

A NEW SWIFT COMES TO TOWN

Tomasina Swift's

Forever More



By Leo L. Levesque

A Swift Enterprise Saga

Thomasina Swift – Girl Inventor

Forever More

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Dedication

A very special thanks to my wife and family who had to live with me throughout the process. For them it was a real ordeal.

I give my personal thanks to Thomas Hudson (tedwardfox). I contacted him with an idea, but he encouraged me to write a story of my own and gave me invaluable help.

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Foreword

The Multi-Universe

The Multi-Universe holds all the probabilities that happen in a person's life. Each major decision adds changes to everyone else's life and adds more layers of probability.

Some people's presence are so dominating that their personality affects unknown numbers of realities. This can be in the past, present or future.

But when five Tom Swifts find out about each other and start to interact in each other's lives there's bound to be repercussions.

A simple story left on a table at a restaurant draws the five Toms together to investigate the existence of a sixth Tom.

Tom Jr., thought to be the original, lives in Shopton, New York and was born in the nineteen fifties and is eighteen years old, tall, lean, with short blond hair and blue eyes. All the Toms looked alike

TSL (Tom Swift Lives), the closest Tom in probability, lives in Shopton, New York and is in the present.

Tom III lives a hundred years into the future and resides in Shopton, New Mexico but spends most of his time in space aboard his ship, *Exedra*.

Tom IV lives in Shopton, California and in the present.

Tom V lives in Shopton, New York, in the present, the youngest at sixteen.

Prologue to Thomasina Swift's Forever More

The summoning light was blinking as Tom Swift Jr. (Nineteen Fifties time line, Shopton, New York) let himself into the lab. It was early and he had nothing in particular to do. Catching up on his reading was his plan. "Oh well," Tom thought to himself, "the reading can wait. I'm sure this summons won't." He touched a hidden wall plate and the room sealed itself off from the rest of the world. Even the electrical power switched over to an atomic battery. From behind a picture he placed his hand on a biometric sensor and a laser scanned both his irises. There was a loud click and a seamless door opened from behind a workbench that slid out of the way. The doorway radiated a blackness that was impenetrable. He stepped into it and disappeared.

Tom stepped out of the darkness into the light of a spring day. He was at the end of a small parking lot, just a step or two from the woods that surrounded the building. The front door was large and made with ornate wood inlays. The walls were of stone and brick. It was one floor high and had the name 'Toms' over the door. As he approached the building the door opened and a large robot with red eye lenses stepped out. He greeted Tom as he held the door open.

"Good afternoon, Master Tom. The others are waiting for you in the meeting room."

"Thank you, Aristotle. It's good to see you again. How are Walking Eagle and Anita?"

"They are both well, Sir. But they could not come today. This way please." And the robot leads him to the meeting room.

"Tom Jr, good to see you again," said Tom III (from a hundred years in the future, Shopton, New Mexico) getting up to shake his hand. Tom IV (from the present time line but from Shopton, California) finished his move on the chess board and shook his hand also.

"Tom Jr., please sit. We have a situation here. The two of us think we could all be in a bit of trouble. TSL and Tom V can't be here at this time, so we must decide on how to handle it ourselves." Tom III handed him a folder. "Read this, we'll wait." The two other Toms continued their chess game. Five minutes later Tom Jr. put the folder down.

"Where did this come from?" he asked both Toms.

“The waitstaff found it a couple of weeks ago. Most of them read it and thought nothing of it. Just another Swift story,” answered Tom IV. “I was here last night with friends and found it under the bar. After I read it this morning I summoned Tom III and the others. He was the only one who could come. The other two are willing for us to handle it.”

“Do you think it’s real?”

“If it’s not, we’re safe, maybe? If it’s real, then there’s another Swift running around the Multi-Universe. Why show yourself in this manner? It doesn’t make sense.”

“Anyway,” said Tom III, “the Swift in that story doesn’t have the technology to make a Negative Zone Portal. So we are either being set up for a big laugh or a big fall. And I’d hate it to be the latter.”

“I can agree with that,” said Tom Jr. He thought for a moment and added, “as I see it we have two choices. Wait and see what happens or go looking for the person that left the folder.”

“We both agree with you, so how do we find him?” asked Tom IV.

“We invent a Negative Zone Snooper.”

“A what?”

“A Negative Zone Snooper; it will locate a Negative Zone portal. Then follow it to its point of origin. The Negative Zone Snooper can’t be too hard to make. The portal leaves a big hole in the space-time continuum; we just have to detect it.”

“Okay,” said Tom III, “I guess that’s a good start, better than waiting. We can do both. We wait and see what happens while we guard our backs. And one of us can come up with a detector. After that what do we do? Go in with our guns blazing?”

Both Toms looked at each other and shook their heads no.

“I know you’re both pacifist, but look guys; I think I’m the one who’s going to track that person down. I have the space ship with a Negative Zone device already built in and I have the time. Get me the coordinates of where to go, and when I find that person. I’ll come back and get you. We’ll go peacefully and if the other guy has a different idea we can at least defend ourselves. My ship does carry weapons.” He sat back with a determined look on his face.

“You’re right, Tom III, we don’t know what’s what, and it’s no use all of us getting killed because we’re so sweet. Ha! Ha!” was Tom IV retort.

“So, brothers in arms, I take it we have a plan? Yes?” asked Tom Jr. The other two agreed. “Good! I’m hungry! Tom III, can you get your robot, Aristotle, to whip us up some lunch. I have a hankering for a double cheese burger with all the fixings, cheesy fries and a large Sunrise Lemonade.”

“This can’t be the Tom Jr. we know!” exclaimed Tom IV. “He’d rather invent than eat. And to think he prefers a robots cooking over his own ‘chuck wagon’ cook’s. The universe is ending!”

Chapter One: Secrets Told

“Grandma! It can’t be!” cried out the young girl in anguish.

“But it’s true, my dear. You are a Swift, and it is time for you to demand your inheritance...”

* * *

The small motorcycle came to a stop at a four way intersection in the middle of a lightly wooded area. The sun was high in the sky. A large sign on the edge of the road showed the direction. Straight ahead was Lake Copland, to the left was the town of Shopton and to the right was the Swift Construction Company. That road was rutted and led up a long hill and disappeared into the distance. The motorcycle gunned forward and turned sharply to the right.

“Where’s all the traffic.” the cyclist thought. “It should be busy this time of day.” At the top of the hill the cycle skidded to a sudden stop at what she saw on the other side of the hill. About a quarter mile away a large factory site of many buildings stood almost empty. At the far side of the compound a few buildings looked occupied. A large two story building to the right of a gate on that side had a few cars and trucks in front of it. On the left of the gate was a smaller building of three floors and an air traffic control tower on top. The compound was bisected by a long runway for planes and at the far left ran another shorter runway. They meet at a ‘T’ intersection. The buildings in front of the cyclist looked long abandoned and in ruin. Most of them looked like airplane hangars with support buildings. The road in front of her ran to a large gate that was closed. The gate was set into a fence that surrounded the whole compound.

On the outside of the fence the woods and brush were cleared away. A small dirt road followed the fence all the ways around to another gate at the far side of the complex to the buildings that were still in use.

The cyclist just stared in amazement at the sight before her eyes.

“This can’t be right! I must have the wrong company! It can’t be! I’ve come all this way for this!” the cyclist just shook her head in dismay. “Well there is nothing more I can do then go down there and find out where the Swift Construction Company is.”

At that, she started her cycle and went down to the gate. As she neared the gate she noticed a large sign posted on the gate. In red lettering it read,

“Closed for Auction” and a date was marked on it.

“Why it’s just a few days away.” Still in disbelief the cyclist rode around the fence toward the other gate.

“This is not what I expected!” she exclaimed to herself. Her Grandma had told her that it was a top ranking manufacturing company of avionics and *airplane* replacement parts. “I must have the wrong place. I must!”

She still could not believe her eyes.

As she approached the other gate she saw a weatherbeaten sign above it proclaiming: SWIFT CONSTRUCTION COMPANY. And on the next line “*Where the Future is Now!*”

The gate was open but the gate house was empty. The building to her left was definitely a manufacturing building. And on her right it looked like it was an administration center. The front wall of the building was all glass and a park like mixture of grass and flower beds surrounded the building and its walk ways. The tower on top looked empty and in disrepair. Some of the glass had been replaced with plywood.

The cyclist parked her bike and walked up the walkway to the front door. She looked inside but it was deserted. The glass door opened easily. She stood in a foyer that was three stories high. Stairways along the side walls lead to the floors above. Each floor had a wide balcony that ran the length of the back walls of the foyer. In the foyer, there stood a kiosk for the security guards and a greeting area in the center of the counter. The back of the kiosk had a wall that reached up ten to twelve feet. Along the top in big gold letters ran a repeat of the company name and slogan. SWIFT CONSTRUCTION COMPANY “*Where the Future is Now!*”

Under the lettering ran three rows of Surveillance monitors. None of them were on. The room was clean but looked as if it was not in use. The cyclist walked to the counter and looked around. There was the usual array of phones and computers that were located at a couple of work stations to the sides of the kiosk. In the middle was the greeting center. Inlaid on the counter top was a map of the building and showed various names and titles of people and the rooms they were in. The name *Damon Swift* caught her attention. It was on the top floor just to the right of what look like an elevator door. It was the company’s presidential offices.

The room she entered was definitely a secretary’s office. There was an L- shaped desk covered with two computers and display screen and the usual phones and paraphernalia of what a well equipped office needed. Several file cabinets lined two walls. A small sitting area was in the far corner and an open door lead to another room. Slight noises were coming from that doorway. The cyclist moved to the open door and looked in.

A tall man with dark blonde hair with graying temples stood behind an old oak desk putting papers in a briefcase. He heard the footsteps of the cyclist as she came into the room.

“What do you want?” he said gruffly before he even looked up. When he did glance up he gasped and stumble into his chair. His face went pale and he spoke hoarsely. “No! It can’t be!” His hands flew to his face and he covered his eyes and then rubbed them with his fingers. He shook his head in disbelief. The cyclist ran to the desk and reach out to steady him.

In a soft voice she said, “Are you all right, Mr. Swift? I did not mean to startle you!”

He looked at her again and spoke just as softly. “You’re not him! But you’re a ghostly image of him. I can’t believe it.” He stared at her for a moment in amazement, and then asked her as he finally composed himself. “Who are you?”

“I’m Thomasina Swift, a relative from England.” She declared this in a loud and proud voice. She stood tall in front of him with a glare in her eyes.

“I have no relatives in England!” he threw back at her. “I have no one left of my family but my daughter.” He looked back at her with fierce intensity. He was looking at a young, tall, slender blonde woman. Her eyes were blue and bright with excitement. Her nose was small, her lips were full and red and her cheeks were pink with emotion.

“I thought you had a son, too?” she asks with accusation.

“He died two years ago along with my wife.” He spoke this in a small sad voice with a hint of disbelief still in it.

“I’m sorry.” She had to stop herself from reaching out to him in his obvious pain. “What happened?” She could not stop herself from asking.

“A car accident, a terrible car accident, I can’t talk about it.” He spoke softly. His eyes had a faraway look to them. He stared into space for a moment more. He shook his head and said. “If you’re my relative prove it.” His voice became stronger and harsh. “I know I have no other relatives.”

The cyclist pulled out an old looking document from a small back pack and handed it to him.

“This is from your dad’s lawyers from back in the fifties. It acknowledges my mother’s birth and states that he has no claims on her. You see, your father was a little wild while he was in Korea. He met my Grandma back then. She was a U. N. nurse from England. He led her to believe that he loved her. When his time was up he told her that he would send for her when he resettled in the states. She never heard from him again directly. A month later she found out that she was pregnant. With the help from the Red Cross she finally was able to send him a message. That lawyer’s document was his

reply.”

She stood firmly there as he read the document. When he was finished she said. “As you can see, he did provide for her well being with a payment each month for the child and did pay for her education till she finished school or turned twenty-one. But Grandma had to agree that no further communication was to be held between them.”

“My Grandma was always a practical woman and knew that all was lost. He did not love her and there was no use in pursuing it. She was a good nurse and loved her profession. She never married and raised her daughter by herself.”

“Her name was Amanda Swift by the way. My Grandma insisted that she receive the Swift surname. That was the only way she would sign over the documents.”

“They had a good life and enjoyed what they could. My mother had a good education and became a private secretary. She worked for several firms and in nineteen-ninety married my father who was a seller on the Stock Exchange.”

“In nineteen-ninety two I was born and my mother died in childbirth from complications. My father gave me my hyphenated name of Thomasina Hudson-Swift as my mother requested. I use Hudson as my middle name, so I’m Thomasina Swift to the world at large!”

She was proud of her heritage. Nothing could tear her faith in her Mother or Grandma. Tears filled her eyes at the last part of her tale. She was trembling from all the emotions she had gone through in the past couple of hours. Time was slipping away fast. She sighed to herself and quieted her emotions.

Mr. Swift just sat there the whole time and said nothing. In a few minutes Thomasina continued her story again when she realized the Mr. Swift was not going to say anything.

“My father was never the same man after my mother died. My Grandma’s impression was that he blamed me for her death. She took over raising me and in a few years my Father left to go to work in the Japanese Stock Market, claiming that jobs were better there. He sent money at first but that petered out and he disappeared from Japan and from our lives. I haven’t heard from him in over seven years.”

Tears started to roll down her cheeks again and this time she used the back of her hand to wipe them away. She was tired and miserable with still no end in sight.

“I’m sorry,” said Mr. Swift. “I wish that your life was easier and I could help you, but I can’t. I’m in no better shape than your father was when he left.

It sounds like we both lost our worlds and the reason to keep on trying. I know it's not fair to my daughter, Sandra, but she is strong, much stronger than me, she'll carry on like all Swifts do."

With this said, he closed his briefcase with a slam, stood up, walked around his desk and left. He did not say anything more or even looked back.

Thomasina sank into a chair that was in front of the desk. She bowed her head and cried like she never had in her whole life.

The sun still shone, the day was still fair, but the room was dark and cold!

Chapter Two: Friend or Foe

In the gloom of the room a voice spoke out.

“Who are you? What are you doing here?” The voice was stern and definitely female. A young woman came into the room and stood in front of Thomasina with her hands on her hips.

Thomasina looked up at the tall, statuesque, light blue eyed blond, just like all the Swifts. Tommy knew she was Sandra Swift.

She managed to stammer out, “I’m your cousin from England, on your grandpa Henry’s side.”

“He had only one child, my Father!” she shot back.

Thomasina stood up right in front of her and her face come into the light from the door way. Sandra stumbled and gasped as she saw Thomasina’s face. With a look of disbelief on her face she asked again. “Who are you?” this time in a mere whisper.

“I’m Thomasina Swift, your grandfather Henry was my mother’s father. Please sit down.” She pointed to the other chair in front of the desk. “This will take some time and I’ve already had a long afternoon.” She spoke quietly and in a firm voice.

Sandra, with a thousand questions racing through her mind took the chair and faced Thomasina as they both sat down. She clasped her hands together and placed them on her lap.

“Okay” she spoke. “Tell.”

So once again Thomasina went thought her family history.

Sandia asked a few question afterwards and finally said, “What do you want from us? If it’s money, sorry, we’re broke. If it’s fame, we’re out of that too! If it’s the clothes off our backs, well you can try for it but I’ll fight you all the way. You’ll only get rags by the time we’re finished.” Sandra stated this firmly and with no hostility. Thomasina could have taken offence at this, but knew that Sandra was just being honest.

“No, Sandra, I don’t want anything of monetary value from your family. My only hope was to get to know more of this part of the family, it’s all that I have left except for my Grandma and she’s getting up there in age. She thought it best for me to get to know you now while she was still around. She hoped I would have a family to go to after she died, if I wanted to.”

“But, Sandra what happen? Grandma told me you had a thriving

business. All of this is too much to understand. I meet your father for a while earlier today, but he told me nothing and just walked out!”

Sandra took a deep breath and began to talk.

“I knew something was wrong when dad came barging into the house and disappeared into his study. I even heard him lock the door. I knew he had come to the plant so I came over here to find out what happened. When Dad gets upset like this he broods for days in his study and won’t talk to anyone. When I got here I saw the motorcycle in front of this building and found you up here. Look Thomasina... Tommy, if that’s alright?”

“Sure,” Tommy replied with a shrug of her shoulders.

“Grandpa Henry took over the company when he came back from Korea and Great-grandpa Tom did the inventing. He let Grandpa Henry run the company any way he wanted to as long as he could invent things. My father did not agree with the way his father was running things and had a big fight with him.

He left for college, graduated with dual masters in Electronics, specializing in avionics and computer control and then in Engineering, specializing in Rocketry. He took a job at NASA and helped big time in the shuttle program and the international space station.”

My Great-grandpa, Tom disappeared in South America in eighty-six. He was on an expedition with several other scientists on board the Silver Cloud. It was one of the last great dirigibles built. Actually great grandpa Tom built it himself in the late thirties. After a long while the search was given up. Nothing was ever found. With great grandpa Tom lost, the company had no new invention to fall back on.

Grandpa Henry was no genius and could barely keep the company going. As thing got tight he sold off patent after patent which left us with less and less to manufacture

“Grandpa Henry died suddenly in eighty-eight and the company went to my father. He did the best he could with what was left. He slowly started to rebuild the company using his knowledge of avionics and engineering skills. He’d vastly improved upon them while at NASA.”

“He started small by making replacement parts for the avionics in planes and their computer controls. His call to fame was durability. If it did not last he didn’t make it. A lot of his electronics was in miniaturization that could be plugged in right off the shelf.” Sandra voice spoke with pride as she told of her father’s accomplishments.

“He mothballed most of the buildings and ran a tight ship. By the time he married my mother and had Tom and me the future for us looked great. We were happy and the past was but a bad memory.”

“Tom and I loved school and we both left our peers behind. You couldn’t keep Tom away from the company. He was everywhere, the crew loved him. They treated him like he was one of them. But the funniest part was that Tom did make a difference. He made parts; he soldered mother boards together for computers and he even improved on them. By the time he was fifteen he was dad’s right hand man and helped in all the designing and engineering of almost everything we were doing.”

“Then in the fall of o-nine Tom and Mother were killed in a car accident.” Sandra’s voice broke over this statement and tears started to stream down her cheeks.

Tommy reached over and took her hands into hers. Then she slowly hugged her till she stopped crying.

“I’m sorry,” stammered Sandra as she finally pulled back and wiped her eyes. “I haven’t cried like that in a couple of years now. You must think of me as a baby.” She leaned back in her chair and regarded Tommy as she finally composed herself.

“No,” answered Tommy. “As a matter of fact I just had a good cry for myself just before you came in.” A little laughter came between them as they realized how much they shared.

“Then what happened?” Tommy had to know the rest of the story.

Sandra placed her hands back on her lap and stared at them for a moment and continued.

“They say they both died instant. It was late at night, about one am. They were coming back from a science competition at the college. An eighteen wheeler shot across the road and hit them head on. The car just disintegrated. Oh, Tommy... there was so little left. I just had to see it. I just couldn’t believe it till I did.” Tears were in her eyes again but they stayed there. She rubbed them away with her hands.

“The driver of the eighteen wheeler just walked away. The police found him several hours later sleeping it off at a friend’s house. By then it was too late for a blood-alcohol test. He was charged with reckless endangerment with death resulting and leaving the scene of an accident. Really just a slap on the hand for killing my mother and brother.” She still looked outrage over this turn of events.

“My father took it hard. He’s been like the walking dead for the past two years. Absolutely nothing brings him out of it for long. The company has been running on its own with the help of loyal employees. It worked for the first year and then word got out about dad’s mental state. I tried to take over running things after that but it was too late. Who wanted to risk a contract with a company that had a young girl in control of things?”

“The company is now in the same shape it was in when grandpa Henry was running it. We slowly started to sell some of our equipment but it was not enough. The rest of our equipment is to be auction off in a few days, and I don’t know how to stop it.” After saying this, Sandra got up and walked over to a portrait of an elderly man. The brass plate on the bottom frame told who it was:

Barton Swift 1860 – 1930.

She swung the portrait to the side and opened a small safe. She took out a book, a small note pad held closed with elastic.

“I knew dad wouldn’t take this.” She said to Tommy as she sat back down in her chair. Tommy looked at it in Sandra’s hand.

“It’s Tom’s dream book. That’s what I call it. Every time he had an idea he would jot it down. Later he would add to these ideas as he gathered more information about them. It was his diary and no one was supposed to look at it. He had it with him all the time. But somehow that day he left it at home. It’s all we have left of his dreams, of the world he wanted to build and be in.” Her tone was sad and almost lost as she whispered it.

Tommy was stung by how much the loss of Tom and his mother had affected the family.

The sun was down and the room was dark. The only light came through the doorway and shone only where the girls were sitting. They looked at each other and knew it was time to leave. They were both emotionally dried out. There was no more to tell. Sandra got up first and held out her hand to Tommy.

“Let’s go, there’s too many bad stories in this room.” They both walked silently out of the building and over to Tommy’s motorcycle.

“I’m sorry, Sandra, I was wrong. Grandma was wrong too. There is no hope for a future here. Your family used it up a long time ago. Death only waits here now. You’re young, strong and intelligent, get away from here. Go as far away as you can. Start a new life. You’ll die here if you stay. I know I can’t. Come back to England with me. We can start over together. We could be great friends. I know it.” This time there was joy in her voice over the prospect of a life with Sandra as a companion.

“No, I can’t. You may be right, there’s not much left here, but there’s still my dad, a few trusted employees and I feel an obligation to see it through. No matter what.” Her voice was strong again as she fortified herself for the future.

Tommy reached into a saddle on the back of the bike and pulled out a jacket. She looked around once more as she put it on. The sun was gone and a few stars were in the sky. A couple of the buildings had lights on, but mostly

the compound was dark. It looked like a ghost town and most of it faded away into the distance. Tommy could not see a future here.

As she was looking around, Sandra dropped the diary into the saddle bag. “Why not? Maybe she’ll come back and return the dairy.” Sandra thought. “I so much want to see Tommy again. Maybe we can work something out in the light of day that this night will not give us.”

She watched as Tommy got onto the cycle and started it. Thomasina held out her hands to Sandra.

“I know we could have become great friends.” Tommy whispered as they clasped hands for the last time. “But faith is not with us. Please take my advice and leave as soon as you can. You’re always welcome in England.” A final tear slid down her face. With that she gunned the cycle into action and disappeared into the night.

Chapter Three: Making a Dream

“Sandra, Sandra Swift! Where are you?” sang out a loud voice that reverberated through the assembly building. “We’ve got to talk, Sandra! Come on out and show yourself,” she continued to yell. Above her from one of the four rooms suspended from the back wall, some fifteen feet up in the air a voice squealed back.

“Here I am Tommy!” Sandra came out of the first room and leaned over the iron railing of the catwalk that gave access to those rooms.

“I’m staying! God help me, I’m staying!” She shouted back as she ran up the stairs that was at each end of the catwalk. When she got in front of Sandra, she grabbed her and swum her around.

“Tommy, how come?” Sandra laughed. “What changed your mind? Last night it was the last thing you wanted to do.” She was still being held and looked Tommy intensely in the face.

“To tell you the truth I should be as mad as hell at you for that dirty trick you pulled on me. Have you read that diary? That wonderful, fantastic diary, oh Sandra, I wish that I could have known your brother. What a great mind he had. What fantastic things he would have done. And to think he was just eighteen when he wrote some of this stuff. I just can’t believe the way his mind functioned.”

Sandra hugged her and said. “I knew you would try to help us once you got to know Tom. It’s one of the reasons why I want to keep this place going. Come, let’s sit down and talk about this.” They both walked back into the room Sandra had come out of. There were several boxes on a large work table in the middle of the room. You could see that Sandra was packing.

Four large windows lined the back wall; two computer work stations were on the right side wall and a large Plasma TV screen with two computers attached to it in the middle of the opposite wall. Everything in the room looked modern and well kept. The room was bright and clean. They pulled out chairs and faced each other like they had last night, but with a different feeling. There was no gloom, only hope and excitement was in the air.

Tommy began to talk.

“When I left here last night I got lost. I found myself by the lake. The parking lot was empty and dark. The water was choppy from the wind and I reached into my saddlebags for my gloves and hat. I felt the diary; it was so warm and inviting in my hand. I just had to take it out and read it.”

“I found a light by the side door of a concession stand. I sat down on the ground and read it.” Wonderment came over Tommy’s face. “Sandra, it talked to me. It really did! At first it sounded like a child talking then it grew into a marvelous male voice. It was soft and very precise. Everything in that diary is just a piece of genius. What he wrote down is so crystal clear in my mind. It was as if I wrote it myself.”

“Sandra, he was only eighteen years old but he was a man with a vision. What that total vision was we’ll never know. But we have a glimpse of it here in that diary and we have to bring it to life.”

All this rushed out of Tommy in one fell swoop. She felt relieved that she finely getting it all out.

Sandra tilted her head and asked, “You can really make sense out of all that stuff?”

“Of course I can! I don’t know how he intended to build some of it. But lots of it is as plain as day. Most of it already exists in one form or another, in the last two years there has been tremendous advancement in all fields of science, especially in computer and microelectronics. I know you don’t know this but I hold a couple of degrees in the sciences. Electronics is one of them. When it comes to brains I’m no slouch! So what do you need to keep this place open?”

“Money, lots of money.” was the reply.

“Well I don’t have a lot of that but I’ll gladly give you all I have.”

“Thanks Tommy, but if it’s not a million or more it won’t help,” she answered back, feeling hopeless again.

“Then how about a new product to sell, a real top notch item?” She had a mischievous look on her face.

“Sure Tommy, Steve Jobs is going to come back down and give us his latest brain storm from heaven.”

“No, he won’t but Tom just about did.”

“What!” she screamed, not believing her own ears.

“Yep, he did! It’s on the last few pages of his diary. He was trying to combine a cell phone with an expandable screen, there’s a drawing of what he wanted it to do. It’s a marvel of engineering. Back then most of what he wanted to do was still on the drawing board of most companies. I think we can put most of it together using current technology and best of all its starts out as a watch bracelet on your wrist. You’ll never have to shove your phone into your bra again.” And Tommy laughed as this because she had done that so many times herself.

“No way, it can’t be done!”

Tommy pulled several sheets of paper out of her back pack. “No! Well

look at this.”

Sandra looked over the drawings and notes. She shook her head in amazement. “How will you do it? It looks complicated. We only have until Friday.”

Tommy was lost in thought for a moment. “Does it have to be a finished product or just a schematic?”

“I guess a schematic would do, but the real thing would make it a cinch.”

“I definitely could have the schematic by Friday, but not the bracelet.”

“Would someone helping you make a difference?”

“Yea, it would. But I still don’t see how we could make it in time. A static model of the three phases of the bracelet is a definite. A working model of all three phases...I don’t know. The real thing? Never!” Her voice was sorrowful at having to tell Sandra this.

“We’ll see about that,” was her reply. “I want you to meet someone. A special someone to all us Swifts. I’ll be back in an hour or so. So just sit tight until we come back. Okay?”

“Whatever you say Sandy. Do any of these computers work?” she asked.

“Yes, they all do. We had to keep them connected to demonstrate that they still did on Saturday. Those buyers won’t buy a pig in a poke, as the old saying goes.”

“What is the password?”

“Where the future is now,” was the reply.

“Of course it is.” And she laughed to herself.

By the time the man showed up, by himself, Tommy had the big CAD computer running and was starting the electronic schematic for the bracelet.

“Excuse me Missy, I was told to come and talk with you about a project.” An older man with salt and pepper hair and glasses was standing at the door. He was not tall but his shoulders and arms were muscular and his hands were huge.

“Yes Sir.” Was her reply as she got up from the CAD computer and faced him.

“You do look like him, by God,” he said as he sized her up with hard, brown eyes. “To be straight with you Missy, if you’re trying to fool the Swifts with some nonsense to help yourself somehow you’ll have to answer to me.” His voice was stern and his face was set with anger.

“No, sir. It’s not a trick. I am a Swift and when I came over here I never expected this. I don’t know if I can help them, but I’m going to try. You can bet your life on that!” she exclaimed vehemently.

“Spoken like a true Swift, Missy. Like a true Swift.” His face softened. Sir, you have me at a disadvantage. I don’t know your name.

“Avery, Hank Avery at your service, the best electronic engineer in town.” And he held out his hand. Tommy reached out and shook it. His hands were huge but gentle and callused from hard work.

“Sandy told me of your plans. So Tom thought of this?” Tommy opened her back pack and took out the diary. She opened it to Tom’s notes. Then she showed him her drawing and notes. He studied both of them for a while and nodded.

“Well Missy, I can see what Tom was going for. But there’s not enough information on these pages to make something out of it. While your own notes outlines the whole device. Did you take some notes out of this book that you forget to show me?” He was not criticizing her but just wondering.

“No Mr. Avery. That’s all of it.”

“Then I’ve got to hand it to you Missy, this shows you do know what you’re doing. I’m game. So what do you want me to do?”

* * *

“Hey you two, it’s night time. Don’t you think it’s time to stop?” Sandra was standing there with a bag of fast food in her hand. She was used to seeing this. Her father and Tom use to do it all the time. She had mixed feeling about it, but she knew that’s the way it is.

“Oh, Hi Sandy, were just about finished” Tommy replied when she turned around to the door. “Great! Food! I’m starved.”

“So am I!” declared Mr. Avery as he reached for the bag.

“What! You get it done?”

“No silly,” said Tommy, “we’re just about finished the schematic for the bracelet. Mr. Avery is a God send. This man knows more about micro-circuitry than I ever imaged possible.”

Mr. Avery turned red with such praise. He bent down his head and ate even faster. He couldn’t even look at them.

“So, what do we do now?” Sandra asked between bites of her own sandwich. “Can we build this bracelet?” It was more the she could hope for.

“We could do a lot of it, but the micro-processor has to be etched out and built in a clean environment and that takes months to set up.”

“I guess the schematics will have to be enough.” She was disappointed. But even Sandra knew that what they had done in the pass few hours was a miracle in itself. They finished eating and cleaned up the center work table.

“Ready, Mr. Avery? Hit the start bottom on the printer and let’s see

what we've done." Page after page came out of the schematic printer that was built under the center work table. Mr. Avery placed them on top as they came out. In a few minutes they were studying them. A half hour later they both sat back satisfied that the schematic was accurate. They then shut down the CADS and the other computers they were using.

"Not a bad day's work. If I do say so myself, Missy. I don't want to be disrespectful to Sandy here, but it was like old times working for both Mr. Swift and Tom. I do miss it." And a faraway look crossed his face for a moment.

"Let's go guys," said Sandra. "I'll pick this stuff up in the morning and see if I can convince someone to give us lots of money." with that they shut off the lights and headed for home.

* * *

"Mr. Avery, what are you doing here? It's four in the morning!"

Mr. Avery stretched his back and looked back at Tommy. He was soldering some intricate electronic components under a high power magnifying glass.

"Couldn't sleep. So I thought I'd throw something together for Sandy's presentation." He picked up the soldering iron again and started to solder. "Would you mind holding those pliers over here to act as a heat sink so I don't burn out those components?" While she helped him she studied what he was doing and looked at all the components he had scattered over the table.

"So you think you can make one of the bracelets using all these used parts?"

"Heck no!" he exclaimed. "But I think I can make a working model. It will have to be two times its normal size, five inches by ten inches. A great display, don't you think?"

"Yes it would, but you don't have the processors. And even then it still won't fit into the enlarged bracelet." She looked at him with puzzlement.

He pulled out a briefcase and opened it.

"This is the second part of it," and he pointed inside. It had a small radio transmitter/receiver and a battery glued to the bottom. "I'm going to put all the computer parts into this and let it run from here. It's a cheat, I know and normally I would never do something like this. But desperate times call for desperate measures." He was looking at Tommy to see her reaction over the grossly unethical move on his part.

"Mr. Avery, you old fox! I think I love you!" The smile on her face was so big it hurt. "Okay, what's your game plan and how will you get around the

processor problem?”

“I’m going to use the original processors and just link everything together.”

She loved the idea and off they went to work like kids in a toy store.

* * *

“You know if you’re going to make a habit of this I’ll just have to fire both of you.” Sandy was standing at the doorway with her hands on her hips. “Every time I find you two together it doesn’t look good.”

They were on opposite sides of the work table with their heads together working over a delicate piece of electronics. Tommy turned around quickly and spread out her arms to try to hide what they were doing.

“Get out of here, Sandy!” shouted Tommy with a grin. “Come back at eleven and we’ll be ready. Go! Shoo! Shoo!” She waved her out.

Sandra just shook her head and left muttering under her breath, “Engineers... who needs them?”

Two hours later she came back. The table was covered with a cloth and both engineers were sitting at a desk looking out the door waiting for Sandra to come. They jumped up when she did. Tommy went over to the work table and with a flourish she pulled off the cloth.

“Ta-da!” she said, and waved her hand over the items on the table.

Sandra slowly walked over to the table and examined its contents. She picked up the bracelet; it was metallic looking, six inches long, three-quarters of an inch wide, an electronic watch was in the middle of a two and a half inch flat surface. The bottom portion of it arced slightly so it could fit around a wrist. The rest of the band looked like linked sausages. As she held it to her wrist it snapped around it automatically, bending at every link.

“Oh!” she said to herself. She looked at the display model and then at the one on her wrist. They were an exact match. She looked at both Mr. Avery and Tommy for an explanation.

“Mr. Avery, it was your idea, you explain it.” Tommy bowed down and stepped back to leave the floor open for Mr. Avery.

“Well Sandy, we could not make the real bracelet. We don’t have the time. So we did the next best thing. We faked it.” He pulled out the briefcase and opened it. It was full of electronics. There were groups of component all over the place. He pointed to different groups.

“That runs the cell phone and this runs the video screen. This switches them back and forth. That’s a transmitter and receiver that sends the signals to the bracelet model. With all this not inside the bracelet we can make the model

work.” He took a deep breath. “You follow this so far, Sandy?”

She nodded her head yes.

“Okay, that’s the worst. The rest is just standard phone.” And he went on to explain the rest of the “magic” of the bracelet.

Chapter 4: Money: “Please, Sir, Can I Have Some More?”

“Mr. Billings, thank you for seeing me on such short notice.” Sandra stood in front of the Shopton Community Bank’s manager. He was short and fat and had a bald spot on the top of his head. She shook his hand after she put a box down on the edge of the desk and a briefcase on the floor. She was dressed immaculately in one of her best suits.

“That’s alright, but I can only give you ten minutes. I have to go out this afternoon. So, what’s in the box?”

Not wasting a minute, Sandra opened the box and placed the model on the table. It was a forearm and hand with the bracelet on it.

“I’ll try to be quick and to the point,” and at that moment two teenagers came into the office followed by a woman.

“Sorry Dear, but you know how the kids are...” “Oh, hi there, Sandy. How’s your father? I hear he’s been under the weather lately.”

“He’s doing better, Mrs. Billings. Thanks for asking.” Sandra looked at the two kids. The boy was about fifteen and the girl about thirteen. “Why not?” she thought to herself. “Please stay, if you can. You might find this interesting.” She then reached into her pocket and pressed a beeper she had there.

A ringing phone sound came out of the model on the desk. Sandra touched the top of the watch face and the side of the bracelet rolled out. It stopped when it was ten inches long, five inches wide. The top lit up and a full cell phone surface appeared. The top was a full touch screen in color. Sandra reached out and plucked the phone off the model’s wrist and held it up to her ear and answered it.

“Hello Tommy. Yes I was just showing him the phone. Talk to you later.” She touched the Off button. She put the phone down on the desk upside down so that they could see that the rest of the bracelet folded itself flat into the back of the phone and was out of the way. She then put her arm out to show them the actual watch bracelet on her wrist.

“Now, to show you the real thing!” She touched the top of her watch and it rolled out. When it stopped a phone screen appeared on it. She then closed it, hoping that they didn’t notice it was just a picture. The surface image was a fake. She quickly picked up the model phone and ran through its features, and it was loaded with them. More apps than anyone could ever use,

a GPS, a ten megapixel camera, zoom and micro picture taking ability, even home movies with a built in motion stabilizer. A touch of a button and the phone numbers turned into a keyboard for texting

“Wow!” exclaimed the boy. “Dad, get me one!” His eyes were gleaming with excitement.

“And that’s not all. We call this “The Entertainment Mode.” Sandra now touched the bottom of the screen, “I just selected for pictures and then touched the expand button.” The whole touch screen expanded two times its size. It went from five by ten inches to ten by twenty inches. Sandra placed the expanded phone on the desk and held out her arm again.

She touched the bottom of the watch face and the bracelet side rolled into its phone size then it folded out to the expanded size. The screen appeared. She immediately placed it face down on a piece of paper on the desk so that they could compare it to a letter size piece of paper. It covered it. She picked it up facing her and touched it again and closed it, turning it back to a bracelet. She touched it to her wrist and it clasped around it firmly. She then ran it through its many modes using the display model.

“The expanded mode can be used for view pictures, moves, TV shows and games. While in game mode the bottom left and right corners are your controllers.” She showed them the display icons.

Sandy continued, “If you call up the GPS mapping, this is the perfect size.” She demonstrated that too.

When she was finished she returned it to bracelet mode and placed it back in the display arm. It clasped it firmly.

“Any questions?” She asked hoping that the information overload was in full force. By the looks on their faces, it worked.

“Daddy! We want one. Now!” Both of the kids yelled, and Mrs. Billings was shaking her head *yes*.

Mr. Billings looked at all three members of his family and wondered how he could say no to buying bracelets for each of them. He knew there would be no living with them after this demonstration.

“Miss Swift you’re in luck.” He said with a smile. “There’s a Board of Trustees meeting this evening at the Shopton Yachting Club. Could you be there at nine with this demonstration?”

Sandra almost yelled with delight on hearing this. “Yes Sir! I’ll be there!”

Sandra was back at the Assembly building shortly after midnight. Tommy and Mr. Avery rushed to her as soon as she drove up. The tears told then all they needed to know.

The next morning Mr. Billings was trying to reach Sandra as he had a

solution to help her.

“Come on Sandra, answer the phone! For god sakes, answer it!” Mr. Billings was frustrated at not being able to contact Sandra Swift. He slammed down the phone. As he rushed out of his office and past his secretary he called out. “Keep trying to reach Miss Swift. If you get her, tell her to call me immediately. Make sure she has my cell number.” And he left the bank in a huff.

* * *

“Mr. Samson, I would like you to meet Sandra Swift of the Swift Construction Company.” He stepped aside so that Sandra could step forward to the bar that Mr. Samson was standing behind. He was tall with black hair, a sharp jaw line and an athletic build. He was young, about twenty five or twenty seven. The bar was located on the back deck of his yacht. It was docked at the Lake Copland yacht club.

“Yes Mr. Billings I know all that. I’ve been following the troubles of the Swifts for some time now. And after last night’s demonstration at the Club I know what she is trying to sell. The questing right now is will the Swifts let me help.”

He took a sip of his drink, “Humm, good! Care for one?” He took off his sun glasses and looked at Sandra.

She was in faded jeans and a slightly too tight pullover. She hated being seen in public like that but by the time Mr. Billings found Sandra at Tommy’s hotel there was no time to change. “Yes indeed. You’re the finest example of womanhood that I’ve seen in a long time.” And he smacked his lips. “Oh, excuse me... have I offended you, Miss Swift?” He could tell by the sudden look of anger on her face. “I’m sorry. Please let me make you one of these drinks. There only Tomato juice with a dash of Worcestershire sauce. One for my favorites, please sit.” And he pointed to chairs that were arranged around a deck table under an open umbrella. They sat down and Sandra was glad to put her demonstration items on the table.

“What am I doing here? This man is a pig.” Sandra thought to herself as she sat there. “How far will I go to save the company?”

Mr. Samson hummed to himself as he prepared the drinks. He come over and placed all three of them on the table and sat down. He placed his hands together in front of his month and said, “Now down to brass tacks. You need a million dollars to try to save the company so you can sell this device of yours and pay back the money you owe the bank. That’s basically it, right?” He smiled behind his fingers while looking at Sandra.

“Yes, Mr. Samson, that’s it. We’re willing to pay the going rate for the loan. If you can give us a year to pay you back, we’ll start next month.”

“Very commendable of you Miss Swift, but I was thinking of something different. How about the weekend in Vegas?” Sandra threw her drink in his face so fast Mr. Samson didn’t even have time to blink.

“How dare you!” exclaimed Sandra. Without thinking she ran off the yacht leaving everything there. She could hear Mr. Samson laughing at her as she ran with tears of disgust in her eyes.

“Don’t worry Mr. Billings. I’ll give her the money and at terms that will set her head spinning. I like a person who won’t let someone else run their lives no matter what the circumstances. She’ll do alright in this world. She just needs a little toughening up.”

* * *

Sandra, Tommy and Mr. Avery walked into the bank a few minutes before noon. All hope was lost. Their faces were set and their emotions were on edge. But they were determined to see it through. Mr. Billings meet them at the door and lead them into a meeting room. He motioned for them to sit down and excused himself for a moment. When the door reopened Mr. Samson walked in followed by a stranger with a briefcase and Mr. Billings.

“What is he doing here?” shouted Sandra as she jumped to her feet. She was shaking with anger.

“Please Sandra, sit down. It’s not what you think. Let me explain.” The look of fear on his face that she would walk out of the meeting was clear.

“Alright Mr. Billings, but for your sake this better be good.” She sat back down and crossed her arms over her chest.

“First, I would like to apologize for what happened this morning. I was not a part to any of it. Believe me, I don’t do business that way!” and he glared at Mr. Samson, who just sat there with a grin on his face. “Now to why Mr. Samson is here. The bank is controlled by a board of trustees. The controlling faction is ruled by Mr. Flagger, the fourth. You all know how he feels about the Swifts. He still hates the Swifts for what happened to his great-grandfather Andy Flagger. When he died in prison the whole Flagger family swore to get even with you Swifts. Mr. Flagger thought his ship had come in. He could ruin the Swifts once and for all. He would have accomplished what no other Flagger had ever done. He stop the bank from giving you the loan you need.”

“Well, Mr. Flagger has met his match. Let me introduce him to you.” He pointed to Mr. Samson.

He waved at them from his seat.

“I will do all I can to help your family, Sandra.” continued Mr. Billings. “Your family has been part of this community for a hundred years. And you’ve always done good works. Not like the Flaggers.

Mr. Samson ran across the Flaggers in his business dealing in the stock market. He didn’t take kindly to the way they do business. He believes they are making their money through inside trading. He just can’t prove it. But they came close to ruining him, a mistake on their part.”

“Mr. Samson is the kind of person that believes in an eye for an eye. You’re going to help him by keeping your company open. If the Swifts don’t fail, then Flagger does. That’s enough to satisfy Mr. Samson. He’s sure that it will be the start of a domino effect and he will be there to see that justice is done to all the people the Flaggers have hurt lately. It’s up to you.”

Mr. Billings sat down and had a sip of water. He was shaking. This matter of the Flaggers meant something personal to him. The Flaggers must have hurt him in some way and he wanted to be part of their down fall.

Sandra looked at her two companions. They both shrugged their shoulders.

“What do we have to do?” ask Sandra.

“Just sign these papers,” answered Mr. Samson. “The bank turns your loans over to me. I pay them off and I place a million dollars in your account. It’s that simple.” His smile held some kind of secret. And Sandra wasn’t sure that it was all that good for them.

“What happens if we fail?” asked Tommy, who did not know this Mr. Flagger.

He answered simply. “I get to keep everything. I will then own Swift Constructing Company lock, stock and barrel. You do still use barrels, don’t you?” And he laughed at his own joke. “No matter what, Flagger doesn’t get your company and you’re no worse off then you are now. My rates for your combined loans are unbelievable. Three years and you don’t start paying it back for six months and then only at one percent.”

Tommy as astounded at hearing that.

“Three years and only one percent after six months? There’s got to be a catch. What is it?” demanded Mr. Avery speaking for the first time.

“Look, I’m not losing anything over this. If it works I’ll probably be picking up Flagger’s loses. I promised to help the people he sucked into his schemes. I’ll sign papers over to you that will commit me to this, so you can keep me honest. Just don’t keep them in the bank. He has too many connections and they will just disappear. Believe me!”

“If you start to pay me back and fail to continue to pay or fail right off, I lose nothing. Your property alone is worth millions as an industrial site. It’s a

win- win situation for me.”

“Look, I know it’s a lot to decide, so take until tomorrow. Call me at my yacht.” He handed Sandra a card. “If you call we both win. If you don’t, oh well. I’ll get even with them some other way.” He got up with his aide at his side and left.

Mr. Avery ran after him. By the time the two girls reacted to this he was back.

“Uncle Hank, what was that about?” ask Sandra.

“Had to go really bad,” and he sat himself back down.

“Well, continued Sandra, we can’t decide this here. Let’s go home.”

And they got up, thanked Mr. Billings and left the bank.

“You don’t have to do it Sandy,” said Mr. Avery. He looked around the room they were in, they had come back to the loft in the assemble building. It had become their unofficial head quarters. He would miss it if they didn’t take the deal.

“We don’t have any choice if we’re going to save the company. I wish Dad was here,” and she sighed.

“Well he’s not, and if he were we wouldn’t be in this mess. I don’t mean to be cruel but you know it’s true.” He sat back in his chair and watched for her reaction.

She had none.

“Sandy, I’ve only been here for four days, but it’s been the worst and best four days of my life. If this is the way the Swifts run their lives, at full speed, it’s a wonder that any one of you have survived! But I love it. You and Mr. Avery mean the world to me now. I don’t want to lose any of this.” Tommy took Sandy’s hand and squeezed it.

“It’s a risk alright,” was Sandy’s reply, “and the Swift Construction Company survives on risk. Let’s go for it.”

Chapter Five: Production

Mr. Avery and Tommy were in the loft office working.

“Yes, Missy. I just finished the list of names of the companies we need to contact to make the sub-assemblies for us. Except one, I don’t know of any one that can make the backing of the touch screens for us. That type of material just doesn’t exist. I know of nothing that is both flexibly and rigged on commend.”

“Don’t worry about that. I’m going back to England tomorrow and will be back in less than two weeks with it. I have a friend that’s going to help me with this problem. I’m good at chemistry and she’s good at growing crystals.”

“Crystals! They’re too hard of a substance for that and to brittle, they’ll break too easily.” He knew crystals were not the answer for their dilemma.

“Don’t worry, I won’t disappoint you. My worry is,” as she said looking over the list he handed to her, “that you don’t have a company named for the manufacturing of the processor chip.”

“Instead of telling you I’m just going to take you to someone that has our answer. Let’s visit Sandy before we leave and tell her where we’re going. I want to find out how well she’s doing at rehiring the people I would like to have on the assembly line. She must be lonely being the only person in the administration building.”

They pulled into a parking lot an hour later. The sign read: Avery Electronics Inc.

Tommy was speechless. She finely said. “Yours? Have you been moonlighting?” was all she could come up with.

“No, not exactly, but close, I do spend time here. Let’s go inside and then you’ll see.”

“Pops, what are you doing here?” exclaimed a younger version of Mr. Avery. He was the same height, with large shoulders and even larger hands. “I know!” He answered himself. “You came to check up on me, is that it?” With a laugh he said. “Why don’t you introduce me to this young lady?”

“Just for that I’m not going to! Anyway, you’ll try to steal her from me and I’ll have to become a miserable old man again. So just show me how well you’re doing with the chip and we can be on our way.”

“Turn back into a miserable old man? You never stopped being one!” At that he turned away from his father and concentrated on Tommy.

“I know, you’re Thomasina Swift. I’m Hank Avery Jr, in case you haven’t figured it out. Let me take you on a two bit tour of this place and I’ll

tell you where we're at with this project." He showed her around till they came to a big window where two men were working with lasers and other high power equipment. "We can't go in there, it's a sealed room. I'm sure you know that, Thomasina."

"Oh, yes. I spent many hours in there while I was doing my research papers at University." was her reply.

"That **FPGA** chip is fantastic!" Hank Jr's eyes were on the chips the men in the sealed room were working on. "I've never worked with one before. But a programmable chip with over a million transistors that is set up with over one thousand core-processors that can perform different task on their own and with what speed! Over twenty times faster than the normal chip and you can shape it into any shape you want. God, would I love to own that!"

Tommy smiled and said, "I own the patent on that chip. I don't know what arrangement Mr. Avery has made with you, but if you carry this off I'll guaranty you'll be the sole manufacturer of this chip. I do want to market it. The only thing is, it will go out as a Swift Construction Company product."

Hank Jr. and Sr. were surprised at this. They both thought that it would be a one shot deal. The two men were in seventh heaven with this news.

Mr. Avery and Tommy left a short time later, and after they got back into the truck Tommy asked, "Are all the companies you have selected like your son's?"

"Naar! He's the laziest of a bad lot." He told her with a twinkle in his eyes.

Two weeks later Tommy was back and sitting in Sandra's office at the Administration building looking over the advertising campaign. There was a hum of activity as more and more people were hired to fill the needed positions. Tommy was exhausted but happy. A lot had been accomplished while she was in England and she was ready for the big push.

Sandra had a desk full of paper work. She was the accountant for all the bills and for payroll. She was also the person running the advertisement in magazines and newspapers, as well as on the internet. Only a few hundred thousand dollars were left. But all the bills were paid.

"So Tommy, what do you think?" she asked leaning back in her chair.

"I think you should see if there are any Electronics Shows between now and Christmas. If there are we should go to them, that way we'll cover all the bases, both with the home and the commercial markets."

Sandy nodded. "You're right, I forgot about them. And thanks for the new battery. I don't know how you did it but it's just what we needed. That polymer-membrane battery from Japan might be the best on the market right now but it didn't give us the power we needed. The conversion drive motors

drained too much energy from the battery to run the tablet for long.”

“Oh it was nothing,” said Tommy. “I was working with a crystal matrix anyway so I just combined a little carbon nano-tubes technology with the crystal matrix I was working on, and a polymer-membrane film that sealed up the tubes and then charged it up. The polymer allows the nano-tubes to soak up the electrons like little sponges. It worked the first time out.” She was very satisfied at how that had worked.

“You might think it’s a little thing but that new battery lasts five hours longer than the polymer-membrane battery. As for that key chain fob, it’s over the top. A six hour recharger that plugs right into the bracelet when it’s in phone or tablet mode and then plugs into a wall socket with its own retractable prongs. We’re including it with every unit we sell as a bonus. If that doesn’t sell the bracelet, nothing will. Uncle Hank says that it can be adopted to fit other electronic devices. The battery and the fob add two more products to our assembly line. If we can’t make it with these products, I’ll eat my shirt!”

“When do we get the back plates and batteries?” Sandy asked changing the subject.

“We’ll get the first shipment in two days and then a shipment every day after that till we tell them to stop. It’s a little costly, so if we can, we should switch over to cargo shipping as soon as possible. We have to have a back up supply of at least four weeks before we can do that.”

“Yes, I can understand that. Work it out with Uncle Hank when you can.”

“No problem. I’m going to my motel. I think I can sleep for a week. Call me if you have to, otherwise I’ll be back when the shipments from England come in”.

Two days later Tommy and Mr. Avery were putting several units together by hand in the loft. Sandra was watching them. Seven fobs were charging on the bench.

“Guys, if this doesn’t work, you’re going to have to shoot me. I’m as nervous as heck!” She was pacing the floor and swinging her arms around trying to find something to do with them.

“Just give Missy and me a few more seconds. There... it’s done. Tommy, your call first.” And he held another bracelet in his hand so he could answer the call.

“I can’t, Mr. Avery,” answered Tommy. “We don’t have them activated to a network. We left them open ended so that whatever network the buyer has he can continue to use it on them. I guess we forgot to do that. We’re going to have to activate them first.”

“Aaaah!” shouted Sandy, “call me after you do!” She stomped out of

the room. Tommy and Mr. Avery were rolling on the floor with laughter.

* * *

The next day in the assembly building they were ready to start production.

“Go on, Sandy, push the button. Times a wasting,” yelled Uncle Hank from the middle of the assembly line where he was standing ready to trouble shoot if necessary.

Tommy was at the other end of the line ready to test the end product. As she pushed the button , the production figures ran through her mind. Four a minute, over two hundred an hour, ten thousand in a week. A million and a half dollars in cash. The lights dimmed for a second, the smell of electricity and solder filled the air, the assembly line started to move. Four minutes later Tommy grabbed the first bracelet up off the line and plugged it into the test rack.

“We’ve done it! We’ve done it!” She yelled as she jumped up and down and all around.

Chapter Six: Melding of Minds

Two days later Sandra found her father in her office. He was sitting in the visitor's chair.

"Daddy! she exclaimed. "Great to see you here."

He had continued to show no interest in what was going on in life or in the company. Sandra ran to him and gave him a hug and a kiss. She sat on the edge of the desk to be near him.

"What can I show you, Dad? Would you like to look at the bracelet?" She held out her arm to show him hers.

"No Sandra, I just wanted to tell you that the Swift Construction Company is all yours. I want out." His face was cold and hard.

"No, Daddy! You can't leave. I won't let you."

"You can't stop me," was his reply.

"No, I can't. But I won't take your name off anything. I can be just as stubborn as you!"

"You might have forgotten your mother and brother, but I can't!"

"Father!" she sobbed with tears in her eyes, her voice rising as she spoke. "If you think I've forgotten them your wrong! I loved them. I still do!" She was shouting so loud that she was being heard throughout the building.

"All that I have done is to keep them alive. Ma was so proud of what you rebuilt here. Tom wanted to go to the stars and bring the Swifts Construction Company with him. They're both dead. I can't let their pride in this company and their dreams for it die with them. I refuse to let this company die too!" And with that said she ran out of the room and left the building.

Tommy found her as she ran out the front door. Someone had heard the yelling and called her.

They sat close to each other on a bench not far from where Tommy had read Tom's diary. Sandra finally stopped crying, her eyes and cheeks were red. She felt so exhausted.

"Sandy, you did nothing wrong! Your father is not thinking straight. He knows you loved them. It's just that you have done something he could not bring himself to do. You kept on living! You refused to curl up and die. Somehow he feels responsible for their deaths. Why? I don't know."

"I do." Sandy replied. "That day, dad was supposed to go with them. His experiment on his new jet engine was more important to him. That engine saved his life. He hates it now and the science that was part of it. He feels he should have died with them. Or worst, he thinks he could have saved them!" A

sob came from deep within her. She had no tears left, just despair. “He will blame himself *Forever More* if I can’t find a way to stop it. He thinks I don’t know why he hates himself. I just don’t care. He’s all I have left. I love him, Tommy. He’s my father.” She sobbed again and Tommy held her until she stopped.

“You just have to tell him that you know. That you don’t care why it happened. That you love him. Tell him you will never stop loving him, no matter what. And ,Sandy, that slogan of your company, ‘Where the future is now,’ has much meaning for you. Look at it this way. There is no future without a now... no now without forgiving the past. Not forgetting it, just forgiving it. We’ll wake him up, Sandy. We’re Swifts!”

Want more?
Look for these Swift Enterprise Sagas in the future:

Thomasina Swift and the Arc Jet

Thomasina Swift and her Flying Generators

Thomasina Swift and her Space Launch Platform

Thomasina Swift and her Space Repair Station (Repairs 'R' Us)

Cast of future characters:

Bud Kenworth, Chief mechanic and pilot from the Air force. Stunt pilot and a pylon racer

Patches, Bud's Ground crewman. Ex crop duster, but has a problem with the bottle

JJ, Bud's seventeen year old brother, troublemaker and gambler

Portia Flagger, A rich, spoiled brat who finds excitement with JJ

Footnote: Names of people and places are not the choice of the author.
The Multi-Universe has its own sense of humor.