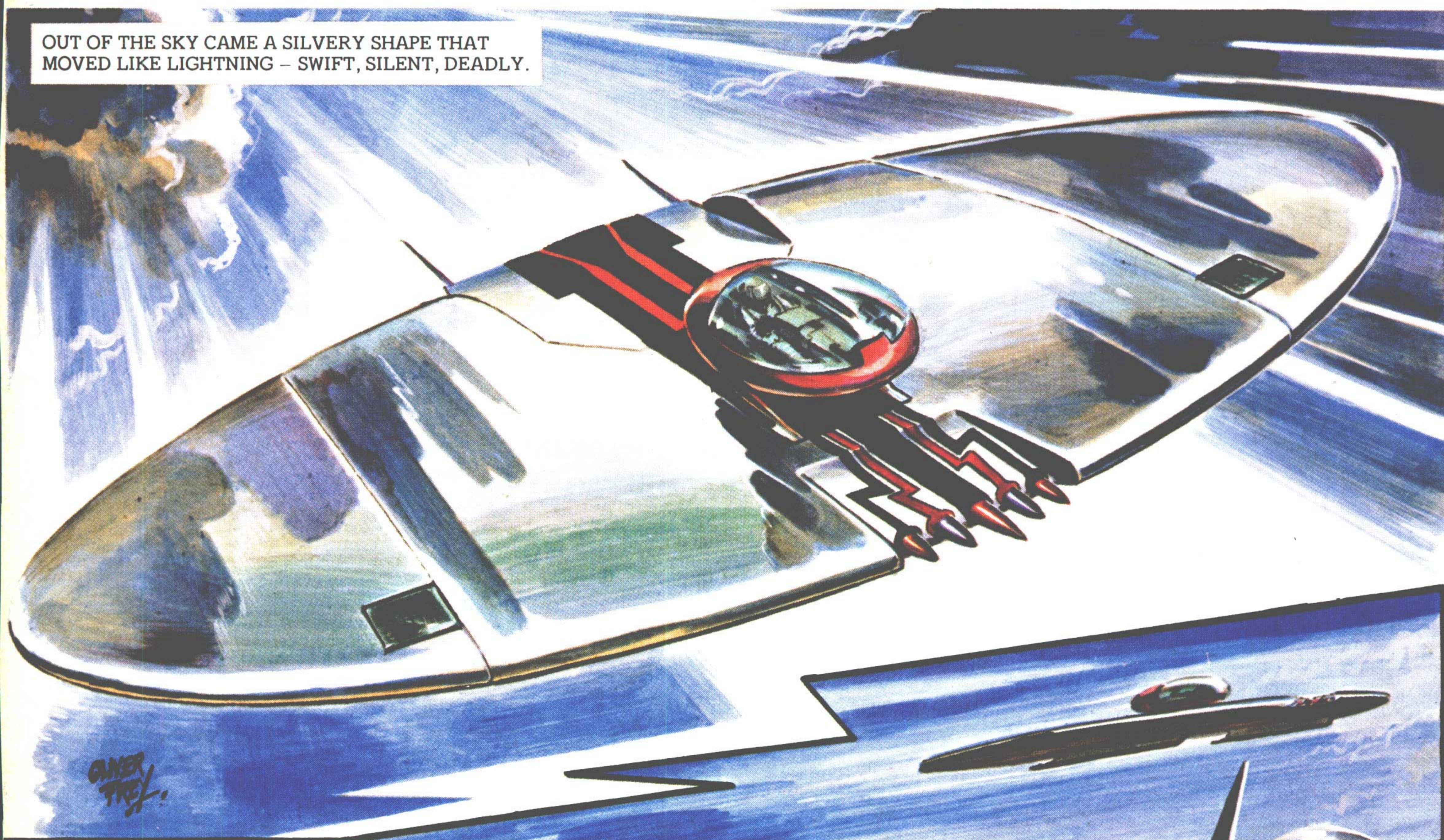


MORE ADVENTURES OF THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

The planet Elektion lies in the galaxy of Yarna and the greatest power on Elektion is the Trigan Empire ruled over by its founder, the Emperor Trigo.

OUT OF THE SKY CAME A SILVERY SHAPE THAT MOVED LIKE LIGHTNING – SWIFT, SILENT, DEADLY.



IT WAS THE OCCASION OF THE TRIGAN EMPIRE AIR DAY. THE CRAFT – TRIGAN'S NEWEST SECRET FIGHTER – WAS SEEN THERE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

LATER THE PILOT – JANNO, THE EMPEROR'S NEPHEW – WAS PRESENTED TO VISITING DIGNITARIES, INCLUDING THE AIR-ATTACHE FROM CATO.

THIS WAS NOTICED BY THE SHARP EYES OF THE EMPEROR. TRIGO MURMURED TO HIS BROTHER.

That was a nasty shock for Zootho. Now he knows for sure that our new craft can knock any of theirs out of the sky.

Lieutenant Janno, meet Marshal Zootho of Cato.

That is a fine craft you have there, lieutenant.

Yes, Sir. And I was only at half-speed.

A SIGNIFICANT GLANCE PASSED BETWEEN MARSHAL ZOOTHO AND HIS AIDE.

He will have some more nasty shocks awaiting him when he visits the air fleet headquarters tomorrow.

THOUGH AT PEACE AT THAT TIME, CATO AND THE TRIGANS WERE HEREDITARY ENEMIES. WHEN MARSHAL ZOOHO AND HIS AIDE VISITED AIR FLEET HEADQUARTERS NEXT DAY, THEY WERE SHOWN SOMETHING OF THE TRIGAN EMPIRE'S MIGHT...

This is the complete range of Trigan fighting craft – all of them faster and more heavily armed than anything else on the planet.

Very – impressive !

AND THEN – THE LIGHTS WENT OUT !

AT THE END OF THE VISIT, THE CATONS TOOK REFRESHMENT WITH THE TRIGAN AIR CHIEF.

Gentlemen – I give you a toast to continued peace between our two countries.

To peace !

A SHORT TIME PASSED – AND THEN THEY CAME ON AGAIN.

My apologies, gentlemen. Not a very good example of Trigan Air Fleet efficiency, I fear.

There is no doubt in our minds about Trigan Air Fleet efficiency, Your Excellency.

What's happened ?

A power failure, I don't doubt. It will soon be put right.

SOON AFTER HIS VISITORS HAD GONE, THE AIR FLEET CHIEF HAD OCCASION TO OPEN HIS SAFE, WHICH WAS HIDDEN BEHIND A PORTRAIT OF THE EMPEROR.

The combination of this safe is really most unbelievably complicated. I would say, unnecessarily complicated.

AND THEN...

The plans of the new secret fighter – gone !

INVESTIGATIONS WERE SET AFOOT IMMEDIATELY. CERTAIN CONCLUSIONS WERE REACHED IN COMMITTEE...

While the lights were out.

If we accuse Marshal Zootho, it will mean war.

Besides – it would take an expert to open that safe in the dark. Zootho's no safe-breaker.

But – what about his aide ?

The Catons took it, of course.

THE MARSHAL'S AIDE WAS INVESTIGATED – WITH A REMARKABLE RESULT...

The name is Yerru, but that's an alias...

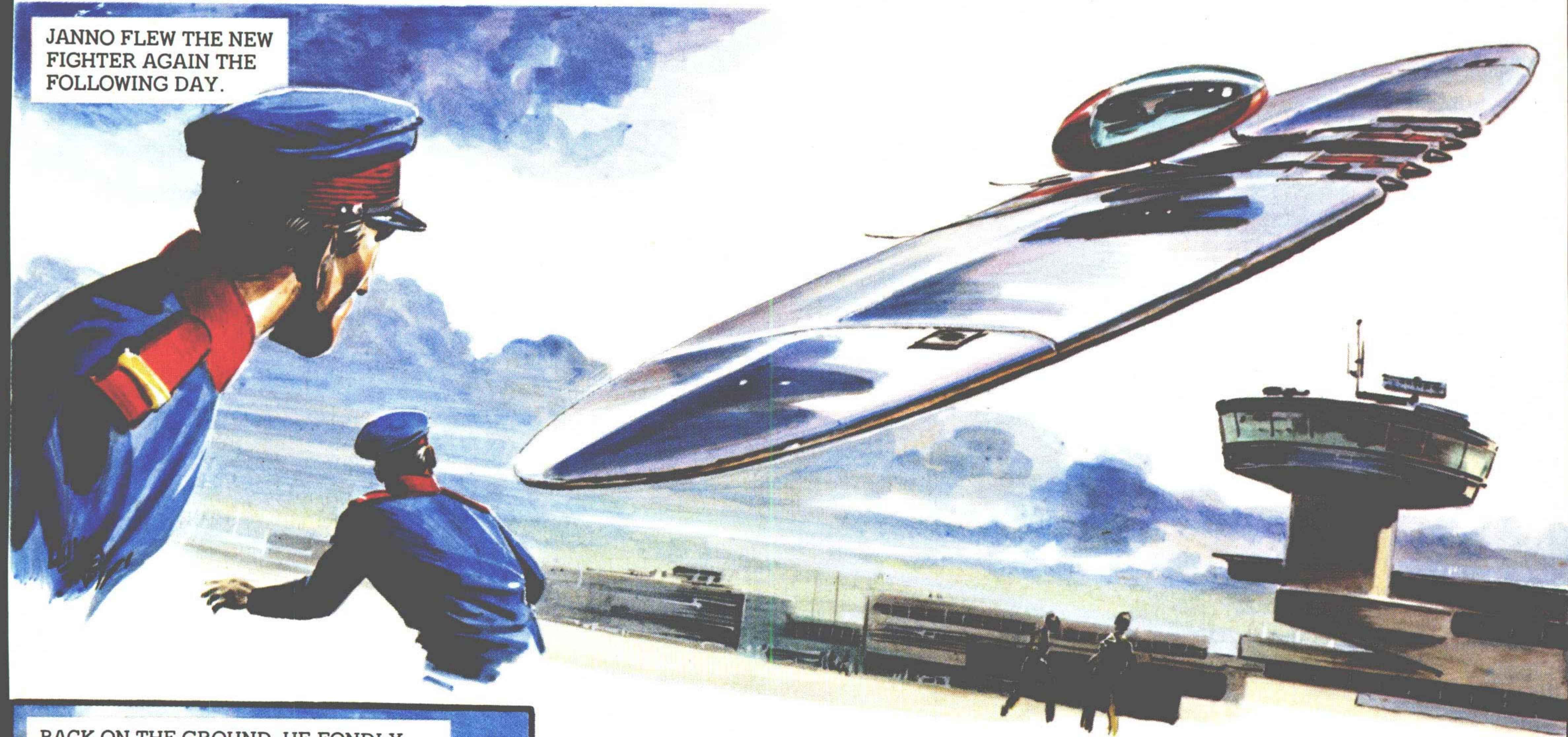
Real name – Boraff...

Believed to be serving twenty years in a Caton gaol for – wait for it – safe-breaking.

MORE ADVENTURES OF THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

The Trigans know that the visiting air attaché from Cato, using a safe-breaker released from gaol for the operation, has stolen the plans of the Empire's newest fighter craft — and there seems nothing that they can do about it!

JANNO FLEW THE NEW FIGHTER AGAIN THE FOLLOWING DAY.



BACK ON THE GROUND, HE FONDLY PATTED THE CRAFT'S SLEEK FUSILAGE AND COMMENTED BITTERLY.

And to think that the Catons will be building these!

You can be sure of that, Janno. With their industrial capacity, the Catons will have a thousand like it in the air within a lunar year!



ODDLY ENOUGH, MARSHAL ZOOTHO THE CATON AIR-ATTACHE AND HIS "AIDE" SEEMED IN NO HURRY TO RETURN HOME AFTER THE AIR SHOW, BUT RELAXED IN A TOP HOTEL — AT THE TRIGAN EMPIRE'S EXPENSE!

I think we'll stay till the end of the lunar month, Yerru, and make the most of this delightful Trigan weather.



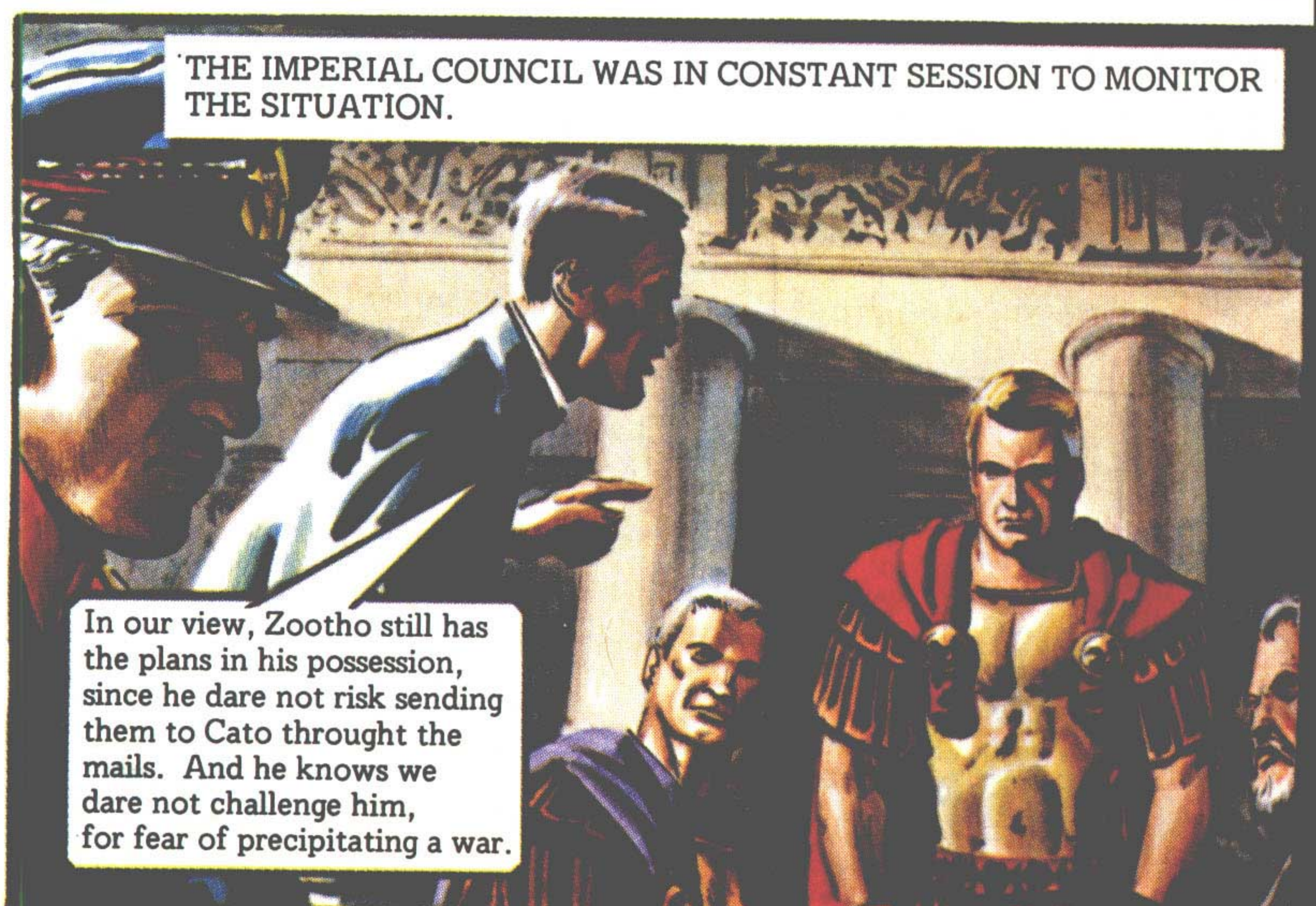
FROM A PENTHOUSE APARTMENT OPPOSITE, THE TWO CATONS WERE OBSERVED, DAY AND NIGHT, BY SECRET SERVICE OPERATORS WITH THE MOST SOPHISTICATED SIGHT AND SOUND EQUIPMENT.

They know they're being watched and listened to — and they're not giving anything away.



THE IMPERIAL COUNCIL WAS IN CONSTANT SESSION TO MONITOR THE SITUATION.

In our view, Zootho still has the plans in his possession, since he dare not risk sending them to Cato through the mails. And he knows we dare not challenge him, for fear of precipitating a war.



THE EMPEROR SPOKE . . .

Excellencies, we must recover those plans — and we must do so without starting a shooting war. I am open to any suggestions — however fantastic !

Sire, I have a suggestion, and it might be regarded as being somewhat fantastic.

ELEKTON'S TOP SCIENTIST, PERIC . . .

The Catons released one of their top criminals from gaol to steal the plans . . .

Why do we not release one of our top criminals to get them back ?

TOP SECURITY GAOL OF THE TRIGAN EMPIRE WAS THE PRISON ISLE OF ZANFF, FROM WHOSE ELECTRONICALLY-SCANNED WALLS AND MONSTER-INFESTED WATERS NONE HAD EVER ESCAPED.

NEXT DAY, THE PRISON GOVERNOR HAD A VISITOR.

Release Nommo to your charge ? Has the secret service taken leave of its senses ?

No, Governor. The service is as well aware as you are that Nommo is the most unscrupulous confidence trickster of our time . . .

"THE LAST OCCASION HE WAS FREE," SAID THE SECRET SERVICE AGENT, "HE WENT TO THE DAVELI EMBASSY . . ."

I am empowered by the Imperial Government to offer you the Trigan Bay Bridge for the sum of five million thullars.

"SO PLAUSIBLE WAS HIS STORY, SO GOOD THE BARGAIN HE OFFERED, THAT THE DAVELIS WERE GLAD TO BUY THE GREAT BRIDGE FOR SCRAP."

Five million thullars, and cheap at the price.

Would you be interested in the Vorg viaduct at four million, your Excellency ?

LATER, IN HIS CELL, NOMMO LISTENED WITH A GOOD-HUMOURED SMILE TO THE PROPOSITION THAT WAS PUT TO HIM. AND THEN . . .

As I understand it, you want me to get those plans from the Caton without starting a war. What's in it for me ?

A free pardon, Nommo.

The plans are as good as back in your hands, my friend !

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

MORE ADVENTURES OF THE

TRIGAN EMPIRE

Marshal Zootho, the Caton air attaché, has stolen the plans of Trigan's newest fighter craft with the help of a convicted safe-breaker. To recover their plans, the Trigans release from gaol a master confidence trickster.

A CRAFT SPED ACROSS THE MONSTER-INFESTED WATERS SURROUNDING THE PRISON ISLE OF ZANIFF.

Farewell —
for ever !

NOMMO LOOKED BACK AT THE GRIM WALLS THAT HAD IMPRISONED HIM.

Don't forget, Nommo — your release depends entirely upon the success of the operation. Fail to recover the plans, or precipitate a war in the attempt — and you go back there for life.

Have no fear
— I shall
never return
to Zaniff.

NEXT DAY, AFTER HE HAD STUDIED THE DOSSIER ON THE CASE, THE NOTORIOUS CONFIDENCE TRICKSTER WAS INTERROGATED BY PERIC.

And what means do
you propose, in
order to recover
the plans ?

I shall exploit the
weaknesses of the two
persons involved. . .

Yerru, alias Boraff,
is a criminal, with a
criminal's mind. . .

Marshal Zootho is too
fond of luxury
for his own good. . .

MARSHAL ZOOTHO, INDEED, WAS GREATLY ENJOYING HIS LUXURY HOLIDAY IN TRIGAN'S TOP HOTEL — PAID FOR BY THE TRIGAN EMPIRE. HE SAID AS MUCH TO HIS AIDE THE FOLLOWING DAY.

This is the way
to live, Yerru.

Yes indeed,
Excellency.

SOMETHING TINKLED TO THE TILED FLOOR CLOSE BY THE CATON AIR-ATTACHE. HE REACHED TO PICK IT UP, CALLING OUT TO ITS OWNER.

Huh ?

Sir ! You
have dropped
something. . .

A SECOND GLANCE TOLD ZOOTHO THAT WHAT HE HELD IN HIS HAND WAS A PRICELESS GEM.

By all the stars. This stone must be worth a king's ransom.

Mmmm – nice little thing isn't it ? But it's forever dropping out of its setting in my ring. Very grateful to you, Sir.

MARSHAL ZOOTHO'S TASTE FOR THE LUXURIOUS LIFE WAS GREATLY STIMULATED WHEN, NEXT DAY, HE AND HIS AIDE FLEW IN HIS NEW FRIEND'S PRIVATE AIRCRAFT TO LAKE LUGO.

Very beautiful countryside, this, Mazzo.

Yes – I own it, as far as the eye can see.

THAT EVENING, AFTER SUPPER, HE WHO CALLED HIMSELF MAZZO DISPLAYED A FABULOUS COLLECTION OF PRICELESS GEMS TO THE TWO CATONS.

Fantastic ! Unbelievable !

Yes – quite nice, aren't they ?

MAZZO REPLACED HIS COLLECTION IN A WALL SAFE. . .

I would like to see the safe-breaker who could find his way into here !

THAT NIGHT, WHEN ALL SHOULD HAVE BEEN ASLEEP IN THE VILLA, A DARK FORM STOLE TOWARDS THE SAFE.

THE STRANGER INTRODUCED HIMSELF AS MAZZO. HE AND THE CATON AIR-ATTACHÉ GOT INTO CONVERSATION AND DISCOVERED THAT THEY HAD MUCH IN COMMON.

So you are interested in precious gems ? Then, Marshal Zootho, you and your aide must visit my villa on Lake Lugo, where is housed my collection.

It will be an honour, Mazzo.

THEY ALIGHTED ON THE BREATHTAKING ISLAND UPON WHICH STOOD A SUMPTUOUS VILLA.

MORE ADVENTURES OF THE TRIGAN EMPIRE

After stealing the plans of Trigan's newest fighting craft, Marshal Zootho accepts the hospitality of Mazzo, little knowing that Mazzo is working for the Trigans. The marshal's aide, who is really a safe-breaker is also in trouble . . .

ALL THE LIGHTS OF THE ROOM WENT ON REVEALING MARSHAL ZOOTHO'S AIDE STANDING BY THE OPEN SAFE FULL OF PRECIOUS GEMS.

Aaaaaaah !

THE PERSON KNOWN TO HIM AS MAZZO ADDRESSED HIM CALMLY.

Nice and quietly, Yerru – or shall I call you by your real name of Boraff ? Sit down, my friend. You and I are going to have a little chat.

THE SAFEBREAKER STARED IN ALARM AT HIS CAPTOR.

You – you know who I am ?

Yes, in Cato you are a free man. Unfortunately, in Trigan, thanks to tonight's episode, you are likely to get a hefty sentence for safebreaking. How do you fancy ten lunar years on the prison Isle of Zaniff ?

THE ANSWER CAME QUICKLY – DESPERATELY . . .

What – what do you want me to do ?

Yes, you are Boraff, released from gaol in Cato for the express purpose of accompanying Marshal Zootho to Trigan in order to steal the plans from the safe at air fleet headquarters. Yes, we know all about you.

That's the sort of talk I like to hear !

We can do business, my friend.

First – not a word of tonight's doings to anyone ! . . .

THE FOLLOWING MORNING, MARSHAL ZOOHO AND HIS 'AIDE' TOOK THEIR LEAVE OF THEIR HOST.

Farewell, Marshal and a good journey.

Farewell, Nommo, and many thanks for your most generous hospitality.

LATER THAT DAY, THEY ARRIVED BACK IN CATO AND WERE GREETED BY THE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF.

You have it?

I have it!

FROM THE LOCKED BRIEFCASE MARSHAL ZOOHO PRODUCED A TINY SPOOL OF MICROFILM.

Behold — the plans of the Trigans' revolutionary new fighter craft!

You have done excellently, Zooho!

CATO'S TOP SCIENTISTS, MILITARY CHIEFS AND INDUSTRIALISTS WERE PRESENT AT A SECRET SCREENING OF THE PLANS.

How soon can we go into production?

Immediately, your Excellency!

THE FANTASTIC INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY OF THE CATON NATION WAS BENT TO THE PRIME TASK OF PRODUCING THE NEW FIGHTER IN ENORMOUS QUANTITIES. WITHIN THREE LUNAR MONTHS, THE PRODUCTION LINE WAS BOOMING.

THREE MONTHS AFTER THE PLANS HAD ARRIVED IN CATO, THE FIRST FIGHTER CRAFT TOOK OFF BEFORE THE ASSEMBLED HIGH-UPS.

.... AND IMMEDIATELY CRASHED!

THE NEWS REACHED THE IMPERIAL COUNCIL IN TRIGAN CITY AMID GENERAL REJOICING, AND TRIGO HIMSELF CONGRATULATED THE EX-CONVICT WHO HAD BROUGHT IT ABOUT.

Your master-stroke was to persuade the safebreaker to switch the real plans in Zooho's briefcase for a new set of plans which Peric had 'doctored'.

So now the Catons have produced a fleet of craft which can never be made to fly!