Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive by Victor Appleton is an adventurous novel where young inventor Tom Swift designs a groundbreaking electric locomotive, facing challenges and excitement as he tests his creation and uncovers a plot to sabotage it.

CHAPTER I - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER I – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive begins not with gears turning or engines roaring, but with an unexpected visit that hints at urgency and ambition. Mr. Richard Bartholomew, a determined man representing the Hendrickton and Pas Alos Railroad, arrives at the Swift home with a request that is as bold as it is risky. His company, battling fierce competition and financial instability, needs a revolutionary solution. Facing a powerful rival railroad led by the resourceful and, as he describes, ruthless Montagne Lewis, Bartholomew knows conventional upgrades will no longer suffice. The mountains his line crosses are harsh, the terrain unforgiving, and coal-based locomotives are not efficient enough. He proposes an ambitious idea: a high-speed electric locomotive capable of two miles per minute that can perform reliably across the toughest routes.

Tom and his father, Barton Swift, listen with increasing interest. The offer is more than just technical; it’s wrapped in confidentiality, competitive pressure, and the potential to reshape the future of rail transportation. Bartholomew doesn’t sugarcoat the risks. He suspects his rival has spies who may already be monitoring this new development, perhaps even within his own ranks. To show he’s serious, Bartholomew offers $25,000 up front to fund the prototype, with a further incentive of $100,000 and guaranteed bulk orders if the Swifts succeed within two years. This is not just a business

transaction. It’s a strategic partnership in a high-stakes industrial showdown. For the Swifts, the offer presents both a thrilling challenge and a heavy responsibility.

Tom is captivated. He sees not only the technical hurdles but also the opportunity to push electric rail technology beyond anything currently on the market. He’s aware that other electric trains exist—such as the well-known Jandel model—but their speeds are limited and performance drops significantly on steep or uneven routes. Bartholomew’s request isn’t just to improve; it’s to leap ahead of the curve. Tom begins sketching ideas in his mind, thinking about advanced motors, energy-efficient drivetrains, and enhanced power distribution. He envisions dynamic systems that can adapt to changes in terrain without sacrificing speed. The dream isn’t only to meet Bartholomew’s expectations—but to exceed them with an invention that could lead the entire industry in a new direction.

Barton Swift, always measured in his approach, considers the practicalities. He’s seen the highs and lows of technological ambition and knows how easily innovation can attract danger. His advice to Tom is clear: embrace the project, but remain cautious. The elder Swift raises questions about security, discretion, and how they might protect their plans from prying eyes. Bartholomew confirms those concerns, recounting how rivals like Lewis are known to play dirty—using spies, bribery, and even threats to disrupt progress. That revelation doesn’t deter Tom. If anything, it hardens his resolve. He suggests they begin working immediately—but under strict confidentiality, using only trusted personnel and encrypted documentation.

The family workshop, long a place of creativity and invention, becomes the focal point of something much larger. Tom begins drafting the first concept diagrams in shorthand only he and his father can fully interpret. The project will require not only brilliance but also security and secrecy. Materials must be sourced quietly, and testing must be done in private. Tom also begins planning the infrastructure needed: a testing track, control equipment, and voltage systems strong enough to support sustained high-speed performance. Every detail matters—from the weight of the locomotive to its wheel traction on steep inclines. Failure is not an option—not just for their own reputation,

but because an entire railroad’s future may rest on their success.

Bartholomew’s passion for the project comes not just from competition but from a belief in modernizing rail travel. He explains how rising fuel costs and operational inefficiencies are making traditional locomotives increasingly unsustainable. Electrification, he believes, is not just the next step—it is the only path forward. With electricity, maintenance costs drop, fuel supply becomes more predictable, and environmental impact is lessened. For Bartholomew, this isn’t just about saving his company; it’s about setting a precedent. And he believes Tom Swift is the only person with the innovation, integrity, and technical ability to make it happen.

The conversation ends with all parties aligned but aware of what lies ahead. Tom accepts the challenge, excited by both the technical puzzle and the chance to shape the future of rail transportation. Barton agrees as well but reminds Tom of the importance of discretion. Plans are made to formalize the agreement within a few days, and Bartholomew leaves, expressing gratitude and guarded optimism. As the Swifts watch him go, they’re not celebrating just yet. There’s a sense that something bigger is brewing—something that will demand more than blueprints and engines. It will require strategy, protection, and perseverance.

As Tom closes the workshop for the night, his mind remains focused. He isn’t just thinking about speed or torque. He’s thinking about how this machine—once built—might change the world’s perception of what electric railways can do. And more urgently, he’s thinking about how to keep the project safe from those who fear that change.

CHAPTER II - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER II – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive continues with tension simmering beneath the surface, as Tom finds himself confronted by a masked thug under the shadow of an archway. The moment is brief but intense—Tom is held at gunpoint, forcibly searched, and has his wallet stolen. Despite the danger, he remains unnerved, suspecting the act was tied not to petty theft but to larger industrial interests. This calculated robbery aligns with the warning given by Mr. Richard Bartholomew about a Western spy potentially sent by Montagne Lewis. The link becomes clearer when Tom realizes the thief was specifically looking for something—his design notes, perhaps—rather than valuables. This reveals an early thread of corporate espionage, raising the stakes of the locomotive project he's about to undertake.

Tom's reaction is grounded in the experience gained from past inventions and adventures. Reflecting on his earliest exploits—from building motor cycles to submarines—Tom now recognizes threats not just as personal danger but as challenges to technological progress. He understands that true innovation often invites sabotage, especially when it disrupts established industries. The H. & P. A. Railroad's financial troubles have made Bartholomew desperate for a breakthrough, and Tom's proposal for a high-speed electric locomotive offers exactly that. The economic burden of steam engines, driven by the volatile cost of coal and oil, makes electrification a bold but necessary leap. Though shaken, Tom's attention quickly returns to this mission, recognizing its urgency not only for the railroad's survival but for setting a new standard in railway transport.

The robbery, though unsettling, also brings clarity. Tom concludes that the spy's mission is not about personal harm, but about halting progress. That's why nothing else was taken—only what might be mistaken as technical documentation. Unbeknownst to the thief, Tom uses a complex shorthand understood by very few,

rendering the stolen papers practically useless. This moment highlights not just Tom’s foresight, but also the intellectual protection he instinctively practices. In modern terms, it’s equivalent to encrypting sensitive data to prevent corporate leaks—an idea as relevant today as it was in Tom’s world. His discipline in safeguarding ideas ensures the real value of his work remains secure.

As Tom processes the event, his mind returns to the possibilities ahead. The electric locomotive, designed for two miles a minute, would revolutionize not just speed but the entire economics of railroads. If successful, the Swift Construction Company could set the benchmark for electrified transport in rugged environments like the Pas Alos Range. Current electric locomotives—such as the widely referenced Jandel patent—have proven insufficient in performance. Tom’s vision goes beyond mere mechanical improvement; he wants to develop a system that adapts to terrain, minimizes power loss, and optimizes battery life or dynamic grid usage. It’s a forward-thinking approach that hints at concepts resembling regenerative braking or power redundancy, long before such systems became mainstream.

With the thief gone and the threat still lingering, Tom resolves to discuss his next steps with Ned Newton and his father. It’s not just about securing a contract—it’s about creating the prototype that will prove the doubters wrong. He considers consulting engineers, acquiring testing grounds, and preparing for a secure workspace, shielded from prying eyes. Tom knows this project won’t just be measured in speed or design specs; its real success will depend on staying one step ahead of those who wish to suppress innovation. That realization strengthens his determination. Even danger becomes just another challenge to overcome with ingenuity and strategic thinking.

Throughout the chapter, there’s a noticeable shift in tone. Adventure gives way to industrial espionage, and youthful curiosity transforms into mature resolve. Tom isn’t just an inventor anymore—he’s a guardian of innovation against forces that thrive on disruption. What he builds has the potential to change how nations move and connect. The electric locomotive becomes not just a machine, but a symbol of transformation—of clean energy, efficient transport, and technological vision. For

readers, this chapter sets the foundation for a thrilling narrative that blends mechanical genius with suspense, highlighting the price—and the power—of progress.

CHAPTER III - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER III – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive begins with a quieter but equally important moment, as Tom visits Mary Nestor to discuss recent developments. Their conversation shifts between excitement and concern as Tom recounts not only the ambitious electric locomotive proposal but also his brush with a nighttime thief. Mary, ever supportive, listens carefully and is relieved when Tom reveals that the stolen notes were indecipherable due to being written in his own private shorthand. The idea of the thief opening the pages only to find incomprehensible scribbles brings a brief smile to an otherwise tense moment. Tom assures her that everything essential remains safe in his memory, a testament to his discipline and sharp recall. Despite the potential threat, Tom remains focused on the larger opportunity ahead.

Mary’s presence in the story does more than offer emotional support; it adds warmth to Tom’s otherwise intense pursuits. She’s one of the few characters who sees Tom beyond his inventions and responsibilities. Her concern serves as a subtle reminder of the personal risks involved in innovation. Tom’s calm response and clever preparation reflect his maturity and forward-thinking nature. Even as danger looms, he never loses sight of the importance of clear planning and self-reliance. This trait is what sets him apart—not just as an inventor, but as a dependable figure to those around him. Before departing, he reassures Mary of his safety, carrying with him not just tools, but a carefully honed mindset.

The narrative quickly accelerates when Mr. Damon arrives unexpectedly in his car. Offering Tom a ride, the gesture appears routine until a second encounter with the thief turns the situation dangerous. As they prepare to leave, the same assailant confronts them, clearly determined to intimidate or steal once more. Mr. Damon’s

sudden reaction behind the wheel causes the car to lurch forward, throwing the thief off balance. At that moment, Tom’s quick action with an ammonia pistol disables the attacker, who flees the scene disoriented. The event is brief but powerful, illustrating the importance of readiness when innovation attracts unwanted attention.

This attack is more than just a plot device; it speaks to the realities faced by inventors working on groundbreaking ideas. As new technologies emerge, so too do those who seek to steal or sabotage them. Tom’s preparedness demonstrates a realistic layer of self-defense that often goes overlooked in stories of invention. His ammonia gun isn’t just a gadget—it symbolizes a larger lesson about the need to protect intellectual property and oneself. In today’s terms, it’s akin to safeguarding digital files or patent documents from cyber threats or corporate espionage. Tom’s physical tools are simple, but the principles behind them remain incredibly relevant.

Following the encounter, Tom and Mr. Damon regain composure and continue their way to Ned Newton’s home. Ned, known for his financial expertise and business instincts, will be Tom’s key partner in organizing the project’s next phase. They aim to discuss drafting a contract and assessing potential capital requirements. The electric locomotive is no small feat—it involves cutting-edge design, cost analysis, and likely, overcoming the limits set by competitors like the Jandel model. Tom believes his design will exceed existing standards in power, speed, and terrain compatibility. It’s not just about building a train—it’s about redefining how rail transport adapts to evolving infrastructure needs.

Tom’s vision aligns with broader trends in the early 20th century when industries began replacing steam engines with cleaner, more efficient systems. The idea of a high-speed electric locomotive running through rugged landscapes reflects not only technical ambition but also environmental foresight. The era’s growing awareness of fossil fuel limitations made projects like Tom’s all the more significant. Electrification promised better energy control, quieter operations, and reduced reliance on unstable fuel markets. Tom’s design is being crafted with this vision in mind, blending innovation with long-term relevance. His actions embody a strategic mindset—solving

present-day problems while preparing for future demands.

By the chapter’s end, readers are left with a blend of suspense and inspiration. Tom has shown not only technical brilliance but also quick thinking under pressure and a deep sense of responsibility. The story reminds us that behind every ambitious project is a series of personal challenges—some emotional, others dangerous. But it is Tom’s composure, trust in his allies, and unshakable drive that keep his momentum alive. As he and Ned prepare to formalize the plan, there’s a strong sense that something monumental is about to unfold. And in that moment, the foundations of invention, partnership, and foresight all come together to push the story forward.

CHAPTER IV - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER IV – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive brings the reader into a late-night conversation charged with tension and excitement. Tom Swift and Mr. Damon arrive at Ned Newton’s residence, confident that the night’s startling events must be shared immediately. Their recent encounter with a highwayman near Ned’s home is presented with a blend of seriousness and humor. Mr. Damon, ever animated, blames the incident on the chaos that tends to follow Tom’s inventive pursuits. Despite the danger, they treat the situation lightly, using it as a springboard to introduce the night’s deeper revelation. The visit transitions into a private discussion that hints at something far more important than a roadside theft.

Mr. Damon’s excitement propels Tom to disclose a transformative business opportunity. Tom explains that the Swift Construction Company has been approached by the president of the Hendrickton & Pas Alos Railroad with a bold proposal. The task is to develop an electric locomotive capable of reaching speeds of two miles per minute—a concept nearly unimaginable at the time. Both Ned and Mr. Damon are astonished, but Tom is already envisioning solutions. He sees the challenge not as a risk but as a gateway to revolutionize how railroads operate. The electrification of transport could drastically reduce dependence on coal and oil, cutting costs and emissions alike.

Tom’s forward-thinking nature anchors the conversation. He references the ongoing interest in replacing steam with electric power, noting how current solutions—like the Jandel locomotive—fall short, especially on mountainous terrain. The proposed route through the Pas Alos Range demands both speed and endurance. Tom is certain that with the right design, an electric engine can outperform outdated steam locomotives.

He outlines how improvements in torque, motor cooling, and regenerative braking could help overcome terrain-related limitations. His focus on efficiency and technical soundness reassures his companions that the project, though ambitious, is well within their reach.

Amid this technical optimism, the memory of the earlier robbery resurfaces. Tom's missing wallet and the deliberate nature of the attack raise suspicions. The possibility that their discussion was overheard or leaked adds a layer of tension. Ned speculates that the culprit may be a local informant acting on behalf of a rival. This adds a new dimension to the problem—industrial sabotage may already be in play. As they reflect on this, the group realizes that their path forward may involve not just technical hurdles, but also strategic defense against competitive interference.

While the worry over espionage lingers, Tom doesn’t let it derail his momentum. He reassures the group that every measure will be taken to keep the project confidential. Trust among the trio is solidified in this moment—Ned with his business insight, Mr. Damon with his unshakeable belief, and Tom with the technical vision. They agree to proceed, not blindly, but with increased vigilance. It is clear that innovation alone will not guarantee success. Secrecy and teamwork are equally critical in a landscape where rivals may go to great lengths to halt progress.

Tom’s ambition also reflects broader trends of the early 20th century. During this time, electric trains were beginning to show promise in Europe and parts of the U.S., but their development was often hindered by infrastructure limitations and skepticism. Tom's vision fits into a historical moment when bold prototypes were needed to prove electric transit could scale. Readers unfamiliar with the history of electrification can appreciate that projects like Tom's mirror real breakthroughs made by pioneers in rail innovation. His story captures that spirit—equal parts imagination, technical precision, and readiness to challenge outdated systems.

In this chapter, the narrative expertly mixes adventure, technological insight, and looming mystery. The electric locomotive becomes more than a machine—it represents a shift in how transportation is viewed and funded. Tom isn’t just building a

faster train; he’s taking on the responsibility of redefining industrial limits. And in doing so, he invites allies and enemies alike to take notice. Whether his invention will lead to a brighter future or more intense conflict remains to be seen, but one thing is clear: Tom Swift is fully committed to leading the charge.

CHAPTER V - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER V – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive shifts focus from industrial invention to the quirky and personal troubles of a close friend. Mr. Damon, a man known for his eccentric expressions and good-natured personality, finds himself the target of a rather unusual string of thefts. His prized buff Orpington chickens, especially a distinguished cockerel named Blue Ribbon Junior, have attracted the attention of relentless burglars. Despite installing barbed wire and providing his servant with a shotgun loaded with rock salt, the nightly intrusions persist. His frustration leads him to turn to Tom Swift, hopeful that the young inventor might provide a more innovative solution. Readers see another side of Tom—not just the brilliant engineer but also the dependable friend willing to solve even the oddest problems.

Rather than dismissing the issue as trivial, Tom listens intently and devises a clever, non-lethal plan. He suggests electrifying the existing barbed wire surrounding the chicken yard. The setup would act as a strong deterrent, giving any intruder a shock without inflicting serious harm. Tom stresses the need for safety and legality, advising Mr. Damon to get the necessary clearance from the local electric supply company. This shows Tom's responsibility as both a technical expert and a conscientious member of the community. It’s a reminder that technology must be handled with care, even when used to protect something as simple as poultry. Mr. Damon, ever appreciative, agrees without hesitation, trusting Tom’s judgment entirely.

Their conversation is suddenly cut short by Koku, the massive and ever-loyal guardian of the Swift household. He reports that suspicious movements have been noticed near the property—footprints that don't belong to any known visitors. Koku, whose instincts lean toward immediate action, restrains himself at Tom’s command. Tom’s caution reflects his growing understanding of the threats that now surround him. Not every

problem can be solved with force. Strategy and patience are essential, especially when the source of danger remains unidentified. Koku’s readiness to protect, even without full understanding, underscores the strong bonds within Tom’s circle.

A closer look at the footprints raises concerns that go beyond chicken thieves. They match those seen near the Swift property in a previous incident, pointing to a larger scheme. Tom suspects that the ongoing surveillance might be connected to his dealings with Mr. Bartholomew. The project to electrify a railroad through the treacherous Pas Alos Range could easily attract industrial rivals. Someone, it seems, is deeply interested in Tom’s involvement and willing to trespass for information. These subtle developments introduce an undercurrent of tension, where technological progress is shadowed by espionage.

Even in this lighter chapter, the narrative doesn’t lose sight of the larger plot. Humor from Mr. Damon’s chicken troubles blends with the serious tone of a growing threat. Tom’s actions show that he is increasingly aware of the dangers his inventions attract. By prioritizing legal and humane solutions, he sets a strong moral example. The juxtaposition of domestic comedy and industrial suspense makes the story engaging. Readers are reminded that threats to progress can come in unexpected forms—whether from thieves in the night or rivals with hidden motives. Tom’s role as an inventor is evolving into that of a protector, not just of property, but of trust and integrity.

Additionally, the story subtly underscores the social dynamics of the time. Electrifying a fence wasn’t a casual task in the early 20th century. Electricity, still not universally understood, represented both modern convenience and potential hazard. Tom's cautious approach shows his respect for both its power and public perception. It's not just about problem-solving—it's about doing so responsibly. Readers unfamiliar with early electrical systems gain a glimpse into how innovation was gradually integrated into everyday life, one application at a time. Even a chicken coop could become a symbol of technological transition, thanks to Tom Swift’s practical genius.

CHAPTER VI - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER VI – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive opens with an atmosphere of tension balanced by humor and domestic commotion. Tom Swift awakens to the aftermath of a peculiar and potentially dangerous night. Despite the presence of a mysterious intruder, no confrontation occurs, thanks largely to Koku, Tom's towering and loyal bodyguard who had stood vigilant. Koku’s efforts to protect Tom culminate in an accidental scuffle that sends Rad, the family’s other loyal servant, hurtling through a window—his dramatic nature providing a contrast to Koku’s straightforward brawn. Both men, although vastly different in demeanor, share a deep devotion to Tom, which creates a comic yet warm rivalry as they compete to be his most reliable aide.

The comedic mishap between Koku and Rad serves a deeper narrative purpose. It illustrates how Tom’s circle—though unconventional—is built on trust and shared purpose. Even in moments of levity, the sense of looming threat remains. Tom, although unfazed outwardly, is aware of the hostile forces closing in, hinted at through Koku's overnight vigilance and Tom’s quiet resolution in the morning. These small character-driven scenes highlight the human elements that ground Tom’s otherwise extraordinary world. While technology and invention fuel his adventures, it’s the loyalty and character of his inner circle that keep his world cohesive.

After breakfast, Tom and his father make their way to the Swift Construction Company. Their destination is a meeting with Mr. Richard Bartholomew, a businessman desperate to electrify a key section of his railroad. The route, cutting through the challenging Pas Alos Range, presents both a technical and financial challenge that few would dare attempt. Yet, Mr. Bartholomew turns to Tom, recognizing that only someone of Tom’s reputation and inventive genius could provide a viable solution. The

gravity of the meeting is quickly apparent, not just in the technical nature of the job but also in the surrounding threats—commercial rivals and possible sabotage.

This business proposition reflects the era’s industrial drive. Railroads were not only a mode of transportation—they were lifelines of commerce and symbols of progress. Electrification promised to enhance efficiency, reduce operational costs, and usher in a new chapter for rail-based travel. Mr. Bartholomew's willingness to trust Tom, despite opposition from unknown forces, adds a layer of urgency. The young inventor isn't just being hired; he is being relied upon to revolutionize a fundamental part of the American economy. Their discussion results in the signing of a critical contract—an act that formalizes not only their business arrangement but also Tom’s role in a broader technological revolution.

Throughout the conversation, undertones of danger continue to surface. Tom is no stranger to industrial espionage, and the hints about spies emphasize the risks of innovation in a competitive world. The threats don’t discourage Tom, though. Instead, they fuel his determination. As always, he balances technical acumen with strategic thinking. He understands that invention, especially one capable of changing how railroads operate, will inevitably attract enemies. The contract isn't just paperwork—it’s a commitment to overcome both mechanical and human challenges.

Tom’s ability to stay composed under such pressure further solidifies his character. He’s not merely a boy genius tinkering in a lab; he’s becoming a leader in the national industrial landscape. The narrative makes it clear that Tom’s contribution is crucial not just to Mr. Bartholomew, but potentially to broader technological adoption across industries. Despite his youth, Tom is respected by seasoned businessmen and feared by less ethical competitors. His inventions are powerful not just because of their function, but because of their ability to shift balance in business and innovation.

What makes this chapter particularly compelling is the interplay between everyday humor and high-stakes ambition. The reader is drawn from a comic window-crashing scene to boardroom negotiations that could shape the future. It’s a reminder that even within narratives driven by technology, human relationships, trust, and personal values

remain central. Tom’s world is dangerous, yes—but also full of heart. As the contract is signed, a new journey begins—one where electrical innovation could either be a triumph or a target. Readers are left eager to see how Tom will maneuver through both invention and intrigue in the chapters to come.

CHAPTER VII - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER VII – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive opens with a candid admission by Tom Swift that he has yet to fully envision the ideal design for a superior electric locomotive. This moment, shared with his father and Ned Newton, reveals not weakness but realism—Tom understands that true breakthroughs come not from rushing invention, but from carefully aligning concept with purpose. He acknowledges the limitations of current designs while expressing confidence in the long-term viability of electric rail systems. Their conversation highlights the many advantages electric locomotion holds over steam: lower operational costs, more predictable performance in adverse weather, and significantly reduced maintenance. These points not only reflect Tom’s thoughtful analysis but also strengthen the case for Mr. Richard Bartholomew’s push toward electrifying his struggling railroad line. The group agrees that while the vision is clear, the road ahead is demanding, especially if they aim to exceed speeds of two miles a minute—an ambitious but not impossible goal.

Motivated by the challenge, Tom decides to travel to Waterfield to continue his research in a quieter setting. Before leaving, he exchanges words with Eradicate Sampson, the long-trusted handyman, and enlists Koku to accompany him on the trip. Koku’s towering presence and earnest confusion about basic tasks add humor to the otherwise serious atmosphere. Tom balances his leadership with patience, reminding Koku of the importance of observation during their travels. The exchange also hints at Tom’s growing awareness that mechanical innovation isn’t his only challenge—human dynamics matter too. While packing, he prepares not just technical notes, but security measures as well, aware of recent disturbances suggesting that his efforts may be under surveillance. This attention to detail, both mechanical and strategic, shows Tom evolving not only as an inventor but as a protector of intellectual integrity.

During their journey, a minor incident on the road takes a darker turn when Tom spots a lone man lurking near the edge of the property. The figure appears familiar, possibly tied to the network of industrial spies trying to derail his project. Tom pretends not to notice but mentally logs the encounter for follow-up. His concern is not panic—it’s calculation. If someone is watching, then they’re already too close. This tension introduces a layer of danger to what was initially just a research trip. The stakes are now split between technical performance and preventing corporate sabotage. Though no confrontation occurs, the moment shifts the tone, turning Tom’s routine travel into a mission that might involve more than engineering.

Once settled in Waterfield, Tom reviews his blueprints and sketches, looking for ways to improve motor efficiency and streamline the power-feed system. Inspiration often comes to him during such retreats, far from the pressures of the lab. He adjusts a few design parameters, sketching possible changes to gear ratios and braking mechanisms. In the background, Koku maintains a careful watch—comically enthusiastic, but alert nonetheless. Tom’s ability to blend cutting-edge innovation with forward-thinking security measures reinforces the growing complexity of his project. It’s no longer just about beating steam power—it’s about beating those who fear change.

The chapter ends on a note of rising suspense. Though Tom remains composed, the reader is left with the sense that challenges ahead may come as much from shadows as from circuits. As the Hercules 0001 continues its slow evolution from concept to physical reality, Tom’s world expands beyond machines into the terrain of strategy, trust, and resilience. The mystery man in the woods may return, or he may already be watching from somewhere closer. Either way, Tom Swift is preparing—not just to build the fastest locomotive the world has ever seen, but to defend it from those who would rather see it fail.

CHAPTER VIII - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER VIII – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive opens with a burst of tension as Koku, Tom Swift’s towering, well-meaning assistant, takes matters into his own hands. After spotting a shadowy figure lurking near the property, Koku pursues the intruder, believing it to be the same man seen sneaking around days earlier. Despite Tom’s repeated commands to stop, Koku presses forward, ignoring the protocols in place for such situations. Tom, forced to act swiftly, halts him with a severe warning—threatening to send Koku back to his homeland where bland food and exile await. The emotional tactic works, and Koku begrudgingly backs down, though his frustration is evident. Tom, though relieved the chase has ended without violence, knows the encounter may have jeopardized their secrecy. If the stranger was indeed Andy O’Malley, a known spy working for Montagne Lewis, their carefully guarded innovations may now be under surveillance.

This realization weighs heavily on Tom as he returns to his workshop. He recognizes the stranger might now know he's been identified, potentially triggering further attempts to infiltrate the Swift facility. Still, Tom chooses to withhold the news from his father, not wanting to cause undue worry. Meanwhile, thoughts of Richard Bartholomew and the struggling H. & P. A. railroad stir urgency in Tom’s mind. A deal with Bartholomew depends on the success of Tom’s electric locomotive, and sabotage at this stage would not just damage equipment—it would undermine investor confidence. Determined to protect his work, Tom orders security enhancements at the shop and revises internal procedures. Every test, every part, and every visitor will now be scrutinized. The threat of industrial espionage is no longer theoretical; it has stepped directly into their yard.

Later, Tom travels to Waterfield to help Mr. Damon install an electrified fence around his chicken coop—a task that blends utility with friendship. Mr. Damon's light-hearted obsession with safeguarding his prized hens provides a rare moment of levity. Yet even as they laugh over wiring and posts, the dark cloud of espionage lingers in the background. Tom shares his unease about the figure lurking near the lab but reassures Damon that once word spreads that Bartholomew has left town, the stalker may lose interest. Still, Tom's instincts tell him it won't be that simple. The stakes are too high, and the invention too valuable. As a precaution, he instructs Mr. Damon to keep an eye out for unusual visitors in Waterfield as well.

Back in Shopton, Tom throws himself into the final phases of locomotive development. His workshop, typically a hive of creative energy, now feels more like a guarded fortress. Ned Newton handles procurement with greater discretion, while Koku stands watch more attentively than ever. Tom reviews the Hercules 0001's wiring late into the night, testing new cooling circuits and refining the motor's output balance. It's a moment of near-total focus—until a flicker in the shadows outside his window breaks the calm. He freezes. Someone is there. Silently, he moves toward the switch to trigger the silent alarm. Every instinct sharpened by weeks of caution kicks in. He knows this isn't a curious bystander—it's someone with a purpose. Possibly the same man Koku tried to catch. Possibly someone worse.

This unspoken threat drives home the reality Tom now faces: success attracts enemies. Innovation, in this world, isn't just a mechanical challenge—it's a game of survival. Every wire and weld is a statement of defiance against those who would rather steal than build. Yet Tom doesn't falter. If anything, he's more determined than ever. His locomotive isn't just about speed or power. It's about proving that ingenuity, when paired with courage and strategy, can withstand even the darkest attempts to suppress it. As the chapter closes, Tom stands at the edge of his lab, eyes fixed on the darkness beyond the glass, ready to defend the future he's building—whatever it takes.

CHAPTER IX - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER IX – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive opens on a tense night as Tom Swift, increasingly aware of potential sabotage attempts, decides to reinforce his home with a newly installed burglar alarm. With critical documents secured in his personal safe and the house quiet under a starless sky, he tries to settle down, only to find himself locked out in minimal clothing amid a brewing storm. The discomfort of being trapped outdoors quickly gives way to concern when Tom realizes something more sinister is unfolding—especially after spotting subtle signs that suggest an intruder has managed to bypass his defenses.

Tom’s instincts are confirmed when he fails to receive a response from Koku, his dependable servant, whom he expected to awaken at the first sign of the alarm. The silence is alarming. Upon managing reentry, Tom discovers Koku unconscious, clearly rendered immobile by chloroform. The methodical nature of the attack leaves no doubt that this was a premeditated strike by skilled intruders. The fact that they subdued Koku without making noise shows they came prepared, understanding both the layout of Tom's estate and the roles of his closest allies. Tom now knows this isn’t the work of opportunistic thieves—this is industrial sabotage, carefully plotted and dangerously executed.

Realizing the implications, Tom immediately inspects the house and the workshop for missing or tampered items. Fortunately, his safe remains secure and the portfolio intact, but the breach itself sends a stronger message than any stolen prototype. The attackers are watching, waiting, and testing vulnerabilities—not just in his property, but in his routines. The experience hardens Tom’s resolve. Rather than retreat, he responds with strategic adjustments: the alarm system is upgraded, additional locks

are installed, and armed security is discussed with Ned Newton the following morning. Tom also makes plans to rotate guard duties and consider backup power sources for the alarm in case of electrical interference. Every new layer of protection becomes part of a growing defense around the locomotive project.

Though shaken, Tom quickly shifts from reactive to proactive. He begins tracing any external leads that could identify the spy network targeting his work. Suspicion narrows toward industrial competitors—especially those who stand to lose if the Hercules 0001 meets its performance goals. He dispatches Ned to quietly interview nearby witnesses and suppliers, hoping to find someone who noticed unfamiliar faces or vehicles near the compound. Meanwhile, Koku recovers and expresses frustration at his own incapacitation, vowing not to be caught off guard again. Tom, appreciative of Koku's loyalty, assures him that no blame rests on his shoulders—this attack was designed to exploit even the strongest defenses.

In private reflection, Tom acknowledges the psychological warfare now embedded in his journey. It's no longer just a race to build the fastest, most powerful electric locomotive—it's a battle of attrition, where rivals use fear and sabotage to stall progress. He finds strength in the support of his friends and the stability of his engineering designs. Still, he recognizes that brilliance alone won't ensure success. Strategy and caution are now as important as innovation. He documents the incident, catalogs his response, and adds a new section to his project file: "Security Protocols." From now on, the work will continue—but under tighter watch and fewer assumptions.

As the chapter ends, the storm outside begins to pass, mirroring the sense of regained control Tom feels. The attack has exposed vulnerabilities, but it has also clarified what's truly at stake. His electric locomotive isn't just a machine—it's a symbol of change, one that others will try to extinguish. But Tom Swift, tested under pressure, isn't one to fold. With every wheel and wire of the Hercules 0001, he pushes not just against technical limits, but against those who fear progress. The challenge has grown darker, but so has Tom's determination to lead the charge forward.

CHAPTER X - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER X – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive opens with a visit from the ever-curious and animated Mr. Wakefield Damon, who arrives at the Swift workshops eager to witness the progress of Tom’s latest marvel. Always fascinated by mechanical ingenuity, Damon recalls with amusement how one of Tom’s older inventions—an electrified fence—solved a cat problem on his estate with shocking efficiency. Now, his interest lies in something far more ambitious: a revolutionary electric locomotive. Tom, dressed in his working gear, walks Mr. Damon through the shop floor, discussing the formidable specifications of the Hercules 0001. The machine, designed to deliver forty-four hundred horsepower via a direct-current system, relies on twelve massive driving wheels to achieve both speed and traction. As Damon’s eyes widen, Tom confidently explains that while steam engines require brute fuel, his invention thrives on engineered precision.

Ned Newton soon joins them, offering a financial update while admiring the scale of the locomotive taking shape before them. Both men express unwavering belief in Tom’s vision, even in its incomplete form. They reference outdated patents and flawed steam designs, suggesting that nothing in current circulation can rival Tom’s work. Meanwhile, Tom stays focused. He explains that secrecy is essential—not just to protect his intellectual property, but to maintain a competitive advantage. He and his team have chosen to work behind closed doors, limiting what even their closest allies can share. The massive workshop buzzes not only with tools and machinery but also with whispered theories from workers and visitors alike. Outside the gates, speculation grows. Word of Tom’s project is spreading, drawing interest from rival inventors, curious engineers, and perhaps more dangerously—those with less noble intentions.

Later that day, while running errands for the Swift Construction Company, Ned enters a downtown bank to complete a financial transfer. As he waits, he overhears part of a

cryptic conversation between two men near the counter. One whispers, “the invention... five hours and it’s good-night,” before noticing Ned’s presence and abruptly ending the exchange. Though the words seem vague, Ned’s instincts stir. Back at the shop, he recounts the scene to Tom and Mr. Damon, suggesting the phrase might point to sabotage. Tom frowns, not from fear, but focus. He knows what’s at stake. The Hercules 0001 isn’t just a train—it’s a symbol of progress, and not everyone wants that progress to succeed.

As the day wears on, Tom initiates a discreet security check around the facility. While no immediate threat is uncovered, the team takes extra precautions. Patrols are increased. Entry points are monitored more closely. Koku, Tom’s towering and fiercely loyal assistant, is briefed to stay alert during the night shift. The workshop now functions with a dual purpose: to build and to defend. That night, under the dim lights of the hangar, Tom walks the length of the locomotive. He tests the alignment of the drive wheels and checks the conductor brackets himself. To anyone watching, this would appear routine. But to Tom, it’s a personal pledge to guard not only his invention but the vision it represents.

In quiet conversation, Tom shares with Ned his growing concern about industrial espionage. The electric locomotive, if successful, would disrupt freight systems across the country—an outcome not all competitors welcome. Tom recalls past instances where rival firms attempted to buy or steal blueprints. He has no doubt that some would resort to sabotage to delay his progress. But fear has no place in Tom’s workshop. The best defense, he believes, is to stay ahead—technically, strategically, and mentally. Plans are made to accelerate internal tests. If all goes well, the first major trial on the company’s enclosed track will happen within days.

The chapter ends with a shift in tone. There’s still excitement, still optimism—but now there’s also the hum of caution. The Hercules 0001 stands in its bay like a silent sentinel, partially complete but already embodying the future. Tom knows that invention and danger often travel together. Still, his resolve remains. With trusted allies beside him, and every wire and rivet placed by hand, Tom is ready to move

forward—even if someone out there is hoping he doesn’t.

CHAPTER XI - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XI – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive begins at a crucial juncture in the development of the Hercules 0001, as Tom directs his energy toward the delicate process of electrical integration. The locomotive, an engineering colossus weighing nearly two hundred thousand pounds and tipping the scale at two hundred eighty-five tons when complete, demanded precise calibration and immense power. Tom calculated a need for forty-four hundred horsepower, converted into a steady stream of 3,000 volts DC—an extraordinary load that pushed the limits of Shopton Electric Company's capabilities. Amidst tangled cables and humming machinery, Tom remained hands-on, dressed in his overalls and personally overseeing the final fittings. The locomotive’s boxy, enclosed design was sleek, with no exposed gears or smokestacks, marking a departure from traditional steam engines. Its clean exterior concealed an intricate web of systems—an emblem of modernity crafted under pressure.

While adjusting the final segments beneath the metal shell, Tom noticed an odd, faint ticking. The noise was rhythmic, almost mechanical, echoing eerily from near the motor housing. He spotted a crumpled pair of overalls nearby and, assuming it was simply misplaced by a careless worker, dismissed it. That illusion of normalcy shattered seconds later when Ned Newton and Rad Sampson rushed in, with Rad yelling of danger. They’d been tipped off by a stranger’s suspicious behavior near the yard earlier that day. Rad’s fear was specific: a bomb. That ticking wasn’t from gears—it was the sound of a timed device counting down. In that instant, the difference between oversight and disaster became razor-thin.

Barton Swift entered quickly, his years of experience lending instant credibility to the warning. He confirmed what everyone now feared—the ticking signaled an explosive, most likely a time bomb. The entire shop fell into a stunned hush. No one moved except Tom. With deliberate calm, he approached the suspicious bundle. Knowing hesitation could cost lives, he grabbed the item and rushed it to a water barrel. With a splash, the ticking vanished beneath the surface. The danger, though still present, had been neutralized. The room exhaled. Tom’s quick thinking had saved not only the locomotive, but every person standing nearby.

In the aftermath, the shop buzzed with nervous energy. The failed sabotage attempt was a grim reminder that success draws not only attention but also hostility. Tom realized that his work had moved beyond the realm of invention—it was now a target. Industrial rivals, threatened by the potential of his electric locomotive, had clearly decided to escalate their efforts. This attack wasn’t just meant to damage equipment; it aimed to intimidate, disrupt, and delay. But if anything, it had the opposite effect. Tom’s resolve deepened. The Hercules 0001 wouldn’t just run—it would thrive. And now it had to do more than prove its engineering—its success had become a statement.

The incident prompted immediate action. Security was doubled. The work yard was swept for other devices. Entry points were sealed off, and all deliveries were thoroughly checked. Tom also tasked Ned with helping him design a surveillance plan for the remainder of the project. Sabotage had moved from the hypothetical to the real. They had to be ready for more. Yet through it all, Tom remained focused on progress. The generator upgrades were completed the next day. Testing resumed. Delays weren’t acceptable—not with the Hendrickton & Pas Alos Railroad contract looming and public curiosity rising.

As the chapter draws to a close, the mood shifts from panic to determination. The Hercules 0001, now fully wired and fitted, hums quietly on its rails. Its smooth design and powerful frame mask the drama of the past few hours. But everyone in the yard knows what could have happened. Tom walks the length of the machine, inspecting

each section not just as an inventor, but now as its protector. The electric age of locomotion is almost here—but it’s coming under fire. And Tom Swift, undeterred, is more ready than ever to meet it head-on.

CHAPTER XII - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XII – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive unfolds in a climate of rising anticipation and unease as the long-awaited trial day for the Hercules 0001 draws near. Tension escalates when Ned Newton uncovers signs of sabotage—an attempt involving explosives meant to cripple the project. The immediate investigation led by Tom, Ned, and Barton Swift identifies the likely perpetrator: O'Malley, a known agent acting under orders to hinder the H. & P. A. railroad. The motive seems rooted less in destroying Swift's business directly and more in obstructing the contract's fulfillment. Recognizing this threat, Tom orders an overhaul of security. The perimeter fence is reinforced, and copper wire—potentially electrified—is mounted atop the stockade walls to deter further intrusion. These measures show Tom's transition from inventor to strategist, anticipating that innovation alone won't be enough to safeguard the future he's building.

The urgency to shield the project doesn't slow progress on the Hercules 0001. Yet, every security improvement adds to the mounting cost, and Ned begins voicing concern. The budget is stretched thin, especially as Tom insists on replicating real-world conditions for the trial. This requires a complex power system: a step-down transformer that converts a massive 100,000-volt alternating current into a usable 3,000-volt direct current, mirroring the energy delivery standards of the Hendrickton & Pas Alos line. Tom remains unfazed by the expense, reminding Ned that a successful demonstration could launch their technology into wide-scale adoption. He believes the cost of failure—both financial and reputational—would be far greater. Despite growing fiscal tension, Ned continues supporting Tom, balancing concern with loyalty.

Beyond the power system, Tom supervises the installation of a dedicated two-mile track within the protected compound. This isn’t just a test route; it’s a controlled replica of field conditions, complete with a dual-wire overhead trolley system for seamless energy transfer. The layout demands precision and introduces another layer of expense, frustrating Ned further. However, Tom knows that without this infrastructure, the test results would lack credibility. The overhead conductors and converted current ensure that Hercules 0001 will be evaluated under pressures identical to those it will face during full deployment. This calculated risk reaffirms Tom’s approach—engineering that doesn’t compromise, even under financial stress.

Adding to the complexity is the constant threat of industrial espionage. Tom tightens protocols, restricts yard access, and installs alarm triggers on key components. Every team member is briefed daily. Koku, ever-vigilant, becomes a fixture in the yard’s night patrols. Tom recognizes that physical innovation must now be defended as fiercely as intellectual property. The sabotage attempt proves their enemies aren’t just theoretical. It validates his caution and justifies the defensive layers now surrounding the project. Unlike the world of pure invention, success here is defined not only by performance, but by survival.

In the quiet moments between tests and construction reviews, Tom reflects on the broader implications of what he’s doing. The Hercules 0001 isn’t just a locomotive—it represents a challenge to decades of steam dominance and a statement of what electric power can achieve. Rivals like the "Jandels," symbolic of outdated tech and entrenched interests, see it as a threat. Tom sees it as the future. And though obstacles remain, he thrives under the pressure. Every problem becomes an opportunity to refine, every threat a motivator to innovate.

The chapter closes with a feeling of controlled intensity. The pieces are in place—the track, the power station, the protective systems—and the locomotive stands ready. Still, unease lingers, as everyone knows the upcoming trial is about more than speed or power. It’s about trust in new technology. It’s about proving that electricity can do more than match steam—it can surpass it. Tom Swift, driven by vision and supported

by a loyal team, is ready to face the test. And whether the Hercules 0001 flies or falters, the trial will mark a turning point not just for the invention, but for the future of rail itself.

CHAPTER XIII -Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XIII – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive opens on a day filled with cautious optimism as Tom Swift finally unveils the Hercules 0001 to a gathering of friends, engineers, and curious onlookers. The electric locomotive, towering at over ninety feet, is unlike anything seen on a rail line before. Its bold design features elevated windows, a sleek body, and a raised pantagraph giving it an imposing silhouette against the industrial backdrop. As the crowd gathers along the yard track, Tom powers up the machine for its first public demonstration. It glides forward smoothly, drawing gasps and applause. Ned Newton and Mr. Damon beam with pride, while Tom's father, Barton Swift, watches in silent approval. The moment is triumphant—but only partially so.

Mary Nestor, standing close to Tom, senses his hesitation. Though the crowd is impressed, Tom feels underwhelmed by the performance. He knows the Hercules 0001 hasn't shown its full strength. The locomotive moved, yes, but not at the velocity he envisions. Tom's goal is ambitious: reaching two miles per minute, a speed that would redefine the limits of land-based travel. In a quiet moment, he admits to Mary and Ned that a technical limitation with the power-feed system is holding them back. The single conductor currently used delivers uneven power during turns, producing arcs and electrical "fireworks" that compromise safety and efficiency. Tom explains his plan for a dual-conductor trolley system that could solve the issue, providing smooth and continuous energy to the engine.

This design hurdle doesn't dampen Tom's spirit. In fact, it sharpens his focus. He speaks with Mr. Damon about creating insulated mounting brackets and experimenting with new contact materials to reduce sparking. Ned offers to run the numbers,

calculating the load variance under different curve pressures. Barton Swift, ever supportive but practical, reminds Tom that innovation often comes in layers—success rarely happens all at once. Tom agrees, but he also knows that the public demonstration has created expectations. Investors, railroad officials, and critics are all watching closely. They're not just curious about the Hercules—they're hoping it works. And Tom doesn't intend to disappoint.

Later that evening, Tom walks the length of the locomotive alone. He examines every connection, listens to the cooling system's quiet hum, and reviews the performance logs. Each bolt and wire represents hours of labor, design, and risk. But what weighs most on him is the gap between what the Hercules has done and what it must do. Achieving his contract obligations is only one part of the mission. More than that, Tom wants to prove that electricity, harnessed correctly, can outperform steam in every measurable way. Freight movement across long distances could be cleaner, faster, and more cost-effective. But only if the Hercules hits the promised mark.

In a private conversation with Mary, Tom reveals how much this project means to him. He recalls watching outdated steam engines belch smoke and waste energy, thinking there had to be a better way. That thought, planted years ago, has now grown into the steel and current of the Hercules 0001. Mary listens quietly, her eyes reflecting pride and concern. She doesn't question Tom's dream—only the toll it may take. Tom, ever aware of the stakes, assures her he'll make time for safety and for rest, but the next phase is already taking shape in his mind.

The chapter concludes with Tom reviewing the results of the yard test with Ned and Mr. Damon. They agree the fundamentals are sound, but more field testing is necessary before full-scale deployment on the Hendrickton & Pas Alos line. Tom outlines plans for a closed-course high-speed run to test the new twin conductor system once it's installed. As they speak, the hum of the Hercules echoes through the yard like a quiet promise of what's still to come. Tom doesn't speak in absolutes. He speaks in objectives—and this one, though difficult, is still within reach. With the support of his friends and his own unwavering resolve, he prepares to push the limits

of invention once again.

CHAPTER XIV - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XIV – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive begins four months after Tom finalized his agreement with the Hendrickton & Pas Alos Railroad to bring electric innovation to their lines. During this time, development on the Hercules 0001 has progressed steadily, although security concerns have not diminished. Andy O'Malley, a known saboteur hired by Montagne Lewis, remains missing, prompting Tom to strengthen safeguards around his facility. Fences are reinforced, guards are posted, and electric current is run through the outer perimeter during test hours. Tom knows that success breeds interference. And with the stakes so high, he can’t afford to trust luck.

As testing intensifies, Rad, Tom’s aging helper, insists on being involved in the final trip out West. His loyalty is undeniable, but his health and limitations are equally apparent. Tom appreciates Rad’s commitment but gently denies the request, entrusting Koku with the role of locomotive guardian instead. Koku’s physical strength and unshakable loyalty make him the more practical choice. Meanwhile, Mr. Damon, enthusiastic as ever, asks to join Tom during the decisive test run. He offers his presence not just as moral support, but as a testament to the belief many have in Tom’s vision. Despite his eccentric habits, Mr. Damon’s faith in the project mirrors Tom’s own drive for excellence.

Tom’s greatest challenge now lies in achieving a sustained velocity of two miles per minute—an ambitious target he believes Hercules 0001 can meet. The limitations of the Shopton track, however, mean this test must be simulated in short bursts rather than extended runs. He shares his concerns with Ned Newton, the company’s financial overseer and trusted friend. Ned, always practical, worries about the stress such

experiments may place on the engine. But Tom assures him that precautions are in place. Every test is calculated. Every risk is measured. His decision to conduct a high-current test at night, under secrecy, reflects both his caution and his ambition.

Throughout the chapter, technical adjustments are described in detail. Tom recalibrates the current regulators, modifies the cooling systems, and installs additional safety cutoffs to prevent overloading. Every improvement brings him closer to the performance threshold he envisions. The locomotive hums with controlled power, its design balancing speed, torque, and resilience. Tom explains that while the theory supports a top speed of 120 miles per hour, only a real-world test can confirm whether it’s sustainable under weight and grade conditions. This isn’t just about building a faster train—it’s about reshaping how railroads operate. And Tom knows that this test could either silence the skeptics or confirm their doubts.

Meanwhile, concerns about sabotage still loom. The private detective agency Tom had previously hired has failed to track down O’Malley or uncover any new leads about his employer. Tom and Ned agree the agency's results are disappointing. More troubling is the possibility that O'Malley remains nearby, simply waiting for the right moment to strike again. The lack of accountability fuels Tom’s mistrust, and he quietly shifts focus from external investigators to more direct security measures. Guards are briefed. Surveillance is increased. And no one, not even minor staff, is allowed near the Hercules without clearance.

As night falls, the final preparations begin. Tom stands by the locomotive, double-checking every wire, every lever, every calibration. Koku watches from the shadows, ready to respond to any suspicious activity. Mr. Damon paces nearby, muttering blessings to mechanical parts. Ned sits near the switchboard, overseeing power flow from the generator. The moment feels less like a test and more like a launch. The team knows what this night represents. It is the culmination of theory, labor, and risk.

The chapter closes as the Hercules 0001 roars to life on the testing track, its motors spinning silently, almost effortlessly. Acceleration builds in carefully measured intervals. Lights blur as speed increases. Tom holds the controls with steady hands,

eyes trained on the gauges. For him, this is more than a race against numbers. It is a push against the limits of convention. And whether the test ends in triumph or a lesson in restraint, Tom is ready to face it. In this moment, the electric future of rail hangs on the silent charge surging beneath his feet.

CHAPTER XV - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XV – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive begins in silence, broken only by the soft crunch of Ned Newton’s footsteps as he creeps through the dimly lit yard of the Swift Construction Company. The night is heavy with tension. Ned, dressed in dark clothes and guided by instinct, suspects that someone may be targeting the Hercules 0001 again. A faint flicker of movement near the perimeter fence confirms his unease. He crouches low, eyes fixed on a shadow that slinks along the boundary—someone clearly attempting unauthorized entry. Given the past attempts to sabotage Tom’s project, Ned prepares for the worst.

Without warning, the roar of Hercules 0001 ignites the night. Its test run lights up the yard, revealing a figure scaling the fence with the help of a pole rigged with notches. Ned’s breath catches. He sees the glint of wire cutters in the intruder’s hand. The man is tampering with the electrified fencing—a fatal mistake. Just as the locomotive thunders past, Ned shouts a warning. The cry comes too late. A burst of sparks erupts as the intruder is jolted back, writhing in pain. The crackling sound echoes through the yard, drawing Tom Swift and the security crew racing toward the source.

The man on the ground is Joe Myrick, a name Tom recognizes immediately. Myrick, once affiliated with the Blatz Detective Agency, has no reason to be on the premises—especially not with a can of oil tucked beneath his coat and tools for sabotage in his pockets. He fumes with arrogance, trying to intimidate them with vague legal threats. But Tom, calm and focused, sees through the posturing. The evidence is too strong to ignore. Myrick’s actions were deliberate and dangerous. The oil, the wire cutters, and the notched pole were not items carried by accident. They were instruments meant to cripple progress.

Tom wastes no time and orders the police to be contacted. He wants the matter dealt with publicly and lawfully. Ned, still shaken, offers a brief summary of the night’s events. Tom listens, nodding occasionally, but his attention is divided. He scans the area, wondering if Myrick was acting alone. The attack was brazen, too bold for one man. Had he been sent as a distraction while someone else moved elsewhere? Tom’s instinct for layered threats kicks in, and additional guards are stationed across the yard. He knows that when innovation reaches the edge of disruption, enemies rarely come just once.

As Myrick is taken into custody, Tom reflects on what this means. His invention—the Hercules 0001—is more than a machine now. It’s a target. The promise it holds for transforming rail transport makes it valuable, and in some circles, dangerous. Rivals like Montagne Lewis, threatened by what Tom’s engine represents, are growing more desperate. But Tom refuses to let fear control him. Instead, it fuels his determination to make the locomotive safer, faster, and more resilient. He takes this incident not just as a threat but as a lesson.

The next morning, security protocols are reviewed and reinforced. Tom meets with local law enforcement to ensure further sabotage attempts are dealt with harshly. Meanwhile, Ned assists with damage control, helping inspect the fencing and reassure employees. The crew, though rattled, admires how Tom handled the crisis. His leadership isn't loud, but it's felt. He doesn’t speak in anger. He speaks in purpose.

Later that day, Tom sits alone in the cab of the Hercules 0001, running his fingers along the controls. His mind is already drafting improvements: tamper alerts for the fencing, upgraded surveillance, and an internal failsafe for sabotage attempts. This isn’t paranoia—it’s preparation. Tom understands that with every step forward, resistance intensifies. But that’s the cost of leading change.

This chapter underscores more than a brush with danger. It reveals the broader tension between innovation and the fear it provokes. Tom Swift doesn’t retreat from that challenge. He advances, knowing that true progress requires not just invention, but the courage to defend it.

CHAPTER XVI - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XVI – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive opens with Tom confronting the betrayal of Joe Myrick, whose undercover sabotage attempt nearly derailed the entire electric locomotive venture. Myrick, caught with explosives and identified as a rogue element from the Blatz Detective Agency, leaves behind a lingering sense of mistrust. Though Blatz insists the sabotage was unauthorized, Tom remains cautious. Rather than dwell on the deception, he focuses on the path forward. His decision to transport the Hercules 0001 to Hendrickton for final trials marks a turning point. Every precaution is taken—security isn't just advised, it's enforced. Tom arranges for Koku, his loyal and physically imposing assistant, to accompany the engine and act as a living safeguard during its rail journey west.

Locked inside the cab with food, water, and a cot, Koku serves as an unarmed sentinel whose sheer presence deters interference. Tom's choice not to arm him speaks to both trust and restraint. He knows Koku's strength alone makes confrontation unlikely. While preparing the train for departure, Tom balances practical logistics with emotional farewells. Mary Nestor, always composed, reveals her concern for Tom's safety. Though reassured by the preparations, she knows the threat isn't imagined. Tom reminds her that Mr. Damon will join them soon and that Koku's watchful eye provides more protection than any weapon. His father, Barton Swift, offers quiet encouragement, signaling support not just for the trip but for the broader vision Tom has embraced—one where electric locomotion leads a new industrial era.

The narrative deepens as Tom and Ned board the train, their departure marked by a mix of resolve and unease. Tom's thoughts shift toward Andy O'Malley, the elusive antagonist linked to prior sabotage. While Tom doesn't fear O'Malley's direct

confrontation, he’s aware that the man represents something larger: calculated opposition driven by industrial rivalry. For Tom, the true danger lies in the shadowy tactics used to cripple progress from the sidelines. This is why the journey west feels like entering contested ground. Every mile of track might bring them closer to success—or sabotage. As they depart, Tom receives a telegram from an earlier station confirming that the Hercules 0001 has safely reached its first stop with Koku still on watch. That brief note affirms the plan is working. But it also hints that the danger isn’t over—it’s simply traveling with them.

Onboard, the atmosphere is one of cautious optimism. Tom and Ned discuss the upcoming tests, aware that this phase will prove whether the Hercules can live up to expectations set by rail executives and skeptics alike. The stakes are not just personal—they are industrial. If the locomotive performs well, it may change the way freight and passengers move across the country. If it fails, it risks being dismissed as a novelty. Tom’s vision is expansive, but he tempers enthusiasm with realism. His methodical nature keeps him grounded. Each component of the Hercules has been tested, but real-world trials offer no margin for error. And beyond the physical mechanics, there is always the possibility of interference. The lessons of Joe Myrick and earlier threats have made vigilance part of the routine.

As night falls on the moving train, Tom reflects not just on innovation, but on trust. He’s learned that every invention must be protected—not just from nature or failure, but from people. And while Koku guards the Hercules, Tom’s mind guards its future. He mentally rehearses the test schedule, considers improvements to the communication systems, and runs through protocols for emergencies. These thoughts are not born from paranoia, but from experience. Progress demands planning. And for Tom Swift, progress is more than motion—it’s a responsibility.

This chapter concludes with a blend of movement and resolve. The train pushes west, the Hercules rides ahead under watchful eyes, and Tom stands at the intersection of ambition and adversity. His determination is clear: no sabotage, no betrayal, and no delay will keep him from seeing his vision brought to life on the rails of a country ready

for change.

CHAPTER XVII - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XVII – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive begins on a note of cautious optimism as Tom and Ned travel across the country, reassured by the steady updates regarding the safety of their prized electric locomotive, Hercules 0001. Even the curiosity and confusion surrounding Koku, their towering companion, amused more than alarmed the railroad crew. Yet that comfort is short-lived. Near Hendrickton, the journey is suddenly halted. News spreads of a freight derailment ahead—Train No. 48 has gone off the rails. Tom and Ned exchange a worried glance. The Hercules was part of that convoy.

At daybreak, the two rush to the site, cutting through debris and twisted railcars to find their invention. Relief floods them when they see Hercules 0001 intact, upright, and positioned toward the front, untouched by the chaos behind. A rail worker standing nearby offers a bemused warning about a “wild man” guarding the cab. Tom smiles, knowing it’s Koku. The loyal giant had refused to leave the engine, protecting it through the night like a sentinel. Tom’s voice quickly calms him, and Koku, though visibly anxious, relaxes. The bond between them is unmistakable. Despite the wreck, the project remains intact—just barely.

Amid the recovery work, Tom and Ned begin to observe more than just mechanical damages. They notice a man with a refined look, nervously pacing and questioning officials about someone named O'Malley. The name triggers concern. Andy O'Malley had once infiltrated Tom’s workshop under false pretenses, clearly linked to past efforts to steal his designs. His presence—now his absence—can’t be a coincidence. Ned pulls Tom aside, noting that if O'Malley was onboard the train, he’s vanished without explanation. There’s no injury report bearing his name. No sighting among

survivors. Just a man who should be there—and isn’t.

That realization changes everything. The crash, once assumed to be accidental, begins to feel suspicious. Tom recalls the meticulous care taken to secure Hercules 0001, both legally and physically. Yet someone like O'Malley, backed by rival interests, would have everything to gain from interfering with its progress. Could the wreck have been orchestrated to sabotage delivery? Or to mask the theft of key components? These questions hang in the air, unanswered but heavy. The situation has evolved from an unfortunate accident to a possible act of industrial sabotage.

Tom quickly checks the locomotive again, this time not for damage but for tampering. Everything appears intact. But that doesn’t ease his concern. A train wreck makes the perfect cover for covert activity. Koku insists he saw no one approach, but even he had to rest briefly during the night. Tom now realizes that every delay, every unfamiliar face, and every unexplained absence must be viewed with suspicion. The stakes are no longer just about technology—they’re about trust and protection in a world where innovation invites not just praise but attack.

As they leave the site, Tom speaks quietly to Ned about taking greater precautions. From now on, every movement of Hercules 0001 will be documented. Guards will be doubled. Communications will be secured. And any name tied to previous incidents—especially O'Malley’s—will be shared with railway authorities. Tom isn’t just building a locomotive. He’s fighting to protect the future of electric transit. And the more success it promises, the more resistance it draws.

The chapter closes with the team reboarding a support train, headed for Hendrickton with their locomotive carefully reconnected to a secure track. Though physically unharmed, they all understand that this derailment was a warning. Hercules 0001 might be able to endure steel and storm, but the real threats lie in shadowy competitors and silent sabotage. For Tom, this wreck becomes a turning point—not only in how he protects his invention, but in how he views the world it must travel through. Progress, he learns, demands more than ingenuity. It demands vigilance.

CHAPTER XVIII - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XVIII – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive opens in the wake of a three-hour delay caused by a wreck along the transcontinental line—an incident that very nearly placed the Hercules 0001 at risk. Though the locomotive itself remained untouched, Tom Swift’s instincts are alert. He and Ned Newton spot familiar figures near the crash site—namely Andy O'Malley and Montagne Lewis, whose prior sabotage attempts have earned them notoriety. O’Malley’s abrupt disappearance upon being recognized confirms their suspicions. Tom sees the timing of their presence as too convenient to be coincidence. The incident doesn’t just delay progress—it reinforces that someone is working actively against them.

Arriving at Hendrickton, Tom and Ned are welcomed by Mr. Richard Bartholomew, the president of the Hendrickton & Pas Alos Railroad. His interest in the electric locomotive is more than curiosity—it’s driven by the need for performance innovation in a competitive transport landscape. Bartholomew believes in Tom’s capability but wants proof. He dreams of trains traveling at two miles per minute, a feat which only the Hercules 0001 might achieve. Tom, though confident, knows such expectations require precision. The machine must not only reach unprecedented speeds but also handle steep grades and long distances without fail. Tom outlines the tests planned through the Pas Alos Range—terrain that has challenged steam power for years.

The preparation phase brings together skill, strategy, and camaraderie. Ned assists with logistics while Koku, Tom’s towering aide, provides strength and levity. Koku’s enthusiasm is unmatched, even if his grasp of engineering is loose. As the test day nears, engineers, brakemen, and firemen from the H. & P. A. line collaborate with Tom to ensure every bolt and contact is ready. Safety is paramount, not just for passengers

but also for the locomotive’s reputation. The Hercules 0001 symbolizes more than metal—it carries Tom’s vision for the future of rail. Among the crew, there’s a shared curiosity: Can electricity truly outperform steam in real-world rail conditions?

Tom walks the length of the engine, checking cables, cooling systems, and control levers. Discussions between him and the H. & P. A. engineers touch on friction resistance, regenerative braking, and sustained output over grade. For many, this is their first time working with an electric locomotive of this scale. Skepticism lingers in small remarks, but Tom engages each question with data and diagrams. It’s not arrogance that drives him—it’s assurance backed by testing. Yet in the back of his mind, the recent sabotage attempt casts a shadow. He stations extra guards near the switches and alerts his team to watch for unusual activity.

The actual test run begins with cautious optimism. The Hercules 0001 pulls out from the terminal smoothly, its hum replacing the roar of steam. Its acceleration is fast but stable. Onlookers along the route track its speed with stopwatches, while Bartholomew observes from a trailing coach. As they climb the first incline of the Pas Alos Range, Tom monitors power draw and wheel torque. Everything stays within limits. The locomotive doesn’t just meet expectations—it begins to exceed them. At one point, they near the two-miles-a-minute mark. Ned cheers, and even the seasoned rail crew exchange surprised looks.

Still, Tom keeps his focus on performance under pressure. He wants to know how Hercules 0001 will behave after long stretches and steep climbs. Can the power unit cool efficiently? Will the traction hold on the tighter curves ahead? He watches each metric, noting minor adjustments for future refinements. Koku, meanwhile, stands guard at the rear of the train, still on alert after O’Malley’s reappearance. Tom has instructed him to signal if anything unusual happens. The past has taught them that innovation often invites interference.

As the chapter closes, the locomotive continues its trial deep into the range. The pace remains steady. Bartholomew, increasingly impressed, remarks that this may be the turning point for his railroad. Tom says little in return. He’s not ready to celebrate.

Success must be proven not just in one run, but consistently—and safely. The journey isn’t just about speed. It’s about endurance, reliability, and gaining the trust of those still tied to tradition. Tom knows that if Hercules 0001 can conquer the Pas Alos, it won’t just be a victory for him. It will be a victory for electric propulsion as the future of rail.

CHAPTER XIX - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XIX – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive starts with a jolt—both literal and emotional—as Hercules 0001 begins an uncontrolled descent down a steep mountain grade. Tom Swift and Ned Newton, alone in the cab, are instantly thrown into a life-or-death situation. The brakes, essential for managing the descent, fail to respond. Tom’s mind, typically calm under pressure, races through options. He’s relieved that no freight cars are attached, but the gravity of their speed builds with every second. The express train scheduled to cross their path at the bottom amplifies the danger. What had been a test of engineering now turns into a high-stakes emergency.

As the locomotive gains speed, Tom acts. He leans out, furiously signaling the Half Way station operator using every visual cue he can muster. It’s a desperate gamble. The track ahead must be cleared. If communication fails, the result could be catastrophic—not only for Tom and Ned but also for dozens of others aboard the westbound express. Amidst the chaos, an idea forms in Tom’s mind—one rooted in immediate need. He considers how future locomotives could use wireless technology to automatically alert stations when a train loses control. That kind of innovation, he realizes, could save lives. The thought takes hold, even as they rocket downward with no way to stop.

At Half Way, the station operator sees the wild descent and reacts instantly. Without delay, he reaches for the telephone—an essential link in Tom’s partially installed safety network—and calls ahead to Hammon. The message is clear: stop the express and clear the tracks. His calm but urgent action becomes the pivot point in this crisis. Though limited by existing communication tools, his initiative and attention buy the

seconds that may separate survival from tragedy. Tom, unaware of the exact response, continues guiding the locomotive as best he can, even as the rails blur beneath them. Beside him, Ned clings to the console, fear etched across his face, unable to offer more than his presence.

Tom's focus never wavers. He adjusts minor controls and scans the horizon for a sign—any sign—that his warning was received. As they near the lower bends, the line remains clear. It's a glimmer of hope. The signal poles ahead carry no red flags, no obstructions. For the first time in minutes, Tom breathes—not in relief, but in determination. If they survive this, things will change. His future locomotives will be equipped not just with wireless telegraphy but with automated emergency alerts. He imagines sensors that activate at critical speed thresholds, instantly contacting stations up and down the line. Safety, he realizes, must be built into the design—not left to chance or human reaction.

As the slope begins to ease, the massive locomotive starts to slow. Not enough to stop, but enough for Tom to regain some manual control. The cab fills with the hum of straining machinery and their own ragged breathing. Behind them, no wreckage. Ahead of them, no collision. The track remains clear—thanks to a relay of fast decisions and the integrity of the men watching the rails. Tom grips the throttle more tightly. He doesn't speak, but in his silence lies resolve. This won't happen again.

In the immediate aftermath, Ned finally exhales and finds his voice. He expresses the raw fear he felt and swears off riding at full speed again. Tom listens but doesn't argue. He knows fear is part of survival. But for Tom, fear isn't an endpoint—it's fuel. This experience won't be forgotten or dismissed. It will be transformed into improvement. He's already thinking about materials, wiring, signal strengths. His mind builds solutions in real time, framed by adrenaline and accountability.

This chapter captures a defining moment—not just in plot, but in principle. It shows that even the most advanced technology requires continuous refinement. Innovation, while bold, is not immune to failure. But it's the response to failure that defines greatness. Tom Swift doesn't just survive this ordeal—he grows from it. His

commitment to engineering isn’t about accolades or sales. It’s about making something truly safer and smarter for the future of everyone who rides the rails.

CHAPTER XX - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XX – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive unfolds against the backdrop of a narrowly avoided disaster. A potential wreck involving Express No. 28 is prevented thanks to a timely delay and an urgent message from the Half Way operator. The warning reaches Hammon Station just in time, and proper signals are set to avert a collision. As the Hercules 0001 barrels down a steep grade at full speed, Tom’s steady hand and the locomotive’s responsive controls prove crucial. The situation could have ended in catastrophe, but precision and calm transform panic into triumph. Cheers erupt from the crew as the train slows safely, and the crisis passes.

Ned Newton, visibly shaken, admits he has no desire to repeat the experience. The force of the descent and the proximity to disaster leave him uneasy. But Tom, ever the inventor, sees something different. Rather than fear, he feels opportunity. The incident sparks an idea rooted in prevention. Tom proposes a wireless communication system that allows engineers to instantly report emergencies to stations both ahead and behind. While controlling nature isn’t always possible, responding effectively can make the difference. Tom explains that while no locomotive is immune to mechanical failure or human error, clear and immediate communication can minimize the consequences dramatically.

His suggestion goes beyond theory. He begins sketching out how compact wireless sets could be integrated into the cab design without interfering with controls. The goal is not just efficiency but real-time networked awareness. A train in distress could now broadcast warnings within seconds, prompting nearby stations and trains to respond proactively. Alongside this, Tom plans to enhance braking systems by improving pressure modulation and feedback mechanisms. It’s not about avoiding speed—Tom

respects power. It’s about pairing speed with safety. Mr. Bartholomew, head of the railway company, immediately sees the merit and pledges full support.

As engineers inspect Hercules 0001 post-run, they find the machine in excellent condition. Its structure held firm even under extreme strain. The feedback from the trial is overwhelmingly positive. Not only has the electric engine outperformed expectations on incline handling, but it has also shown resilience under emergency conditions. This elevates confidence in Tom’s design across the board. Discussions begin about scaling production and initiating more expansive testing on longer, more complex routes. Tom, however, doesn’t celebrate for long. He returns to the drawing board with fresh urgency. His focus is already on refining the innovations inspired by the near miss.

The chapter also touches on the emotional tone of innovation. Ned’s caution reflects the very human side of progress—concern for life, apprehension in the face of danger. Tom doesn’t dismiss it. Instead, he builds on it. He understands that invention must serve both the daring and the doubtful. Every engineer on the track deserves tools that make their jobs safer. That belief fuels his drive to ensure that Hercules 0001 becomes more than just fast—it becomes smart, connected, and secure.

Later that day, a smaller demonstration is held at the yard, showcasing some of the updates Tom begins prototyping. While the full wireless system isn’t in place yet, mock signals simulate how it might operate. Mr. Damon, ever supportive, repeats his favorite phrase—“Bless my safety lever!”—as he watches the mock-up unfold. Railroad staff from nearby towns begin asking when the system might be available. Some even ask if similar technology could assist in night freight operations. Tom takes note. He sees applications far beyond express runs.

As the chapter ends, optimism flows like current through copper. Tom’s invention has done more than perform—it has proven adaptable. He has shown that innovation isn’t just about boldness. It’s about listening, learning, and evolving. The Hercules 0001, once a marvel of mechanical design, is now becoming a platform for integrated safety and communication. And for Tom Swift, the future isn’t just electric. It’s connected.

CHAPTER XXI - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XXI – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive delivers a pulse-quickening turn as an ominous cry—“The switch! It is open!”—slices through the hum of electricity and steel. Tom Swift, standing inside the cab of the Hercules 0001, reacts instantly, eyes snapping to the track ahead. A misaligned switch, if left unchecked, threatens to send the powerful locomotive off-course at high speed. The danger is real and immediate. With no time to radio ahead, Tom relies on instinct. His hand flies to the emergency brake while Koku steadies the cab from the jolt. The heavy machine groans as it begins to decelerate. Tom knows this is no accident. This is sabotage.

Just hours earlier, the mood had been cautiously optimistic. The test runs had gone smoothly, with the Hercules 0001 pulling freight up steep grades that once humbled traditional steam engines. Even Mr. Bartholomew, president of the Hendrickton & Pas Alos Railroad, had begun speaking in terms of contracts and fleet conversion. Tom, while encouraged, remained watchful. Ned Newton had warned that their rivals—specifically Montagne Lewis and his operative Andy O'Malley—weren’t finished yet. Despite added security and close cooperation with Mr. Damon and Koku, something still felt fragile. That fear now manifested in twisted metal and open track.

As the locomotive lurches to a stop just before the faulty switch, Tom leaps from the cab. The team fans out to examine the area. A pry bar, recently dropped, lies near the switch handle—still warm to the touch. There’s no mistaking it. Someone had manually shifted the track at the last moment. Ned scans the brush nearby and spots movement. Koku bounds into action without hesitation, crashing into the undergrowth in pursuit. Tom gives chase, adrenaline surging as the image of a saboteur escaping turns from fear into fury. Innovation, after all, should be defended—not only by

patents, but by action.

While Koku continues his pursuit, Tom and Ned return to assess the locomotive. Though shaken, the Hercules 0001 is undamaged. The braking system worked as designed, and no derailment occurred. Still, the psychological impact lingers. They had come within seconds of disaster. Mr. Damon insists the incident must be reported to Bartholomew immediately. Ned agrees, citing the clear intention to discredit their work or worse—destroy it outright. Tom, though calm, resolves to increase vigilance around all future tests. He recognizes that their innovation represents not just progress, but disruption. And those who profit from the old ways won’t go quietly.

Tom’s next move is strategic. He arranges for round-the-clock surveillance at all track junctions involved in their trials. A duplicate switch detection system, previously in prototype form, is installed along critical points. It will automatically signal the cab if any switches ahead are misaligned. At the same time, the team doubles their documentation, ensuring each test result is secured, timestamped, and cross-verified. Legal protections, already filed for the Hercules' core systems, are expanded to include the new safety features. In Tom’s world, invention is not only about building—it’s about protecting what’s been built.

Back in the workshop, the mood is resolute. No one has spoken of quitting. If anything, the attempt on the locomotive has unified the team. Koku returns, disappointed he lost the suspect in the woods, but he’s greeted as a hero nonetheless. Tom assures him that their combined efforts may have saved more than a machine—they may have saved lives. Mr. Bartholomew, upon hearing the full report, expresses both anger and admiration. He promises the full backing of the railroad’s legal team and instructs his security detail to prioritize tracking down O’Malley and Lewis.

This chapter lays bare the thin line between triumph and disaster. The Hercules 0001 had once again proven its strength—not in power alone, but in resilience. The threat wasn’t from nature or flawed engineering. It came from those who fear change and act in darkness. Tom, ever the forward thinker, meets this reality not with retreat, but with renewed innovation. He understands that technology alone is not enough. Vision must

be paired with vigilance. Through the shadow of sabotage, the electric locomotive continues to move forward—slower now, but smarter and stronger, carrying the hopes of a new era on rails electrified by ingenuity.

CHAPTER XXII - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XXII – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive begins at a moment of near disaster as Hercules 0001 lurches unexpectedly onto a siding due to a misaligned switch. The abrupt diversion leads to a rough but controlled stop, avoiding a full derailment by Tom’s quick reaction. The jolt damages the locomotive’s front end, but the more urgent issue isn’t mechanical. A figure had been seen tampering with the switch moments before the incident. As the dust settles, Koku, Tom’s loyal and towering assistant, leaps from the cab in pursuit of the fleeing saboteur. It becomes clear that this is no random event—it is the work of Andy O'Malley, a known operative of Montagne Lewis, whose sabotage campaign against Tom's electric locomotive project has become more brazen.

Tom wastes no time. Leaving Ned Newton to inspect the damaged pilot, he grabs his coat and races after Koku, whose long strides have already put distance between them. The chase leads across rough terrain, winding through scrubby hills and into a narrow gully. Tom, though agile, struggles to match Koku’s sheer speed and strength. The fugitive, agile and clearly familiar with the terrain, darts ahead but cannot shake his pursuers. Ned, a few steps behind Tom, urges caution. But Tom knows this chase isn’t about ego or vengeance—it’s about stopping a pattern of deliberate attacks aimed at discrediting his invention and stealing industrial secrets. If O'Malley escapes now, more damage could follow.

As the pursuit intensifies, Koku finally closes the gap. With surprising grace, the giant lunges forward and tackles the man to the ground. A struggle ensues, but it’s brief. Tom arrives just in time to see Koku rise, one massive hand gripping O'Malley’s collar. The saboteur spits threats and denials, but the evidence—his presence near the

switch, the timing, and his known connections—condemns him more than any confession. Tom checks O'Malley for injuries, ensuring the capture wasn’t unnecessarily rough. Then, with O'Malley in tow, they begin the walk back toward the siding. The moment is a victory, but also a sobering reminder of how high the stakes have become.

Returning to the locomotive, Tom finds Ned securing tools and assessing the front-end damage. The pilot is dented, and one coupling is misaligned, but the Hercules 0001 remains structurally sound. The real victory is that no passengers were injured, and no freight lost. More importantly, a key saboteur has been stopped. Tom questions O'Malley on the spot, hoping to extract information about Montagne Lewis’s broader plan. The man remains evasive, claiming ignorance. Yet his nervous glances and clenched jaw betray him. Tom suspects Lewis was targeting this test run specifically, hoping to spark failure in front of prospective buyers and railroad officials. It was an attack not just on a machine, but on an idea.

Tom contacts the local authorities by telegraph, informing them of O'Malley’s capture and requesting transport. While waiting, he and Ned discuss preventive upgrades—more secure switch monitoring, faster fail-safes, and expanded communications along the rail line. Each incident becomes fuel for better design. As inventors, they refuse to be derailed by sabotage. Instead, each setback sharpens their focus. Tom’s belief in electric locomotion remains unshaken. In fact, it grows stronger. With every threat overcome, he gets closer to proving that innovation, when coupled with courage, is unstoppable.

As the sun dips below the ridgeline and the locomotive is eased back onto the main track, there’s a sense of earned calm. Tom watches the horizon, his thoughts still racing, already mapping out improvements to both hardware and process. Koku, silent but alert, keeps watch on O’Malley, who sits with his back to a rail, hands bound and head lowered. The mission is far from over, but progress has been made. What this chapter reveals isn’t just a moment of action—it’s the resilience behind invention, the willingness to defend progress, and the trust shared among friends bound by a

common purpose. In the world Tom Swift inhabits, success is never given—it is chased, caught, and defended.

CHAPTER XXIII - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XXIII – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive begins with tension already rising, as Hercules 0001 strikes a bumper post at the end of a timber siding. The impact jars the massive locomotive, bending the front-end pilot and causing a moment of panic. Mr. Wakefield Damon, shaken but unharmed, quickly assesses the situation. Although the damage is visible, the locomotive remains operational. But the real danger hasn't yet arrived. Moments later, a group of men led by Montagne Lewis appears, their intent hostile and their presence uninvited. Lewis, a broad-chested man with a dyed mustache and a habit of barking orders, demands to see Tom Swift. Mr. Damon, though outnumbered, remains composed and makes no mention of Tom or Ned's whereabouts.

Instead of retreating further, Mr. Damon moves into the cab of the electric engine, locking the door and bracing himself against whatever might come next. His defiance surprises the gang. They pound on the cab's door, hurling threats and warnings, but Mr. Damon refuses to give in. He arms himself with an ammonia pistol—a small but effective device invented by Tom Swift for self-defense. When Lewis attempts to force his way in, Mr. Damon pulls the trigger. A sharp burst of ammonia sprays directly into the ringleader's eyes, sending him stumbling backward in pain. The gang hesitates, momentarily disoriented by their leader's cries. Though he's not known for violence, Mr. Damon's act of resistance halts the attack. However, the threat hasn't passed. Lewis regroups and begins to plot another move.

As the conflict simmers, the sharp sound of a train whistle slices through the air. A freight train, loaded with empty cars and building speed, is fast approaching. Lewis, wiping his eyes and gritting his teeth, realizes an opportunity. With the switch still set

to direct the train toward the siding, he grins with malicious intent. Rather than continue their assault, the gang steps back, choosing not to warn the oncoming train. Their logic is cruel but calculated—if the freight train slams into Hercules 0001, it will destroy what they could not. Mr. Damon, inside the cab, hears the whistle as well. He peers through the window and sees the distant headlight growing larger by the second. The open switch, unrepaired since the accident, now represents disaster.

Desperation takes over as Mr. Damon searches for a way to stop the oncoming train or divert it. But communication is impossible. Tom's telephone system, still under installation, remains inactive between this siding and the Cliff City yardmaster's office. The line is incomplete—just a few critical connections short of being functional. The timing couldn't be worse. What was supposed to be a system of instant communication now leaves them isolated in a moment of dire need. The yardmaster remains unaware of the broken switch. The freight train speeds toward them with no orders to stop or reroute. Mr. Damon's hands grip the edge of the window frame. His thoughts race. There's no time to escape. The locomotive could be destroyed.

The chapter's final moments capture the helpless anticipation of a collision that seems inevitable. Mr. Damon shouts out into the darkness, hoping someone—anyone—might hear. The gang stands nearby, watching silently. Their sabotage doesn't require further effort; the train will do the rest. Amid the rising noise of metal and speed, the future of Hercules 0001 hangs in the balance. And while Tom and Ned are still unaware of the unfolding danger, the consequences of communication failure and unchecked malice now converge on the isolated siding.

This chapter explores more than mechanical vulnerability; it illustrates how innovation can be undermined not only by enemies but also by timing and incomplete systems. Mr. Damon, often seen as eccentric, proves himself courageous under pressure. His defense of Tom's invention, using intellect rather than force, shows that resolve and ingenuity remain critical even when odds seem stacked. Meanwhile, Lewis's character grows more sinister. His willingness to let a train crash to destroy a rival exposes a man ruled by ego and fear of progress. As the chapter closes, the suspense tightens.

Will anyone intervene in time? Or will Tom’s breakthrough be reduced to wreckage before it has a chance to succeed? The answers lie just beyond the approaching headlight.

CHAPTER XXIV - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XXIV – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive escalates into a high-stakes encounter as Tom finds himself in the middle of a sabotage attempt designed to derail both his invention and reputation. The freight train thunders toward a wrongly positioned switch, a setup meant to cause destruction. Montagne Lewis, desperate to eliminate the competition posed by the Hercules 0001, believes his plan will go unnoticed. From his elevated position, Tom spots the danger and reacts instantly. His warning shouts rise above the rumble of the train, alerting the engineer in time. The swift action prevents catastrophe, proving once again that Tom’s vigilance matches his technical brilliance.

As the tension peaks, Koku emerges carrying the unconscious body of one of Lewis's hired men. The scene jolts the remaining saboteurs, sending them fleeing into the woods without resistance. Tom, with unwavering focus, resets the track switch with seconds to spare, allowing the train to pass unharmed. The freight engineer, shaken but safe, salutes Tom with deep gratitude. It is not just a mechanical triumph, but a moral one. Courage, not luck, saved the day. Meanwhile, Lewis, realizing his plan has failed, tries to maintain his composure. But Tom, refusing to be threatened or swayed, makes it clear justice will be served.

In a decisive move, Koku physically restrains Lewis, who offers no further resistance. Tom secures him and O’Malley inside the cab of the electric locomotive, ensuring their confinement until authorities arrive. The symbolism is clear: the very machine they tried to destroy is now holding them accountable. Despite the chaos, Tom remains focused. He inspects the Hercules 0001 thoroughly, noting some minor tampering but no irreversible damage. The team works quickly to repair the harm, restoring the

engine’s systems and confirming its operational stability. Tom’s sense of relief is quiet but unmistakable. This attack, while dangerous, only reinforced his resolve to protect the technology he believes in.

Once the situation is secured, discussions begin about how best to present the incident to the railroad officials. Mr. Bartholomew, the railroad president, arrives shortly after with a concerned expression. Upon hearing the details, he expresses deep respect for Tom’s courage and quick thinking. He immediately agrees that charges should be brought against Lewis and his conspirators. The event becomes more than an attempted act of industrial sabotage—it serves as a turning point in the company’s confidence in electric transportation. What was once theoretical is now proven under pressure. And for the Swift Construction Company, this moment becomes a defining endorsement of their innovation and security.

Tom’s team, although shaken, expresses pride in how the crisis was handled. The moment allows everyone—from engineers to investors—to see the practical resilience of the Hercules 0001 in a real-world emergency. Not only did the locomotive survive an attempted derailment, but it also continued to operate efficiently afterward. That reliability under threat becomes a key selling point. Tom doesn't dwell on praise but immediately redirects attention to future improvements, aiming to add fail-safes to prevent such sabotage from succeeding again. His mind never stops refining, always building upon the latest test.

Beyond the technical victory, the chapter underscores the importance of integrity in invention. Tom’s opposition isn’t just mechanical failure—it’s willful sabotage, driven by greed and fear of progress. Yet in the face of this, Tom remains calm, strategic, and composed. The image of Koku towering over the restrained villains while the Hercules 0001 powers on becomes a symbolic statement: brute force and deceit cannot overpower vision and determination. The team knows the worst is likely behind them, and from here, the road ahead looks clearer.

In summary, this chapter offers more than a thrilling moment—it frames Tom’s invention as a beacon of progress standing tall against underhanded resistance. It

weaves together themes of perseverance, ethical ingenuity, and teamwork. By repelling the threat, Tom not only saves a train, but secures his future and affirms his role as a leader in technological innovation. His victory is not just in the hardware, but in the unwavering trust people begin to place in him and his work. The Hercules 0001 emerges stronger, both as a machine and as a symbol of modern progress.

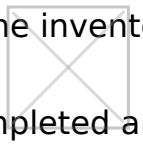
CHAPTER XXV - Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

CHAPTER XXV – Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive begins with an air of tense anticipation as the Hercules 0001 prepares for its full-speed test run across the Hendrickton & Pas Alos Railroad. With Tom Swift at the controls and key figures such as Mr. Damon and Mr. Bartholomew aboard, the locomotive begins its journey with a smooth start that quickly evolves into a powerful demonstration of electric precision. As the miles pass and the mountainous terrain approaches, the locomotive does not falter. The climb over the Pas Alos Range, once feared for its sharp grades and long hauls, is handled with quiet efficiency. The steady hum of electric energy replaces the familiar rumble of steam. Tom’s invention proves its strength where it matters most—under pressure, in motion, and on schedule.

Throughout the journey, reactions of the passengers reflect both awe and validation. Mr. Bartholomew watches the gauges and notes each mile with satisfaction, realizing this engine may become the backbone of his rail line’s future. Mr. Damon, ever enthusiastic, peppers Tom with praise and loud exclamations of “Bless my voltage regulator!” The performance far exceeds initial expectations. Freight cars trail behind the Hercules without strain, and the load distribution remains steady even on downhill curves. No delays are encountered. No mechanical adjustments are needed. The trial run not only proves the concept—it delivers undeniable success. Engineers and observers track data in real-time, gathering figures that confirm the locomotive’s ability to sustain high speeds while maintaining safety and fuel-free efficiency.

Meanwhile, personal threads deepen the emotional resonance of this achievement. Barton Swift, once skeptical, now stands quietly impressed. The proud look he casts toward his son says more than words. It’s a moment of generational handoff—approval

not just of a machine, but of Tom’s vision and independence. Later, Mary Nestor’s arrival provides a touch of warmth. Her concern, though gentle, reveals how closely Tom’s work affects those around him. She had waited anxiously for news of the test, and seeing the success firsthand reassures her that his risks have paid off. Their exchange, brief yet sincere, anchors the story’s emotional stakes. The scene reminds readers that progress is more than data—it’s about people who believe, worry, and hope alongside the inventor.



With the test completed and every performance benchmark exceeded, the Swift Construction Company is officially awarded the contract to supply electric locomotives to the Hendrickton & Pas Alos Railroad. It’s a milestone that reshapes the future of rail transport. Mr. Bartholomew signs the documents with enthusiasm, praising Tom’s ingenuity and expressing confidence in a partnership that will modernize his entire fleet. In this moment, Tom isn’t just a builder—he’s a leader guiding industry into the electric age. The crew celebrates modestly, with handshakes and laughter, but the significance isn’t lost on anyone. It’s a day that marks the beginning of cleaner, faster, and more reliable train travel. No more coal. No more steam valves. Just harnessed electricity and innovation moving at full speed.

Beyond its technological success, the chapter highlights a shift in public perception. Observers from rival companies, once doubtful, now express reluctant admiration. Reporters on site begin drafting headlines that hail Tom as a “young genius shaping the future of transportation.” The praise is deserved, but Tom remains humble, emphasizing teamwork and the support of those around him. Even as he accepts the accolades, he’s already thinking ahead—refining features, reducing weight, and increasing efficiency. He’s not content with victory. He sees it as a beginning.

This chapter blends adrenaline, engineering triumph, and human connection. Tom’s journey with the Hercules 0001 mirrors larger themes: ambition met with resistance, invention validated through action, and personal growth achieved in parallel with professional milestones. What began as a risky prototype has now become a revolutionary solution. The Age of Speed, as Mr. Bartholomew calls it, isn’t

approaching—it’s already on the tracks. Through careful storytelling and vivid pacing, this chapter affirms that progress doesn’t just happen—it’s built, tested, and believed in by those willing to take the first leap.