

TOM SWIFT
and His
Fabulous Timescope

BY
Victor Appleton II

Book 34 in The New Adventures of Tom Swift Jr.

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An all new adventure in the world of Tom Swift Jr.

Dedication

**To all those readers that Tom Swift both father and son
have thrilled for almost a century and to those readers
that discover him in the future.**

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Chapter One

Bud Barclay Returns

The red convertible raced toward the Swift Experimental Station, a four-mile square enclosure where Tom Swift, Sr. and his son Tom Swift, Jr., create their inventions. The driver was Bud Barclay, eighteen and the pal and companion of the young inventor, Tom Jr., who was also eighteen. Bud was returning from San Francisco where, he had been visiting his family.

Bud slowed as the main gate came into view. He stopped at the gate and showed his identification to the guard. The guard returned his identification, and waved him in. He drove to the main lab building where he was sure he would find his pal Tom.

Tom was at work on his latest invention when the door opened and Chow Winkler, the range cook, entered. He had been a chuck wagon cook in Texas when the Swifts had been building a nuclear power plant, the Citadel. When the Swifts returned east, he joined them as head chef, often accompanying them on scientific expeditions.

Chow, a balding plump man who favors loud colorful western shirts, wheeled in a lunch cart.

“I knew you would forget to eat lunch, Tom. So I brought your lunch to you.”

Tom laughed. “Chow, I’ll soon need glasses if you don’t tone down those shirts. That little number nearly burned out my retina.”

The cook smiled. "It is a right pretty number, ain't it."

As Chow went to the adjoining room to set out Tom's lunch, the lab door opened and Bud Barclay entered. "Hi, Tom," he said.

Tom and Chow were thrilled to see him. "Hi, Bud," they said together.

Tom grinned at his friend. "I'm glad to have you back. How were your folks?"

"Everyone was well, but I'm happy to be back. What are you working on, another invention?"

Tom nodded. "Yes, but Chow has brought in plenty of lunch, so why don't you join me and I'll tell you about my new Timescope."

Bud was amazed. "A Timescope? You mean a time machine to travel into the past or future?"

Tom laughed. "No, a way to look into the past. As for travel, I don't believe that is possible. The Timescope is based on my Electronic Retroscope."

Tom and Bud go to the apartment next to his lab where Chow has set out their lunch.

"Okay, Genius boy, tell me how you can see the past, but can't travel in time?"

"Well, it works on the principle that the past exist, but the future does not. Only the past and present can exist, because the future has not formed yet."

Bud frowned. "I think I get it."

Tom continued. "We are traveling into the future, but slowly as we leave the present. Then there are the paradoxes."

Chow scratched his head. "What are paradoxes, Tom?"

“A paradox, appears contrary to common sense, but could be true.”

Bud grinned. “My head is spinning, but go on.”

“Well, suppose you went back in time and caused the death of your ancestor. You would cease to exist, but if you don’t exist how could you travel back in time and cause the death of your ancestor?”

“I see what you mean, I think,” Bud said.

“Some scientist believe,” said Tom, “that any change in the past, however small, would change the present. While others believe such change would be impossible because the present has already been formed.”

Bud whistled. “That, Genius Boy, is quite a mouth full.”

The boys finished the fine lunch that Chow had served, and Tom and Bud returned to the lab while the range cook returned to his galley.

The Timescope looked like a large cabinet with a computer screen on top. The camera was built into the cabinet.

“How goes it so far, Tom?”

The young inventor grimaced. “Not so good. I get fuzzy pictures, but can’t tell yet if they are in fact from the past.”

“What could be the cause?”

“It could be the Timescope camera or the monitor.” Tom ran his hand through his crewcut. “It could also be that the power is too low to reach into the past.”

“How will you learn which it is?”

“I’ll go back and redesign it. I believe the principle is sound, it just needs more work.”

The boys pitched in and worked together into the afternoon. Tom finally put down his slide-rule. "Bud, have you seen Sandy?"

Bud flushed. "No, I came straight to the plant."

Tom grinned. "Then you had better come home with me. Sandy has been looking forward to your return."

"Thanks for the invite, I would love to see your sister. Why don't you call Phyllis Newton and see if she can join us?"

"That is a great idea, Bud. I'll call Phyl right now."

Tom telephoned the Newton home. Ned Newton was a close friend of Tom Swift senior, and was the head of the Swift Construction company. "Uncle Ned, can Phyl come over to my house? Bud is back and is coming over to see Sandy."

"I'm sure it will be all right. Can you pick her up, and bring her back later?"

"That is great, Uncle Ned. Bud and I will be there in an hour," Tom said.

Tom closed and locked his lab, and he and Bud left the building. They took Bud's convertible, and drove to the Newton home to pick up Phyl. She was seventeen with dark hair, and a good friend of Sandra Swift. She was Tom's favorite date and he and Phyl often double dated with Bud and Sandy.

When they arrived at the Swift home, they did not set off the alarm system. Each had a special coil in their wristwatches that deactivated a magnetic field that protected the Swift home from intruders.

The three young people were met at the door by Mr. Swift. He and his son resembled each other, but Tom was

taller than his father.

Mr. Swift shook hands with Bud. “Welcome back, Bud. Was everything well with your family?”

“Thanks sir, I’m glad to be back. And, yes. They’re all fine.”

They were just in time for dinner. Mrs. Swift, a lovely woman who doted on her famous husband and son, had prepared her fried chicken with mashed potatoes and green beans.

After dinner, the men retired to Mr. Swift’s den while Sandy and Phyl helped Mrs. Swift clear the table. The elder Tom filed his pipe. “Tom, how is your Timescope progressing?”

Tom glanced at Bud. “Not so good, Dad. As I explained to Bud, I believe I need more power to reach back in time.”

Mr. Swift lit his pipe and took several deep puffs. “Keep at it son; most inventions take time to develop.”

“Thanks, Dad. In fact, I have several ideas how to perfect it.”

Tom’s first invention was the Sky Queen, his Flying Lab,. He followed it up with the Jetmarine. Since then, he has added dozens of inventions to his credit from rocket ships to a deep sea Hydrodome, all to explore both outer space and the seas.

After Mr. and Mrs. Swift went up to bed, Sandy put on some records and the four young people danced until it was time for Phyl to go home. Bud volunteered to take her.

The next day Tom rode to Swift Enterprises with his father. “Any more thoughts about how to increase power to your Timescope, Tom?”

Tom nodded. “Yes, I have decided to use atomic power.

It is the only source to deliver the unlimited power needed.”

Mr. Swift glanced at his son. “If your Timescope is to remain portable, the atomic pile will have to be small and light weight.”

Tom smiled. “Thanks to your special plastic, ‘Tomasite,’ that should be no problem.”

Arriving at Swift Enterprises father and son parted. Mr. Swift had some letters to write, while Tom headed for his lab. He was about to enter when he heard loud voices coming from within.

Tom knew he had locked up when he and Bud left the night before. He threw open the door to find Bud and Chow shouting at each other.

“Hold it,” he cried. “What is going on here?”

Bud turned to Tom. “When I came in, I found Chow in here and I know we locked up last evening.”

Chow puffed out his chest. “As I told, Buddy boy, I found the door ajar, and thought you had come in early.”

Tom frowned. “Bud and I did lock up, so someone must have broken in. I’ll call Harlan Ames and report it.”

Harlan Ames was Chief of Security at Swift Enterprises.

The Security Chief arrived twenty minutes later. “Hello, Tom. I had just arrived when I received your call. What is wrong?”

“Chow found my lab door ajar this morning, but Bud and I know it was locked last evening when we left.”

Harlan nodded. “Let me check the door.” Ten minutes later he reported his findings. “The lock has been picked, Tom. Is anything missing?”

Tom Frowned. “No, but someone could have taken

pictures of my Timescope. Luckily the most important part, the tuner, was in the safe.”

Harlan shook his head. “I don’t like to think we have a spy at Enterprises, but we must have.”

Tom nodded. “Do what you can to find the spy, but it is troubling to think someone working at Enterprises is disloyal.”

After the Security Chief and Chow left, Tom and Bud got back to work. Tom opened the safe and took out the Timescope’s tuner. “If our unknown visitor had taken pictures of my Timescope tuner, he might have sold them to some foreign power.”

Bud grinned in spite of that possibility. “So, what will you do with this? Are you planning to spy on the builders of the pyramids?”

Tom laughed. “No, but it will be possible someday. You see the Timescope will have to be where the past happened to work. Do you remember the Mayan ruins in the Yucatan with the symbols of our space friends?”

“Do I? That was some adventure,” said Bud.

“Well, if I could use the Timescope there we might get a look at whoever carved those symbols.”

“Wow, Tom. That would be great.”

Tom inserted the tuner into the Timescope camera. He turned on the Timescope, but as before, all that appeared on the screen were vague shadows. The young inventor shook his head in disappointment. “It’s no good, Bud. Until I can get more power it just won’t work.”

“Too bad, Pal, but maybe a little R & R with Phyl and Sandy will fire up that brain of yours,” Bud said.

Tom smiled. “I believe there is a conspiracy afoot. Did

Sandy and Phyl put you up to this?"

Bud grinned. "You have me, Genius Boy. Sandy suggested it last night. Phyl wore me down as I was taking her home."

"I thought so. What's the plan?"

"Well, tomorrow is Saturday. Why don't we take the girls on a picnic to Lake Carlopa?"

Tom nodded. "That is a good idea. Sandy and Phyl have been after me to take some time off."

Bud laughed. "I think they were hoping for more than a day."

"Well," said Tom. "It's all the time I can afford to lose."

"They know that, Tom."

At the end of the day Bud left Tom to close up, but as he was about to leave the telephone rang.

"Hello," said Tom.

"Tom, it's Harlan Ames. We may have a lead on the person who broke into your lab."

"Good work, Harlan. Can you tell me who it was?"

"Not on the telephone, Tom, but if you meet me at the Shopton police station it will become clear."

Tom drove to the police station where Harlan Ames was waiting for him with the Chief of Police. "Tom, when I learned someone had broken into your Lab I went over the list of new men we had hired. Only one stood out."

Tom nodded. "Who was it, Harlan?"

"His name is Jerry Colson. I thought it might be him because he is on probation, and had not provided the references we needed."

The young inventor did not like a disloyal employee.
“How was he caught?”

“When I was sure it was him, I contacted the police and they picked him up. We found a small spy camera on him, and it still had the film in it.”

Tom nodded. “Good work, Harlan. Maybe he did not have time to pass the film to whoever hired him to spy on Swift Enterprises.”

Chapter Two

Thousand Dollar Mistake

Tom ran a hand through his blond crewcut. “Chief, may we see the prisoner?”

The police Chief nodded. “I don’t see why not, but he may not talk.”

The police Chief conducted them to an interview room where the prisoner sat with his head down. When he looked up and saw Tom, he blanched.

Harlan Ames questioned him. “Jerry, why did you betray your employer’s at Swift Enterprises?”

The prisoner looked at Tom. “A man offered me a thousand dollars, to take a picture of your new Timescope. I had heard you had not perfected it, so I thought a picture of it would make no difference.”

Harlan shook his head. “That was only the beginning, Colson. Once they had their hooks in you they would demand more of you until you were caught, and no longer any use to them.”

Jerry gave a hang-dog look. “I guess I made a big mistake. I’m sorry, Tom.

“You said a man asked you to take a picture of my Timescope. What did he look like?”

Jerry thought for a moment. “He was a heavysset guy with black hair, a mustache and what they call a goatee. Oh, and he spoke with an accent.”

“I’m sorry you got yourself into this fix, Jerry. Because of our many government contracts, we can’t take this lightly. Any breach of trust must be left to the law,” said Tom.

Tom and Harlan left the police station minutes later. “You know, Tom, whoever that man is, he won’t stop trying to get your invention.”

Tom nodded grimly. “Yes, it is not the first time someone or some group has tried to steal one of my inventions.”

Harlan paused. “Tom, I’ll beef up security at Enterprises, but you must be careful. The next best thing to a Tom Swift invention is the inventor himself.”

Tom laughed. “Thanks for placing me second to my inventions. But, all kidding aside, if my Timescope had been working, we could have seen Jerry in action.”

Harlan nodded. “That could be a motive, if someone did not want the police to have such a device.”

Tom considered that. “That means it could be criminals as well as foreign agents.”

“That’s right, Tom. You must be on alert; you can’t take chances,” Harlan said. “You need to keep me informed about your plans.”

Tom grinned. “I will, Harlan. Bud and I are taking Sandy and Phyl Newton on a picnic tomorrow.”

The two parted, and Tom drove home. The Timescope might be far from a working model, but it appeared that did not matter to someone.

Monday he would work on an atomic pile to power the Timescope.

Saturday dawned clear and warm. Bud came by and picked up Tom and Sandy. The three young people drove to the Newton home to get Phyl. Sandy rode in front with Bud

while Tom and Phyl sat in back.

At the Shopton Country Club they changed into swimsuits and ran for the water. After an hour of swimming, they lay on a blanket the girls had brought with them.

“Bud, Harlan and the police caught the man who broke into my lab. Someone offered to pay him for the picture.”

Sandy looked at her brother. “What kind of picture, Tom?”

Tom smiled. “He took a picture of my new Timescope invention. Harlan thinks criminals might be behind it, if not foreign agents.”

Phyl frowned. “How does your Timescope work, Tom?”

“Well, right now it doesn’t—it needs a new more powerful energy source—but it’s based on the theory that since the past has happened, it is stacked like a deck of cards. My Timescope will see through those layers, to view any event in the past.”

Both girls were impressed, but Sandy was also proud of her brother. Bud was more impressed by the lunch the girls had packed. He could smell the fried chicken, left over from Mrs. Swift’s delicious dinner.

The girls could see that Tom and Bud were ready to eat, but they loved to tease their dates. It was not often they could get the boys to themselves. They seemed to be taking forever looking through things.

Finally Bud could stand it no more. “If you girls, don’t unpack that food, I am going to starve right in front of you.”

Both girls giggled. “We can’t have that,” said Sandy. “You are both so fit, I don’t think you have anything to lose.”

Bud grinned. “Maybe not, but I feel as if my stomach is

touching my backbone.”

The girls, taking pity on their dates, began to lay out the paper plates and spoons and forks. Then the fried chicken, coleslaw, potato salad and a peach pie with soda.

Tom and Bud tore into the food, much to the delight of the girls. When all the food had been consumed, Tom and Bud dozed as the girls packed up what was left. Sandy and Phyl had brought paperback books to read while the boys slept.

No one noticed that the sky had filled with dark clouds until the wind picked up. Once the rain began to fall, Tom and Bud awoke with a start. They gathered their things and ran for the car. Lightning and thunder were made worse by the wind and pounding rain made driving difficult.

When they reach the Swift home, Mrs. Swift begged Bud and Phyl to stay. At least, until the storm ended. Glad to extend their double date they agreed.

Sunday the Swift family went to church; it was the one day they could all be together as a family. Bud and Phyl having stayed with the Swifts because of the storm accompanied them.

After church, they returned along with Mr. and Mrs. Newton to the Swift home for Sunday dinner. Mrs. Swift and Mrs. Newton, with Sandy and Phyl helping, prepared a feast. Later after dinner the Newton's left with their daughter. Bud left, too, after complementing Mrs. Swift.

“I would not like to say so to Chow, but you are the best cook by far.”

Mrs. Swift smiled. “Thank you, Bud, but I know how much you enjoy Chow Winkler's cooking.”

Bud blushed. “Chow would be better if he would stop

experimenting with strange recipes.”

Mr. and Mrs. Swift laughed with Tom and Bud joining in. Chow was famous for his rattlesnake pie and armadillo steaks. No one knew what crazy recipes he would devise next.

Chow, despite his unusual cooking, was a much loved figure at Swift Enterprises. He had been on most of Tom’s adventures, and was a loyal and faithful employee. Bud teased the chef mercilessly, but would be the first to defend him from anyone else.

Bud left late in the afternoon, promising Tom that he would meet with him at Enterprises first thing the following morning.

Tom spent the rest of the day in his father’s office designing the small reactor that would provide unlimited power to his Timescope. In its present design the Timescope was larger than Tom liked, but it would take more work to make it truly portable. The first step was a small portable power source.

By bedtime Tom had designed a small reactor pack he thought would work.

The next morning, he drove to Swift Enterprises in his silver sports car with his father. Mr. Swift was needed in Washington, and there was a plane waiting for him. Tom dropped his father at the plane, and then drove to the building that housed his Lab.

Inside Tom telephoned Arvid Hanson, the Chief model maker at Swift Enterprises. “I have plans for a new power reactor box, Arvid. It’s for my Timescope. I need it right away. Got some time?”

“Sure, Tom, I’ll be right over to pick up the plans.”

As Tom was putting the telephone receiver down, Bud walked in. “Hi, Tom.”

“Hi, fly boy, I have some changes in mind for the Timescope, changes not dependent on power. Are you still willing to help?”

Bud grinned. “Long as my job is to watch you, and hand you a wrench now and then.”

Tom begin by disassembling the Timescope. “See, Bud, several of these parts can be miniaturize. That will make the Timescope more compact, and more portable.”

The telephone rang and Bud answered. “Hello, Bud Barclay speaking.”

“Listen, if Tom Swift wants his sister back alive, he will give us the plans for his Timescope. We will call tomorrow with instructions.”

Bud hung up and told Tom what had been said.

A minute later as Tom and Bud stood, shocked, Arvid Hanson arrived to pick up the plans for Tom’s reactor box.

“Arvid, the plans are on the drawing board. Someone called and said my sister Sandy has been kidnaped.”

The model maker was equally shocked. “Have you called Harlan Ames?”

Tom slapped his head. “What a fool I’ve been, Harlan will know what to do.”

Tom called the Security Chief. “Hello, Harlan, can you come to my Lab at once?”

“Sure, Tom, I’ll be there in fifteen minutes.”

Bud paced the floor. “If anyone hurts Sandy, I’ll—” He could not go on.

Tom knew his and his father's work often brought danger to their family.

Evil men would do anything to get their hands on the Swift's inventions, but Sandy had nothing to do with Swift Enterprises besides taking up the occasional customer, looking to buy a Swift airplane. She had been taught to fly by her brother, and at seventeen Sandy Swift was an accomplished pilot.

Chapter Three

Sandy Has Been kidnaped

True to his word, Harlan Ames entered the lab in fifteen minutes. “What is up, Tom?”

“Harlan, my sister Sandy has been kidnaped.”

“What?”

“Someone called here and said, if I wanted to get her back alive, I must give them the plans to the Timescope.”

“Have you called home, maybe it’s a hoax?”

“No, but I don’t think it is a hoax,” said the young inventor. “Besides, I don’t want to worry mother.”

“You don’t have to, Tom. Ask to speak with Sandy, if she is there it is a hoax, but if she isn’t we will at least know the truth of it.”

Tom could see the wisdom of the Security Chief’s advice. “Very well, Harlan, I’ll call home.”

Tom dialed his home telephone number. “Hello, Mother, is Sandy there? I need to talk with her.”

“Why no, Tom. Sandy left about two hours ago, to do some shopping.”

Tom replaced the telephone receiver. “Harlan, mother said Sandy went shopping more than two hours ago.”

Bud made a fist and slammed it into his palm. “Then it’s no hoax. We must do something.”

Harlan nodded. “We will, but first the police must be

notified.”

Bud frowned. “We can’t leave it to the police, Tom. The kidnapers said they would call with instructions; we must do something.”

“We will, Bud,” Tom said grimly. “The last time Sandy was in trouble, I put a tiny transmitter in her watch. If she has activated it, we should be able to locate her.”

Harlan smiled. “Let me make that call to the police, and then we’ll see what we can do about finding Sandy.”

While Harlan Ames called the police, Tom removed three radio receivers from a cabinet. “I’ll tune each of these to the frequency of Sandy’s watch. Once we pick up the signal, we can triangulate it”

Arvid Hanson took one of the radios. “If Sandy turned on the transmitter more than two hours ago, will it still be transmitting?”

Tom smiled and nodded. “It has one of my miniature solar battery, so it will run for a year.”

The battery had been charged on Tom’s Outpost in Space by direct sunlight. Though small, smaller than a dime, it had the power to run Sandy’s watch for more than a year.

On Harlan’s return, he accepted a radio. “The police will be on the alert, but can do little without something to go on.”

“Then it’s up to us,” said the young inventor. “Harlan will go west, Arv will go east and Bud and I will go north. When we pick up the signal, and pinpoint Sandy’s location, we will converge on that location.”

It was late afternoon when they left Swift Enterprises. Tom and Bud were not the only ones worried about Sandy, Harlan and Arv were loyal to the Swifts, and that included

the entire Swift family. Tom and Bud picked up the signal a half hour later.

They marked their location on a map and the signal direction before returning to Enterprises. Arv and Harlan came in moments later with their information.

Three sets of eyes watched as Tom drew the lines on the map. Where the three lines crossed would be where Tom's sister, Sandy, was being held.

Shopton, in New York State, was a small town. To the east was Swift Enterprises and a few miles beyond that off the coast was Fearing Island where Tom had launched his first rocket ship. The three-mile-long thumb-shaped island, once scrub grass and sand dunes had become an important Swift installation.

As the last line was drawn on the map, the three lines crossed twenty miles north of Shopton in heavy woods. "It will take too long to drive there, we will take the Flying Lab."

Tom ordered the giant plane be raised from its underground hanger. The large triple-decker plane, could be flown by one pilot. It could land vertically, in a space no larger than the plane.

Tom, Bud, Harlan and Arvid climbed aboard the plane. Tom took the pilot's seat, with Bud in the copilot's seat. Tom gunned the lifter jets and the plane rose straight up into the sky. At just a thousand feet he cut in the rear jets. The plane responded to Tom's hand on the controls, and reached the woods where Sandy was being held in minutes. Tom put the plane down three miles from where the lines on the map had crossed.

It was eight o'clock, but the moon was full in a partly cloudy sky. As the rescuers made their way through heavy

undergrowth, fearing to use flashlights if the kidnapers were watching, the full moon offered little help as the trees made a perfect covering to screen out the moon rays.

It took three hours for the four rescuers to reach where the three lines had intersected on the map. Tom was first to notice the light through the trees. It was coming from a cabin. He and the others crouched at the edge of the woods.

Bud whispered. "Sandy must be in that cabin, but how do we learn where she is without endangering her?"

Tom frowned. "I have an idea that might work."

"What is it?" Harlan asked.

Tom nodded, toward the cabin. "That light might be for a guard. I'll slip over to the window, and see if Sandy is in there."

The other gave slow nods to Tom's plan. Tom avoided the window until he reached the cabin. As he eased along the side toward the window, he bumped into a shovel leaning against the cabin. It made a racket as it fell. Tom froze as someone opened the window and looked outside. Hidden in the darkness beneath the window Tom was invisible to the guard. The man closed the window mumbling, "Must have been those dang raccoons."

Slowly, the young inventor rose and looked in the window. Inside, he saw his sister tied to a chair. The guard sat at a table playing solitaire.

Tom eased away from the cabin, and returned to where Bud, Harlan and Arvid waited. "Sandy is in there, and I saw only one guard."

"Was he armed, Tom?"

"I think not, Harlan. What danger could a girl of seventeen present?"

Bud was for rushing the cabin, but Harlan advised caution. “It will be better to lure the guard out of the cabin. We don’t want to risk harm coming to Sandy.”

Tom grinned. “When I was under the window after knocking over that shovel, I heard him say something about raccoons.”

“Raccoons?”

Tom nodded. “Yes, I think they have been causing trouble.”

Tom’s plan was simple, Bud would make noise to attract the guard outside. Harlan and Arvid would be ready to attack the guard while Tom would enter the cabin to rescue Sandy.

They agreed it was a good plan. Bud went to where the cabin had some trash cans. Harlan and Arvid placed themselves on each side of the cabin door. Tom stood behind the Security Chief, ready to enter the cabin, when they had secured the guard.

Bud bashed one of the trash cans with a tree limb. The guard came running out of the cabin, and was tackled by Harlan and Arvid. Tom slipped in the open door, and rushed to the side of his sister.

“Oh, Tom,” exclaimed Sandy. “I knew you would find me.”

Tom smiled. “Thanks to that transmitter I put in your watch. I don’t know how we would have gotten here without it.”

He untied his sister as Harlan and Bud entered. “That bum won’t talk,” said Harlan. “He is only a cheap thug, so I doubt he knows anything important.”

Bud hugged Sandy. “If that guy hurt you, I’ll bash his

head in,” he said.

“No, he did not mistreat me, Bud. I think, he was ordered not to.”

Tom nodded. “They wanted me to turn over my Timescope to them for your safe return.”

“Let’s get out of here. We’ll take the guard with us and turn him over to the police. Maybe they can learn who he is working for,” said Harlan.

Sandy walked between Tom and Bud. Harlan and Arvid brought up the rear with the sullen guard.

It was near midnight when Tom and the five others boarded the Flying Lab for the return trip to Swift Enterprises. They had rescued Sandy and had her guard as their prisoner. Harlan Ames tried to question the man but with little luck. He remained sullen and defiant, refusing to even give his name.

Tom radioed Swift Enterprises. “We have rescued Sandy, and are returning with a prisoner. Please contact the police and have him picked up for kidnaping.”

“Will do, Tom, but your mother has called, she is worried about Sandy, and why she has not come home.”

“I’ll call home soon as we land,” he answered. In minutes, Tom sighted the runway lights of Swift Enterprises. He put the giant plane down gently as a mother puts down a sleeping baby. He and Bud were the last to leave the plane with Sandy. Harlan Ames took the prisoner to the Security Office to await the police.

The three young people went to Tom’s apartment in the main Lab building. Tom telephoned home while Sandy cleaned up a little. “Hello, Mother, Sandy is with Bud and me.”

“Oh, Tom, I’ve been so worried. Where has she been?”

“Well, you can stop worrying now. We will be home in half an hour,” Tom answered.

After completing the telephone call, Tom realized how tired he was, and knew Bud and Sandy were too. “Bud, why don’t you come home with Sandy and me? We can sleep late, and come back to Swift Enterprises together.”

“That would be great, Tom.”

The trio rode to the Swift house in Bud’s red convertible. When they entered the house, Mrs. Swift had hot chocolate for them.

“Go straight to bed after you have your hot chocolate. You can tell me all about it in the morning.”

Chapter Four

Rescued

The next morning, over a late breakfast with Mrs. Swift, Tom and Bud, Sandy told her story.

“Well, my plan was to go shopping. I drove my car into Shopton, and was window shopping when two men approached me. They forced me into a car, and drove me to that cabin. The man with the goatee left, but the other man stayed to guard me.”

Tom looked concerned. “Was he the man we caught?”

Sandy nodded. “He wasn’t very nice, but he did not hurt me.”

Bud, with an angry retort, stated, “If he had, he would be lucky to have reached the police without an accident.”

Tom shook his head. “Bud, you know we couldn’t do something like that. The police will give him what he deserves.”

Bud looked contrite. “You’re right, Tom, but when, I think of them kidnaping Sandy, my blood boils.”

“Whomever Goatee is, he is after my Timescope and will stop at nothing to get it.”

“What do you plan to do now?”

Tom grinned. “Perfect the Timescope, learn who Goatee is and foil whatever he is up to.”

“I’m with you, Genius Boy. Besides, as far as our past villains go, Goatee is a piker.”

“Maybe so, fly boy, but a dangerous one,” said Tom.

“Don’t forget he was behind Sandy’s kidnaping.”

Bud frowned. “I haven’t forgotten, but how can we stop someone even the police can’t find.”

“The same way we foiled villains in the past, by outsmarting them,” said Tom.

Mrs. Swift put her hand on Tom’s arm. “Tom, I want you to take every precaution. Sandy was fortunate to have you as a brother, but if you are kidnaped who will rescue you and Bud?”

Tom smiled. “I will be careful, Mother. Have you had any word from father, when will he be back from Washington D. C.?”

“No, but he said he might be gone at least a week.”

Tom stood. “Come on, fly boy. We need to get to Enterprises. How can, I ask others to be on time if I’m not.”

Tom Swift and Bud Barclay drove to Swift Enterprises, in Bud’s red convertible. After clearing the main gate, Bud parked at Tom’s Lab. The boys hurried inside, and as Tom unlocked his Lab he said, “With Sandy’s kidnaping, work on my Timescope has fallen behind. Arvid will need another day to build the case for the atomic power pack.”

“You can still work on the Timescope, to make it more portable can’t you?”

Tom nodded. “Yes, but any more delays will push my deadline back.”

Bud frowned. “Deadline? I did not know you had one.”

“Well, it has been top secret, known only to Dad and me. We want to test the Timescope down in the Yucatan.”

“Wow,” exclaimed Bud. “You mentioned the Yucatan awhile back, but dense as I am, it did not register.”

“Don’t worry, Buddy boy, I would not think of leaving you out of any adventure the Swifts undertake.”

“Is that why your father is in Washington?”

“Yes,” Tom said. “It’s still top secret so keep it quiet.”

Bud grinned. “You know me, Tom. The ‘Sphinx’ is my middle name.”

“That is good to hear. Now let’s get to work,” said Tom.

Tom began work on his Timescope and lost all sense of time as he reduced the size of the machine’s components. Bud gave what help, he could, but most of what his pal was doing was over his head.

It was not until they heard a baritone singing *Home on the Range*, that they knew it was lunch time. Chow Winkler wheeled in a lunch cart loaded with hamburgers, French fries and milk shakes. “I knew you, Buckaroos would forget to eat if I did not put it under your noses.”

Bud grinned. “I can smell food, but that shirt is blinding me.”

Chow’s chest expanded. “This little purple and orange number is an eye catcher.”

Tom and Bud dug into the lunch. The roly-poly former range cook enjoyed serving the boys. He liked nothing better than to see Tom and Bud enjoying his food, even if he had to take some ribbing from Bud Barclay.

After lunch, Tom made progress reducing his Timescope to a more portable model. Late in the afternoon Arvid Hanson reported that the case for the atomic power cells, that would power the Timescope, would be ready the following day.

Bud frowned. “You will have the case tomorrow, but what about the atomic power cells?”

“I have already ordered them from the Citadel, and they are being flown to Swift Enterprises. They should be here tomorrow, too,” said Tom.

The Citadel was an atomic power plant the Swifts built in the Southwest. It was a top secret installation, guarded by drone planes. Rising out of the New Mexico desert, there is nothing but open country for miles in any direction.

At last, Tom put down his screwdriver. “I think we have done all we can today, Bud. Let’s knock off.”

Bud grinned. “I’m all for that. You don’t know how tiring it is watching you work.”

Tom laughed. “As a Swift test pilot you earn your keep, fly boy.”

Tom locked the Lab, and the boys headed out. Hundreds of Swift workers were also leaving the plant, but were being replaced by the night shift. Tom viewed the scene with pride. Swift Enterprises had been built by his father and Ned Newton and was the most prosperous business in Shopton.

Bud dropped Tom at his house. “Bud, why don’t you come in and have dinner, I’m sure Sandy won’t mind.”

Sandy and Mrs. Swift welcomed the boy’s home. Mrs. Swift had prepared her famous pot-roast dinner. “I hope your father comes home soon.”

Tom smiled. “Don’t worry, Mother, Dad can take care of himself.”

Mrs. Swift smiled. “I am well aware that your father has a knack of getting out of trouble. But, I fear that one day, the odds may catch up to him... or you.”

Bud with his mouth full of pot-roast said, “Tom, has me to keep him out of trouble, Mrs. Swift.”

Sandy laughed. “If you fight his enemies the way you

attack Mother's pot-roast I doubt we need to worry."

Bud looked contrite. "Between your Mother's cooking and Chow's, it's hard to pick a winner."

The next morning Tom was having breakfast when the doorbell rang. Sandy answered it, and Bud rushed in with a newspaper. "Tom, you won't believe this."

Bud thrust the newspaper in front of the young inventor. Tom read the headline. "Oh no, this article is terrible."

Tom Swift Invents Time Machine

Tom Swift, Shopton's own teenage inventor, has now gone too far. It is this reporter's belief that he has. Most top scientist believe as I do, that interfering with the past would be dangerous for the present. At eighteen Tom, like his father, has done some remarkable things, but he must not be allowed to tamper with time.

Tom ran a hand through his close-cropped hair. "How could he get such a story? Only four people know of it; Dad, me, you and Chow."

Bud shook his head. "You know none of us would say anything."

Suddenly Tom snapped his fingers. "Maybe not intentionally, but I'll bet we are all guilty."

"What do you mean, Tom?"

"Where was the one place we freely talked about the Timescope?"

Bud frowned. "I suppose it would be in your lab at Swift Enterprises."

Tom nodded. "Give a candy cigar to Bud Barclay for

answering the sixty-four-thousand-dollar question.”

Bud’s eyes widened. “You mean your lab is bugged?”

Tom nodded. “It’s the only answer that makes sense. That spy Jerry Colson must have bugged the lab.”

Bud glared. “That dirty rat. What are you going to do about this article and the reporter that wrote it?”

“What can I do? He has free speech on his side. The article is full of misinformation, but unless the paper is willing to publish a retraction, little more can be done.”

Sandy had picked up the newspaper, and she was angry. “Tom, you must demand a retraction at once.”

Tom looked grim. “I’m afraid if I do, they will want to know more about the Timescope. Information I don’t want to give out.”

Bud frowned. “Do you think Goatee in behind that article, Tom?”

“Who else has been after my Timescope? Maybe failing to get it, he decided to have public opinion stop me.”

Sandy angrily. “I think it’s a lousy trick. The public should know you would do nothing to endanger anyone.”

Tom grinned. “Perhaps they do, but when the newspaper prints something, the public believes it to be true.”

Tom was more upset by the newspaper story than he wanted to admit. It placed a shadow over Swift Enterprises and could damage the Swift name. It made no difference that the story was one-hundred percent false—the public would believe it because it appeared to have scientific endorsement despite not naming any.

Tom and Bud drove to Swift Enterprises where Bud dropped Tom at his lab while he drove to the Swift Airfield.

A new jet plane design had been delivered from Swift Construction Company, and Bud was to test pilot it. He climbed into the cockpit, and signaled the tower he was ready for takeoff. The plane ran down the runway and soared into the sky.

Chapter Five

Mr. Swift Returns from Washington

Tom was opening the lab, when Arvid Hanson arrived with the Tomasite case to house the atomic cells that were coming from the Citadel. “Thanks, Arvid, it’s just what I wanted.”

“No problem, Tom. That Tomasite is great to work with.”

Tom called Harlan Ames to tell him about the bugged lab. It took only half an hour to debug the lab.

High above against the blue sky, Bud sent the small jet into a series of spins. As he came out of the last spin, he grinned and said, “Now, to give this baby the ultimate test.”

He pulled back on the controls to send the plane skyward. When he reached thirty-thousand feet, he put the plan into a dive.

The wind roared as the plane hurled toward the ground. At twenty-thousand feet Bud pulled back on the controls, but they would not move. Real fear raced through the mind of the young aviator. With the skill of a much older, and experienced pilot, Bud did not panic. At ten-thousand feet, believing the plane to be hopeless, he bailed out. The jet went into a spin and crashed in the woods north of Shopton. As he drifted toward the ground, he sadly shook his head; no pilot liked to lose a plane.

As Bud hit the ground inside Swift Enterprises, the plane from the Citadel landed at Swift Enterprises. The atomic power cells were unloaded, and taken to Tom’s lab. Tom had

the cells put in a room lined with Tomasite. "It will be safer to work with them in there," he said.

The special room had double doors, and was shielded with Tomasite, a special plastic impervious to atomic radiation. The outer door could not be opened unless the inner door was closed. Tom could work safely in there in a radiation proof suit, made also of Tomasite.

Bud was picked up by a Swift Enterprises' Jeep, and stopped off at Tom's lab. "Hi, fly boy, how did your test flight go?"

Bud ran a hand through his black hair. "It didn't, Tom. The controls froze as I was diving from thirty-thousand feet."

"Too bad, but at least you are safe," Tom said.

Bud nodded. "I'll write my report for Swift Construction later, but when I saw that plane from the Citadel, I thought you might need help with those atomic energy cells."

Tom grinned. "Well, it is a two man job. Get into your radiation suit, and we will unpack the cells and put them in the Tomasite case Arvid built."

The two boys looked like space men in their radiation suits. Tom opened the outer door closing it behind them, before he opened the inner door into the radiation proof room. The boys unpacked the cells and transferred them to Arvid's case. With the cells safely contained in the Tomasite case, they carried it out to the lab.

They doffed the radiation suits. "With these power cells, I should have the power needed to run my Timescope."

Bud smiled. "Wow! Getting to view the past will be amazing."

"Yes, we can watch the building of the pyramid, or the

sinking of the Titanic." Tom grinned and added, "If we wanted to go to Egypt or the North Atlantic."

They worked on the Timescope late into the afternoon, stopping only to eat the lunch Chow Winkler wheeled in. Later, Bud left to write his report on the plane and what caused it to crash. The report would allow the Swift Construction company to fix the problem or to change the design.

As Tom was about to leave the lab, Mr. Swift entered. "Dad," Tom exclaimed. "You're back. When did you arrive?"

Mr. Swift feeling tired looked at his son sadly. "My plane landed ten minutes ago. I have bad news, Tom. The Mexican Government has refused, to allow you to use your Timescope in the Yucatan."

"What!" cried Tom.

Mr. Swift nodded. "It was all set. Then just as I was leaving they withdrew their support."

"But, why?" Tom asked. "They have never refused before."

"Tom, I believe it was because of that article in the newspaper."

"But, Dad, that article was in a local newspaper. How did you see it in Washington?"

Mr. Swift grimaced. "The wire services picked it up, so it has been printed nationwide."

Tom ran a hand through his blond crewcut. "It looks as if our unknown enemy, Goatee, has won another round."

Mr. Swift nodded. "Maybe he is no longer an unknown."

Tom gasped in surprise. "What do you mean, Dad?"

“Have you ever heard of a scientist named Ambrose Tucker?”

Tom scratched his head. “I have heard the name. Wasn’t he the scientist blacklisted for plagiarizing another scientist’s work?”

Mr. Swift took out his pipe and filled it with tobacco. “Yes, he has a reputation for that and much more.”

“How do you know he is Goatee?”

“I don’t know for sure, Tom, but Tucker came to the meeting uninvited and denounced your Timescope. And, he does have a goatee.”

Tom frowned. “With his reputation, why would they even listen to him?”

Mr. Swift shook his head. “I don’t think they would have, if not for that newspaper article.”

“What do you plan to do now, Dad?”

Mr. Swift gave a weak smile. “Go home, see Sandy and your mother. Then sleep. I know you can run Swift Enterprises, Tom, so it will be in good hands.”

Tom nodded and smiled at his famous father. “Thanks for your trust, Dad. I won’t let you down.”

Mr. Swift smiled. “You never have, Son.”

After his father had left the lab, Tom thought about what his father had learned in Washington. He called Harlan Ames and told him about the scientist, Ambrose Tucker.

“I’ll get right on it, Tom.”

“Thanks, Harlan, if he is behind our troubles, any information will be useful.”

“Tom, the only crime was Sandy’s kidnaping, and we

may not be able to prove Tucker was behind it.”

“I know, Harlan, but given enough rope Ambrose Tucker may give himself away.”

“Okay, Tom, I should have something by tomorrow afternoon.”

Tom locked his lab and went home. His Timescope was almost ready for testing. But, with the Yucatan closed to him, he would need to find another place to use the Timescope.

The young inventor was not worried about the rogue scientist; he had fought both spies and criminals. Each invention attracted its share of villains.

Tom arrived home in time for dinner. His mother’s fried chicken and mashed potatoes gave new life to his tired body. Later, he told his father about calling the Security Chief. “Harlan said we can’t prove Tucker was behind Sandy’s kidnaping.”

The next day, as Tom drove to Swift Enterprises, the sky was full of dark clouds. It began to rain as Tom drove through the gate of Enterprises. He ran inside the lab building, and took the elevator to the top floor where father and son shared a lab. Tom went into the apartment off the lab to change into dry clothes. After changing, he hung his wet clothes to dry.

Tom was making tea when Bud Barclay entered. “I thought I would find you in here when the lab door was unlocked. All test flights have been canceled due to the rain.”

While the boys drank hot tea, Tom filled Bud in on what his father learned in Washington. “The Mexican Government has withdrawn permission to use my Timescope in the Yucatan.”

Bud snarled. "That is outrageous. Why would they do that?"

"Because of a rogue scientist named Ambrose Tucker. He may be Goatee. He showed up at Dad's meeting and denounced my Timescope."

Bud frowned. "Has he been arrested?"

Tom shook his head. "No, we can't prove he was behind Sandy's kidnaping, and he has broken no other laws."

"Give me five-minutes with him. I will make him talk," Bud said angrily.

Tom grinned. "I applaud your enthusiasm, but if we do it that way, we will be no better than he."

"You're right, Tom, but it makes me so angry when it looks as if that rat will get away with kidnaping Sandy."

"Ambrose Tucker is the least of my worries. With the Yucatan off limits, I must find another place to use my Timescope."

"Have you tested it yet with the new atomic power cells?"

"No, I will do that tomorrow, but I had hoped there would be no delay between testing and leaving for the Yucatan."

"How do you plan to test your Timescope?"

Tom grinned. "What event happened right here in my lab several days ago."

Bud scratched his head. "You don't mean Jerry Colson's break in of the lab, do you?"

"That is exactly what I mean. We know the date and the time give or take an hour or two. If my Timescope works as it should, we can watch him as he photographs the plans and

bugs my lab.”

“Wow,” Bud exclaimed. “When can we start?”

Tom laughed. “Hold on, fly boy. I told Harlan Ames and Arvid Hanson about the test, and they want to be here to witness the Timescope in action.”

Tom wheeled the Timescope to where it would have the best view of the lab. He then made a last minute check of the Timescope to insure it was ready for the test, he had just finished when the door opened. Harlan Ames and Arvid Hanson entered followed by Chow Winkler.

Chow was pushing a cart loaded with Range burgers and French fries. There was soda for the boys with coffee for the men. “I heard about your little shindig, and thought some food might cheer you up.”

Chapter Six

Tom Tests His Timescope

Tom and Bud laughed. “Chow, if those are rattlesnake burgers, you can keep them,” Bud said.

Chow looked hurt. “Now, Buddy boy, these are Angus beef burgers, but if you don’t want yours, I’ll gladly eat it for you.”

Bud’s face fell. “I’m only kidding, Chow. You know I like your cooking.”

Chow grinned. “Buddy boy, you ain’t as hard to please as a bunch of hungry cowboys.”

Tom turned on the Timescope. “I have set it to the date and approximate time of the burglary.”

As the dark screen brightened, a picture of the lab came into focus. The lights in the lab were never turned off completely, only dimmed to a twilight.

They ate Chow’s burgers as they watched the screen. Tom could see disappointment on the faces as nothing was showing on the Timescope’s screen but the empty lab.

Suddenly a shadow appeared, as they watched it moved to the table where, Tom had left some early plans for the Timescope. They watched as Jerry Colson photographed the Timescope, knowing the tuner was in the safe. He then placed bugs where Harlan Ames had found them. Then the spy appeared to walk toward the Timescope as he left the lab.

Tom turned off the Timescope.

Bud slapped his pal on the back. “Another winner, Genius boy!”

Harlan shook his head. “Tom, if I did not know you, I would have a hard time believing what you just showed us.”

Bud and Arvid were also amazed and Chow shook his head. “Tom, that time-thing is your greatest invention yet.”

“Thanks, Chow, but I don’t know about that.”

“Are you kidding, Tom?” asked Harlan Ames. “Your Timescope will be a boon to police work. They will be able to watch a crime as it takes place hours, days or even years after it was committed.”

“Think what mysteries it will uncover,” said Arvid.

Tom glowed with pride. “Swift Enterprises will market the Timescope after I have tested it on something besides the lab break in.”

When Tom, Bud and Chow were alone, after the other two men have left, the westerner asked, “Why don’t you use your Timescope to view the fall of the Alamo, Tom?”

“Sorry, Chow, but that would require a trip to the Alamo in Texas. I’m still hoping, Dad can get Mexico to allow us to go to the Yucatan. Dad said he would call an old friend in Mexico City. Professor Valdez heads the Mexican University Anthropology Department.”

“Well, bless my Texas hide, Tom, don’t you go off and leave me.”

Tom said. “Chow, what would we eat without you along?”

Bud grinned. “Cactus salad, and rattlesnake stew here we come.”

The overweight chuck wagon cook nodded at Bud. “Buddy boy, you ain’t seen nothing yet.”

Bud grimaced. “That’s what, I fear, Chow. By the way, Tom. Sandy would like me to stop by this evening.”

Bud and Chow left Tom in the lab. Tom sat at his desk and, as was his habit, let his imagination wander. He was so engrossed that at first he did not hear the telephone ringing. He grabbed it on its fifth ring. “Hello, Tom Swift speaking.”

“Tom, I’m Principal Tyler at Shopton High.”

Tom grinned. “Yes sir, what can I do for you, Principal Tyler?”

“Tom, I hate to impose on you on such short notice, but would you be willing to speak to our science classes tomorrow afternoon?”

Tom hesitated. “That does not give me much time. May, I ask why such short notice?”

“Well, Tom, I’m embarrassed to tell you, but our planned speaker did not work out.”

“Can you tell me who that was? I would hate to upstage a fellow scientist.”

“Well, it’s no secret our first speaker was Ambrose Tucker. I know he has had some bad press, but he is a noted scientist although a controversial one.”

Tom took a deep breath. “Principal Tyler, it would be an honor to speak to your science classes.”

“Tom, that is wonderful. You are not much older than our students, but are world famous. They will be thrilled.”

When Tom arrived home, he told his family and Bud about Principal Tyler’s telephone call. “He, convinced me to do it,” said Tom, “when I learned Ambrose Tucker had been

set to speak, but changed his mind.”

Mr. Swift drew on his pipe. “Tom, I think you are doing the right thing. We need more young people interested in science. What say, we all go with you to Shopton High?”

Tom smiled. “Dad that would be great.”

Mrs. Swift beamed. “Tom, I am so proud of you.”

Sandy and Bud nodded. “Pal, you’re sure to make a splash with those students.”

“Just so I don’t end with egg on my face, I’m not a public speaker.”

Mr. Swift smiled. “Don’t worry about that; you are my second in command at Swift Enterprises. That should be enough to get you by.”

Sandy smiled at her famous brother. “Tom, aren’t you forgetting something?”

Tom frowned. “What do you mean, Sis, what have I forgotten?”

Sandy shook her pretty blond head. “It’s nice for us to go listen to your speech, but what about Phyl?”

Tom slapped his head. “Phyl, how could I have forgotten her?”

Sandy laughed. “My brother is a real egghead.”

Tom telephoned Phyl and told her about his coming speech at Shopton High. She was just as thrilled as Sandy. It was decided Mr. and Mrs. Swift would take one car while the four young people would go in Bud’s red convertible. If they wanted to stop for soda’s later they could.

The next day, Tom worked in his lab. Tom’s mind was never at rest, despite the many inventions he had created there were countless others in his head, on the drafting board

and those being built at Swift Construction Company.

After a fine lunch prepared by Chow Winkler, Tom went into his private apartment next to his lab to get ready for his trip to Shopton High. He did not have a case of nerves, but a hot shower made him feel better. He dressed in a suit and tie. As he waited for Bud and the girls he thumbed through a science magazine.

The telephone rang and Tom answered it. “Tom, Principal Tyler speaking. I wanted to warn you. Ambrose Tucker decided he wanted to speak after all. I told him we had made other arrangements, and Tom Swift would be our speaker. He flew into a rage. I fear he might disrupt your speech.”

Chapter Seven

Tom Makes a Speech

“Don’t worry, Principal Tyler. Ambrose Tucker does not bother me. I do believe my reputation will stand any attack he may make.”

Bud, with Sandy and Phyl, picked Tom up at Swift Enterprises. “Tom, your parents will meet with us at Shopton High.”

Tom sat on the dais, and looked at the students in the auditorium, most no older than he. His family was in the first row. There was no sign of the rogue scientist, Ambrose Tucker. Tom had told Bud and the girls about the telephone call from Principal Tyler. Bud was outraged while Sandy and Phyl tried to defuse his anger.

Principal Tyler walked onto the stage. He tapped the microphone and received a loud hum in response. “Students, faculty members and honored guest, I am pleased to introduce Tom Swift, Jr., as our guest speaker. Tom, please stand and take over the microphone.”

Tom stood, and shook hands with Principal Tyler. The principal left the stage to Tom.

“I have been asked to speak to you of science, but I cannot without mentioning the great scientists of the past. Leonardo de Vinci, Newton and Galileo, all great thinkers before their time. Newton and Galileo made discoveries of nature and space. Leonardo de Vinci designed many inventions we have today, but were impossible in his day.

Why did a great inventor like Leonardo de Vinci fail? Because he did not have the foundation to build on.

“In other words, technology must have a foundation. The gas engine made the car possible. That made the airplane possible which led to developing the rocket.

“I did not invent the airplane, but I did design and build the Flying Lab. I did not invent the submarine, but I did design and build the Jetmarine and the Diving Sea-Copter. My rocket, the Star Spear, made possible the building of my space station.

“The human mind can do so much, but without that which came before, great ideas will remain undiscovered.

“Science fiction writers envisioned space travel before the rocket was invented. Jules Verne was such a far thinking writer, he envisioned space travel, submarines and flying machines.

“H.G. wells was another with his novel of The Time Machine, but some inventions are impractical. My Timescope will not travel into the past or the future, it will only peer into the past. The Timescope was based on my earlier invention the Electronic Retroscope.

“So in conclusion it is better to redesign what is already out than to discover something completely new. Most important discoveries are made by accident anyway.”

Suddenly, a goateed man leapt up. “Tom Swift, you are a fraud and a thief.” He spoke with an accent.

There were gasps from the students and faculty members as heads turned to see who had spoken. Tom saw a heavy set man with a goatee. The man pushed his way past people in his row until he stood in the aisle.

“I, Ambrose Tucker, charge Tom Swift with stealing my

Time-machine.”

Bud stood, and before Sandy or Mr. Swift could stop him, he rushed at the rogue scientist. “You are crazy, Ambrose Tucker. Tom Swift does not have to steal from goof-balls like you.”

Tucker sneered at Bud. “My Time-machine will make Tom Swift’s Timescope obsolete.”

Bud balled his fist. “We know you were behind the kidnaping of Sandy Swift.”

Ambrose laughed. “Prove it, Barclay.”

Mr. Swift arrived with Principal Tyler. “Bud, leave him to the police, they have been called.”

Ambrose sneered. “Like father, like son. You think you can steal ideas and make them yours, but I’ll expose you for what you are.”

“Ambrose Tucker, your outrageous conduct is why we cancelled you. The Swift’s are beyond reproach,” said the principal.

Those in the audience close enough to overhear Ambrose Tucker started to chant, “Swifts, Swifts.” giving their support to Tom and his Dad.

The rogue scientist became embarrassed as the chanting grew in volume. He shook a finger at Mr. Swift then turned and fled the auditorium.

Tom, still on stage, held up his hands for silence. “Thank you for standing by the Swifts.”

He took a deep breath. “Ambrose Tucker may be a scientist, but he has never published anything new. As for his Time-machine, it will never work. I say this as a scientist, time travel is impossible. There is only one way into the future, and that is one day at a time.”

Tom walked off stage with his head held high. The auditorium erupted in applause. Sandy and Mrs. Swift clapped loudest of all.

He was met backstage by his parents, Bud Barclay, Sandy and Phyl. “Son, you made an impression on those students, that a man like Ambrose Tucker can’t touch.”

“I hope you are right, Dad. Even one student following Ambrose Tucker will be a tragedy.”

“Cheer up, Genius boy, I don’t know about you, but Sandy, Phyl and I could use a hamburger. What say we stop at the malt shop on the way home?”

Mr. and Mrs. Swift laughed. “You kids have a good time... your mother and I will see you at home.”

Tom said goodbye to Principal Tyler. The principal shook his head. “I’m sorry about what happened. We were looking for a speaker, and his name was on a list. When he learned he would be speaking at a high school, he declined.”

Tom smiled. “Then you called me.”

Principal Tyler nodded. “When he decided to speak after all, I called you. When I informed him we had engaged you, Tom Swift, he went into an absolute rage.”

Tom nodded. “It’s obvious the man is unhinged.”

“Yes, he has a brilliant mind, but he inherited ten-million five-years ago, but it only made him more eccentric. He really believes he can make a working time-machine, but as you pointed out it is only a pipe dream.”

Tom left Principal Tyler to find Bud and the girls. He was once more inundated with praise for his speech. Sandy and Phyl were both proud of him. Bud slapped him on the back. “Tom Swift, boy genius, public speaker and nice guy.”

Tom grinned. “Cut it out, all this praise will go to my

head.”

Bud laughed. “How can it? I doubt there is any room up there for a little praise.”

Sandy frowned. “Phyl, I think the boys have forgotten us.”

Phyl nodded. “I thought we were going for hamburgers, but maybe I was mistaken.”

Tom and Bud looked at one another. “Oh, oh,” Tom said. “I believe the girls are becoming restless. We had better feed them before they turn on us.”

Bud grinned. “And me without my whip and chair.”

Sandy stamped her foot. “Bud Barclay, that is not funny.”

Bud hung his head. “Sorry, Sandy. You know that was only a bad joke, don’t you?”

Tom laughed. “Let’s go while fly boy has his foot in his mouth.”

When they arrived at the malt shop, the place was crowded with young people from Shopton High. Tom, Bud and the girls were soon the center of attention. Bud ordered hamburgers and fries with milk shakes for Tom, Sandy, Phyl and himself.

A boy about Tom’s age came over to his table. “Tom, in your speech you said a time-machine was impossible. Why could someone not invent one someday?”

“Well no proof has ever been found by anyone that someone from the future has ever been to the past or present. That is because the future has not happened yet. As for the past there are too many paradoxes to consider.”

“Like what?”

“Like could a human live through a time trip, if such a trip was possible or would such a trip endanger the present? There are many more, but I think you get the idea.”

“What about your new Timescope? Will that endanger the present?”

Tom shook his head. “No, because the viewer will not be in the past. It will be like watching any other live television program.”

After, the boy left. “Why is time so difficult for people to understand?”

“I don’t even understand my alarm clock.” Bud said.

Sandy laughed. “That must be why you are never on time.”

They dropped Phyl at her house before Bud dropped Tom and Sandy at theirs.

Mr. Swift called to Tom as he and Sandy entered the house. “Tom, may I speak with you?”

“Hi, Dad, what’s up?”

Mr. Swift smiled. “I have some good news and some bad.”

“What is the good news?”

“The Mexican Government has decided to allow you to take your Timescope to the Yucatan.”

“That is wonderful news,” Tom said.

Tom was delighted at the news, but remembered his father had said something about bad news too. “Okay, Dad, what is the bad news?”

“Remember, Tom, it was not easy to change their minds.”

Tom nodded. "I understand."

"The condition for you being allowed to go to the Yucatan is that you have a man from their Antiquities Department accompany you."

"I suppose they want to make sure we don't disturb or remove any artifacts," said Tom.

Mr. Swift frowned. "That is not all, Tom. They want you to take some Mexican policemen along."

Chapter Eight

In the Jungle of The Yucatan

Later, Tom thought about what his father had said as he was getting ready for bed. It would take a week to get everything ready for the Yucatan trip, load everything into the Flying Lab, and fly to Mexico City to pick up the Antiquities Professor as well as the policemen.

Despite the problems caused by having the professor looking over his shoulder, and the police ready to arrest him at the least infraction, Tom was eager to get underway.

The next day at Swift Enterprises, Tom filled Bud in on the new developments. “We can leave in a week barring anymore attempts by Ambrose Tucker and his ilk.”

Bud grinned. “That’s great, but who is the professor assigned to watch over us?”

Tom shrugged. “I don’t know. I guess we will learn that when we get to Mexico City.”

Bud shook his head. “I can’t say I like the thought of Mexican Police dogging our footsteps.”

“I don’t either, fly boy, but they will be there if there is trouble. Some of those natives in the Yucatan fear strangers.”

Bud nodded. “All I remember of our last trip down there was the heat, and that jungle did nothing to elevate it.”

While Bud supervised the gathering of supplies and the loading of the Flying Lab, Tom worked on his Timescope.

A week is a short period when you could use a month, but seven days after Tom had heard the news from his father everything was ready for the Yucatan trip.

The huge Flying Lab was raised from its underground hanger. The Swift family was on hand to see the boys off, Mr. Swift, Mrs. Swift and Sandy along with Ned Newton, the lifelong friend of Mr. Swift, and his daughter Phyl Newton.

Harlan Ames, Arvid Hanson and Chow Winkler would accompany Tom and Bud. Despite being one of the world's largest planes, the Flying Lab did not need a large crew; the plane could almost fly itself. Tom took the controls while Bud sat in the copilot's seat. Tom fired the jet lifters and the mighty ship rose straight up into the air. When he reached thirty-thousand feet Tom switched to forward flight, and the giant plane headed south at the speed of sound.

An hour later, Tom set the auto-pilot when Chow served lunch. To everyone's delight, he served good old American hamburgers with fries and milk shakes.

Bud grinned. "Chow, I suppose there are no strange foods in the stratosphere for you to cook up."

Chow winked at Tom. "I could cook up some rainbow stew, but I thought all that color might not agree with you, Buddy boy."

Tom and the others laughed as Bud grinned. "All right, Chow. I guess you got me there."

Tom regained the pilot's seat, and switched off the auto-pilot as the flying Lab approached Mexico City. He radioed the airport for clearance to land.

Tom slowed the plane as he received instructions from the airport. He switched to the jet lifters and descended,

making a three-point landing. Mexican customs came aboard, but soon cleared the plane and crew to enter Mexico.

A black limousine entered the airport and came to a stop beside the Flying Lab. Tom and Bud were expecting the appointee of Professor Eduardo Gonzales from the university who was to oversee their trip to the Yucatan. A man of middle age got out of the car. He was dressed in a gray suit and carried a briefcase. He nodded at the boys.

“I am Eduardo Gonzales. May I know which of you is Tom Swift, Jr.?”

Tom extended his hand. “I’m Tom Swift, Jr.”

Eduardo shook hands with the young inventor. “I have known your father for many years. I am glad to finally meet his son.”

Tom smiled. “Dad has spoken of you often, Mr. Gonzales, but I had no idea it would be you coming with us to the Yucatan Peninsula.”

“Eduardo please, and it was a last minute decision to send me instead of my assistant.”

The professor looked up at the Sky Queen. “So this is the famous Flying Lab I have heard so much about. When will we be leaving?”

“We are waiting for Captain Fernando Rivera of the Federal Police. He and some policemen will be going with us.”

Eduardo smiled. “It is merely a formality. I am here to record the trip for the university. Captain Fernando Rivera to keep it legal. I am sure neither of us wish to interfere with your work.”

Bud pointed at a van that had just entered the airport.

“This must be the police now.”

Bud was correct, as the van stopped next to the Flying Lab. Captain Fernando Rivera was about thirty with thick black hair and a well groomed mustache. The back door of the van opened and six armed police got out.

Captain Fernando Rivera shook hands with Tom and Bud. “My orders are to see that the natives of the Yucatan are not exploited, and to protect any artifacts found.”

Tom nodded. “We are not after artifacts, Captain Rivera. When we were here last, we uncovered a temple with some strange symbols on it. I wish to use my Timescope to investigate them.”

Once everyone was aboard, and assigned berths, Tom fired the jet lifters and sent the Sky Queen into the stratosphere. “Yucatan here, we come,” said Bud.

The Yucatan Peninsula in southeastern Mexico separates the Caribbean Sea from the Gulf of Mexico. It contains thick jungles, ancient Mayan Temples and jaguars. The Indians native to the Yucatan avoid contact with outsiders.

As the Sky Queen flew toward the Yucatan Peninsula, Tom received a radio call from his father. “Hello, Dad. I hope you are not calling with bad news.”

“That depends, Tom. I just learned from the police that Ambrose Tucker chartered a plane, his flight plan was to the Yucatan.”

Tom frowned. “That is bad news, Dad. I’ll tell Captain Rivera. Maybe Ambrose will break some Mexican law.”

“Take care, Tom, we don’t know what Ambrose Tucker is up to,” Mr. Swift said signing off.

“Take over, fly boy, I need to speak with Captain Rivera.”

Tom left the cockpit and found Chow serving coffee to the Professor and the Captain. Tom repeated his conversation with his father.

“I am sorry, but until he breaks the laws of Mexico there is nothing I can do.”

Tom nodded. “He was behind the kidnapping of my sister, so I am sure he won’t stop there. If he is going to the Yucatan there must be a reason.”

Professor Gonzales frowned. “Tom, do you think he will interfere with your Timescope experiments?”

“All I know, Professor, is that Ambrose Tucker has kidnaped my sister to stop me, and when that failed, he attacked my reputation. There can be no other reason for him to follow us to the Yucatan.”

The Captain took a sip of his coffee. “Don’t worry, Tom, you have the backing of the Mexican Police. If this man does anything criminal, my men and I will arrest him. He will find our prisons, unlike those in your country, a thing to be feared.”

When Tom returned to the cockpit, he learned they were over the Yucatan Jungle. He had decided to bypass the cities and fly direct to where they had uncovered a Mayan temple the last time they had been to the Yucatan.

Tom cut in the jet lifters and lowered the Sky Queen a mile from the Indian village. He did not want to upset the superstitious Indians who rarely if ever saw an airplane. On their last trip the Indians had mistaken them for Gods.

It was decided that only a small party should approach the village. Tom picked Bud and Professor Eduardo Gonzales to accompany him, but Captain Fernando Rivera insisted on going with the advance party.

Chow, disappointed at not going with Tom to the Indian village, decided to explore and gather some native plants for dinner. As he wandered about, Chow got farther and farther from the Flying Lab. He found the jungle a fascinating place forgetting the dangers.

Meanwhile, Tom and his party had arrived at the village. The Chief decked out in a robe made of bright colored bird feathers welcomed them, the Witchdoctor not so much.

Tom explained why they had returned. “Chief, we are friends, and do not plan to disturb your ancient temples. I only want to use my invention to examine the strange symbols carved in stone on the temple walls.”

The Chief nodded. “It is good, Tom Swift is friend of the Mayan people.”

Tom smiled. “You are a great and wise Chief. We will give your temples both care and respect.”

The Chief led Tom and the others to the feast, with Tom seated on the Chief’s right in a place of honor. Indian women served the food. There was roast wild pig and fresh fish caught in the nearby river.

Chow suddenly found that he was surrounded by Indians. The Indians were about to flee when a white man ordered them to take Chow prisoner. Chow was tied and led through the jungle by two husky Indians to the camp of his captor. The roly-poly chef was put in a hut.

In the dark hut, Chow tried to free his hands, but the rawhide strips would not give. He had left the Sky Queen without telling Harlan or Arvid where he was going. The former chuck-wagon cook knew Tom and the others would not rest until he was rescued.

Chapter Nine

Chow is Missing

In the Indian village, the Chief ordered a feast in honor of their guest. Professor Gonzales told Tom it was a great honor and he dare not refuse if he wanted the good will of the Chief. The fest would start at sundown. The villagers were running about gathering food and building cooking fires.

As the dinner hour approached, Harlan Ames began to look for Chow. He soon learned Chow was not on the Sky Queen. The security Chief told Arvid, “Chow is not aboard the Sky Queen. Do you know where he might be?”

Arvid frowned. “Chow went outside several hours ago, so he should have been back by now. You know how serious he is about his cooking.”

Harlan nodded. “That is why I am worried. Chow would never willingly miss cooking dinner.”

The two men went and spoke to the six policemen, but they had not seen Chow either. Harlan and Arvid left the Sky Queen and tried to find where the chef may have gone. A careful look around the Flying Lab founded no trace of the cook.

Arvid shook his head. “Do you think, he went to the village?”

“I doubt it. After Tom left him here Chow was disappointed, but he understood Tom did not want a large

group descending on the village.”

“Well,” said Arvid, “it’s getting too dark to look for him now. What say I make some sandwiches for everyone until our cook returns?”

Harlan frowned. “What do you suppose is keeping Tom and the others?”

Arvid laughed. “You know these natives, they love to feast. Hey, I bet Chow did go to the village. He could not resist a feast and to get some new recipes.”

“Tom took a radio with him. I think I’ll call and tell him we can’t find Chow,” said Harlan.

They reentered the Sky Queen, where Harlan radioed Tom. “*Sky Queen to Tom Swift, come in Tom Swift.*”

Bud had the radio. “*Bud Barclay to Sky Queen, come in Sky Queen.*”

“*Bud, Harlan Ames here. Is Chow there with you?*”

Bud frowned. “*No, Harlan we left Chow at the Sky Queen.*”

There was a moment of silence broken by static. Then Harlan came back on. “*Bud, Chow is missing and has been shortly after you left.*”

“*Harlan that has been more than four hours. I’ve got to tell Tom.*”

“*I know, Bud, but it is dark now. It will be impossible to locate him before morning.*”

“*I know, Harlan, but I must tell Tom. Bud signing off.*”

Tom was chatting with the Chief, but he had noticed Bud on the radio. When the Chief turned to Professor Gonzales, Tom saw it as his chance to speak with Bud. If something was wrong at the flying Lab, he wanted to know at once.

The moon and large bonfires provided the only light in the Indian village. Flickering shadows painted Tom and Bud with grotesque patterns. “Bud, was that the Sky Queen you were talking to on the radio?”

Bud nodded. “It was Harlan Ames. Chow has been missing since we left them.”

Tom’s stomach gave a lurch. Chow Winkler was as much a part of the Swift family as any employee. His loud shirts, his folksy way of speaking, but most of all his cooking made him an indispensable member.

“We must get back to the Sky Queen at once,” Tom said grimly. “Chow must be found.”

Tom approached the Chief. “Chief, something has come up, and we must leave. We will come back to see you before any work is done in the temple.”

Professor Gonzales and Captain Rivera did not know what was up, but followed Tom’s lead in thanking the Chief for his hospitality.

Chow had no way to tell how much time had passed, but knew it had been several hours since he had been put in the hut. His hope of rescue had faded with the light as the day became night. He had been given neither food nor water, and the guards had been changed three times.

On the way back to the Sky Queen, Tom told Professor Gonzales and Captain Rivera about the missing chef. “Do you suspect foul play, as you say in your country?”

Tom ran a hand through his blond crewcut. “I don’t know, Captain Rivera. I told you about Ambrose Tucker, and how he was behind the kidnaping of my sister. We also know he chartered a plane for the Yucatan.”

The Captain smoothed his mustache. “Does your chef know any secrets that would be useful to his captor, if he has been taken?”

“I have never hidden anything from him, but I doubt Chow knows anything important.”

“Tomorrow at first light my men and I will search for your missing chef.”

Tom and Bud retired to their small cabin. “I suppose it is possible Chow just wandered away from the Flying Lab and got lost.”

Tom shook his head. “Chow can be absent minded at times, but no way would he be away this long.”

“You know, Tom, I’m clutching at straws. I may give him a hard time with my teasing, but Chow is my friend too.”

Tom smiled. “I know, fly boy. Remember Chow was a Texas chuck-wagon cook. If he could keep those cowboys in line, he can take care of himself.”

“Yeah, Tom, but what if a jaguar got him or he got caught in quicksand?”

“Thinking like that is not going to help Chow. We must stay positive for his sake.”

“You’re right as usual, Tom. If that rat Ambrose Tucker is behind this, I want just five minutes with him.”

The next morning, after a quick breakfast, Captain Rivera and his men began their search for Chow. Tom and Bud watched as the policemen headed toward the Indian village. “Captain Rivera must know what he is doing, but I don’t think Chow would have gone that way.”

“You’re right, Tom. If Chow was looking for edible plants, he would have gone toward the river.”

Tom nodded. "Let's go that way. Maybe we can find some trace of him."

The boys set out with heavy hearts. They could not bear to think the unthinkable, that some wild animal had attacked their friend. When they reached the water, Tom went up river while Bud went down river. Each carried a small radio to keep in touch.

Tom had gone a half mile when he found a pith helmet. "This belonged to Chow, I'm sure of it."

Bud had found no trace, and was about to turn back when his radio crackled. "*Tom Swift calling Bud Barclay.*"

"Bud here, Tom. Have you found something?"

"Yes, come on back. I'm a half mile from where, we parted. Tom Swift signing off"

Bud hurried back, and when the boys were together once more Tom showed Bud the pith helmet. "That's Chow's right enough," Bud exclaimed.

"Look there," Tom pointed. "Tracks of bare feet, Chow was captured by Indians."

"Should we go get Captain Rivera?"

"No, Bud, it will take too long. We must find Chow then we can report to the captain."

Luckily, by the river the ground was soft and permitted the boys to follow the tracks. Both boys were sweating as the sun burned off the coolness of the morning.

Colorful birds chattered in the trees. The distant growl of a jaguar had the boys on edge. They had followed the tracks for two miles when they came to a clearing and saw a lone hut. Two Indians stood, as if on guard, in front of the grass hut. Tom and Bud were hidden by the thick jungle foliage as they watched the hut for signs of life.

“Tom, Chow must be in that hut,” said Bud.

“I agree, Chum, but I don’t like the looks of those spears and knives those Indians are holding.”

“We must do something,” Bud said grimly.

“Maybe if we work our way around back there will be a way into the hut.”

Bud nodded. “Let’s do it. Chow may be in danger?”

Tom and Bud went slowly in order not to alert the guards. When they reached the back of the hut, they saw where some animal had nibbled on the grass leaving a hole they could enlarge. The boys set to work and in minutes the hole was large enough for Tom to slip inside.

In the dark hut, Tom found the trussed up chef. Tom used a pocketknife to cut the rawhide and free Chow. The plump cook almost got stuck in the hole Tom had made, but with Tom pushing and Bud pulling they got him through the hole.

Once they were out of earshot of the hut, Chow told the boys what had happen to him. When he revealed that he had not been given food or water, it made the boys angry. Bud give him water from a canteen.

“Why did the Indians capture you?”

“A white man ordered them too, but I never saw him again,” said the cook.

“What did he look like?”

“I only saw him for a moment, Tom. He had a goatee.”

“Ambrose Tucker,” both boys cried.

The boys helped Chow along as they made their way through the thick jungle growth. When they reached the Sky Queen, Captain Rivera and his men had returned after a fruitless search of the jungle.

Harlan Ames and Arvid Hanson welcomed Chow back with good hearted slaps on the back. Captain Rivera questioned Chow about his abductors, but Chow could add nothing to what he had told the boys.

Captain Rivera spoke to Tom. “Señor Swift, your man cannot say for sure it was Ambrose Tucker. Without Señor Winkler’s unbiased testimony, I cannot arrest him.”

“I understand, Captain Rivera. We came here to use my Timescope to investigate the strange symbols in an early Mayan Temple. Ambrose Tucker appears determined to stop me.”

The Captain smiled. “Investigate, Señor Swift, it may be the best way to expose him.”

Tom considered Captain Rivera’s advice later when he and Bud were alone. “Bud, we came here to test my Timescope on those strange symbols we saw in that Mayan Temple. I think it’s time we did that despite Ambrose Tucker.”

Bud grinned. “Atta boy, Tom. The Chief has given us his permission, and I say the sooner the better.”

“We will start tomorrow. Captain Rivera can leave some of his men to guard the Sky Queen.”

“Who will be going besides us?”

“Harlan, Arvid, Chow, the Professor and Captain Rivera with some of his men,” said Tom.

Word spread quickly, and preparations began to gather everything needed for the expedition to the Mayan Temple. The Temple was older than two thousand years, and had been lost in the jungle until Tom Swift had rediscovered it.

Tom and Bud led the eight others toward the temple. They would stop in the village to let the Chief know that

they would be working in the temple.

The Chief welcomed the group. “Tom Swift is friend. He will honor our ancestors.”

The Witchdoctor was not so friendly—he danced around the group shaking a rattler and mumbling incantations.

The Professor whispered to Tom. “The Witchdoctor has put a curse on us. He said if we entered the Temple we will never come out.”

“Why does the Chief allow it?”

“Tom, the Chief fears the Witchdoctor. While he is on our side, he dares not offend the Witchdoctor.”

“Well, Professor Gonzales, as a scientist, I don’t believe in curses. I came here to use my Timescope in the Temple, and I intend to do it.”

The Mayan Temple was two miles from the village, in an area of thick jungle. The Temple rose a hundred feet from bottom to top. Its grandeur long past was in ruins, the home of snakes and monkeys.

Tom and his party approached the entrance with care. He knew besides the danger on animals inside, there was the possibility of cave-in from loose stones used to build the temple.

They were unaware that they were being watched by two pair of malevolent eyes. The evil Witchdoctor and Ambrose Tucker. Both wanted Tom to fail with his Timescope.

Chapter Ten

Trapped in the Temple

Built as burial mounds for priest and chiefs, the stone structure had the temple on top. The four sided pyramid had steps up the outside where priests and human sacrifices would climb to the top, and the sacrifice would be presented to the sun god on a blood-stained altar.

The entrance had crumbled leaving a hole through which they had to crawl. Captain Rivera insisted on leading with a pistol in his hand. The policeman presented a picture of both bravery and determination. Fallen stones and other debris littered the floor of the temple. Tom, Bud and Professor Gonzales followed the captain. Harlan Ames and Arvid Hanson carried the Timescope. Two of the policemen helped, and one policeman, brought up the rear. The building had a musty animalistic smell, and water had dripped on the walls creating a green mold.

Captain Rivera raised a hand, he had heard something moving in the next room. They carried flashlights powered by Swift solar batteries energized on Tom's space station. As they shined their lights into the room, a jaguar growled and leaped toward the invaders of her den. Captain Rivera fired and the great cat turned and fled into a side room, but when the captain followed, he could find no trace of the jaguar. Tom was glad the jaguar had escaped; this was her home, and she no doubt knew of another way out.

They at last arrived at the room that had walls covered with the stone carved symbols. They stared in awe at the

strange carvings, and Professor Gonzales ran his hand over the symbols. “Amazing. I have never seen symbols like these before. I have studied Mayan writing, and I can say without fear that this is neither Mayan nor Aztec writing.”

Tom smiled. “Professor Gonzales, you have no doubt heard of the space people my father and I have been in contact with.”

The Professor nodded. “Of course, Señor Swift. It is well known in my country.”

“Well, I believe these stone carved symbols were made by the ancestors of the present space people.”

Tom’s words astounded Professor Gonzales and Captain Rivera. “You see,” said the young inventor, “that is why I wanted to use my Timescope on them. My Electronic Retroscope could only date the carvings, but my Timescope will show us who carved them.”

Outside, two figures approached the entrance. The Witchdoctor watched as Ambrose Tucker pulled a bundle of dynamite sticks bound with tape from his backpack. “Tom Swift will never come out of there.”

Ambrose placed the dynamite over the entrance, and lit a short fuse. He ran for the jungle, but the Witchdoctor danced and shook his rattle at the burning fuse. “What is that old fool doing? Doesn’t he know when that dynamite blows he will be killed?”

Tom was supervising the setting up of his Timescope when there came an explosion. It rocked the ancient pyramid as if hit by an earthquake. Falling rocks, shaken loose by the explosion, and a cloud of dust filled the tunnels

and rooms. A large building stone fell from the ceiling barely missing the Timescope as Tom, Bud and the others regained their footing.

Tom's first thoughts were of the Timescope. Had it been damaged? A close inspection proved it had not, but what had caused the explosion?

Bud, coughing and holding a handkerchief over his mouth and nose, ran to the entrance and found it blocked by tons of rock. As the dust settled, Captain Rivera sniffed the stale air and smelled a faint trace of dynamite.

When the others heard they were trapped, Tom tried to ward off panic. "Listen, I know this seems hopeless, but there may be another way out."

Professor Gonzales, suffering the most, wiped his round face with a handkerchief and adjusted his eyeglasses. "Señor Swift, how can you know that?"

Tom smiled. "Have you forgotten the jaguar, Professor Gonzales?"

At Tom's words, a cheer went up. "We will find a way out, but we came here to use my Timescope on these carvings. I suggest we do that."

Bud seconded his friend's suggestion.

The blast was heard in the village as a distant rumble, the Chief looked in the cloudless blue sky. "Where is the Witchdoctor?"

His wife looked toward the Witchdoctor's hut. "He left after the white ones did."

The Chief shook his head. "I gave my word to Tom Swift. Not even the Witchdoctor may break it."

“The Witchdoctor has cursed them. Would you my husband, defy his curse?”

In the pyramid work began in earnest. The Timescope had been set up before the explosion. Tom wiped dust off his invention, and was glad it had not been damaged.

Bright lights were directed at the wall carvings as Tom turned on the Timescope. A soft hum came from the mechanism as it warmed up. “I believe this pyramid is older than two-thousand, so I will set the Timescope to twenty-five-hundred. I will bring it toward the present as needed.”

As the television screen brightened, a picture from twenty-five-hundred years in the past formed. The scene was in the open air, the jungle far in the distance. The watchers were stunned by the clarity of the picture.

Professor Gonzales turned to Tom in amazement. “Señor Swift, what is that scene? I don’t see the pyramid.”

Tom smiled. “The Timescope has not moved, Professor. What you are seeing is this spot as it looked like twenty-five-hundred years ago. This pyramid had not been built yet.”

Tom moved the Timescope forward a hundred-years. People appeared, ancient Mayans mapping the ground where the pyramid would be built.

Those watching were enthralled by what they were witnessing. History as it was happening, in the far distant past.

“Your Timescope will be a great boon to archaeology,” said the professor.

“Police work will be greatly enhanced by it also,”

declared Captain Rivera.

They watched as, stone by stone, the pyramid took shape until stone walls blocked the outside view. The Timescope could see no carvings on the wall. Almost a thousand years passed as Tom brought the scene forward. Mayan men would enter the room, mostly priest, but no one carved symbols on the wall.

Tom was at a loss when were the carvings made, or who made them? He wanted to know.

As Tom adjusted the time to the one-thousand year mark, things began to change. The room they were in, mostly left empty, took on another look as a priest and several serving girls made the room fit for a king.

Professor Gonzales frowned. "Why would they suddenly turn this room into an apartment for a royal person? Yet today it bears no such look."

"Yeah, and there are still no carvings on the walls," said Bud.

"Remember," said Tom. "What you are seeing happened a thousand years ago. It must have been an important visitor for them to need this room."

Captain Rivera had been trying to reach the men, he had left to guard the Sky Queen, but the radios only gave out static. "It is as if we have been cut off from the outside world."

Professor Gonzales nodded. "I am afraid it is so, Captain Rivera. These thick stone walls, will not permit radio waves through them."

Only Tom and Bud were watching the television screen when a priest entered with someone no more than four feet

tall, with a pale almost gray complexion. He had no hair and his eyes were larger than human eyes. It clearly showed the priest was humbled before the strange being.

Bud gasped. “Tom, it must be one of the space beings.”

Tom nodded. “Yes, Bud. He must have carved the symbols while he resided in this room.”

Tom turned off the Timescope; everything they had seen while it was on had been taped. Tom called everyone together. “It is time we found a way out of this trap.”

Bud nodded. “I’m all for that, Genius boy.”

“Going on the assumption that the jaguar knew of another way out, we must find that exit and get out of this stone coffin.”

“I can’t say I like your choice of words, Genius boy,” Bud said.

They packed the Timescope and made their way through the building. They had gone but a short way when they heard rushing water. Stone steps led down to where an underground river flowed. There was a walkway about three feet wide beside the river. It was wet and slimy; one slip and the unwary would fall into the rushing water.

With Tom in the lead, they slowly made their way along the slippery bank. They passed under a round well-like hole over the river, and could see the sun above.

The professor pointed. “That my friends is a sacrificial well. The sacrifice would be bound and tossed into the well, the river would then carry them to whatever god wanted them.”

Bud frowned. “I thought sacrifices were done on top of the pyramid?”

The professor smiled. “Yes, Señor Barclay, it was so for *willing* sacrifices, but for unwilling victims or enemies, it was the well.”

“You mean to tell me there were willing sacrifices?”

“Oh, my yes,” said the professor. “It was a great honor among the Mayans. Most often it was a young girl chosen for her beauty and chastity.”

Bud shook his head. “How could they be so barbaric?”

Chapter Eleven

Escape from the Temple

“You are looking at it from a modern viewpoint. The Mayans were a primitive people.”

As they reached a place where the river turned, they saw daylight before them. “We made it,” Tom said.

They cheered the young inventor for leading them to safety.

Bud slapped his pal on the back. “Do you think that jaguar came this way?”

Tom grinned. “Maybe, but her way out may not have been our way.”

They were a more cheerful group as they made their way back to the Temple. The body of the Witchdoctor lay where a flying stone from the explosion had killed him.

Bud frowned. “I knew that guy hated us, but I did not think he would try to kill us.”

Captain Rivera rose from studying the body. “No, Señor Barclay, it is unlikely the Witchdoctor set the dynamite. I believe it must have been the American, Ambrose Tucker. Now, I have reason to arrest him, if only on suspicion.”

“Let’s get back to the village,” said Tom. “We had better carry the Witchdoctor’s body back with us.”

Two of the policemen under Captain Rivera’s command picked up the Witchdoctor’s body. It was a somber group that entered the village. The villagers stared at the body in

both fear and loathing—no one cared for the old man. Some braver even spat as the body passed.

The Chief viewed the remains impassively as Tom told him about the explosion, and being trapped in the Temple, then escaping and finding the Witchdoctor's body.

“He break my word to Tom Swift. Witchdoctor bad, better off dead.”

Tom wanted to leave for the Sky Queen, but protocol required them to stay for the Witchdoctor's funeral. A funeral pyre was built, and the villagers watched as the body was placed on the pyre. The Chief with a lighted torch set it afire.

Professor Gonzales observed the ritual with far more interest than the others did. Even Captain Rivera appeared uncomfortable by it.

“The burning of the body is believed by primitive people to make it easier for the soul to make it to the afterlife,” the professor said.

“What if the body is not burnt?”

Professor Gonzales smiled. “Ah, then, Señor Barclay, the spirit becomes a ghost. In Mexico, we have the Festival of the Dead where we honor those who have died, so their spirits can rest.”

Captain Rivera frowned. “As a policeman, I take a more modern view of death. A death can be natural, but when it is not, it is my job to see that someone pays.”

Captain Rivera paused. “I do not believe the Witchdoctor's death was natural. He died in the explosion that trapped us in the Temple.”

As the funeral pyre burned out, Tom and his friends were free to leave. As they approached the Sky Queen, the three

policemen, left to guard the plane, jumped to attention. Captain Rivera took their salute and returned it. "Have you seen a stranger or has anyone approached the plane?"

"No, Captain Rivera, we have seen no one," they said as one.

Tom unlocked the Flying Lab, and everyone went aboard. Tom made sure the Timescope was secured before he and Bud entered the cockpit. Tom fired the jet lifters and the Sky Queen rose above the jungle. "Next stop, Mexico City."

Bud grinned. "Looks as if that rat, Ambrose Tucker, has failed to stop Tom Swift."

Tom glanced at his copilot. "You may be right, but we don't know where Ambrose is or what he will do next."

Tom radioed his father at Swift Enterprises. "Hi, Dad, we are in the air on the way to Mexico City."

"Hello, son, how did your Timescope do?"

"Better than I could have hoped for. Wait until you see the tape."

"I can't wait, Tom. Hurry home, and be careful."

"I will, Dad. See you in a day or two."

Tom signed off. "Bud, I think we are due some R and R, so what do you say about checking out Mexico City?"

Bud gave whoop. "I say we do it. I just wish Sandy was here."

Tom smiled. "I know what you mean. I miss Phyl, too."

As the Flying Lab approached the airport at Mexico City, Tom radioed the tower for landing clearance, but was told by the controller to wait. "That's strange," said the young inventor. "I wonder what the trouble is."

Both boys were at a loss, their original flight plan on leaving the airport for the Yucatan had stated there would be a return flight.

The radio crackled. *“Tower to Sky Queen, you are cleared to land on runway seventeen. Please remain aboard your plane until you are cleared to disembark.”*

Tom replied. “Roger, all parties will remain aboard.”

“What do you make of this?”

Tom shook his head. “I’m at a loss since all our papers are in order. It must be some sort of snarl up.”

On the intercom, Tom called out, “Captain Rivera, please come to the cockpit.”

Captain Rivera entered. “What is the matter, Señor Swift?”

Tom explained what the tower had radioed.

“I am at a loss, Señor Swift. I will speak with whoever it is.”

“Thank you, Captain Rivera. We are lucky to have you aboard.”

Tom brought the Sky Queen over runway seventeen and cut in the jet lifters. The giant plane landed gentle as a feather before taxiing to a parking place.

At once, the plane was surrounded by police. Captain Rivera opened the door, and a police detective entered. “I am Detective Carlos Hernandez. Who is the owner of this plane?”

Tom stepped forward. “I am Tom Swift, and this plane is owned by Swift Enterprises of Shopton, USA. May I know what this is about?”

“We have received a report that you are transporting

Mexican artifacts,” said the detective.

“Detective Hernandez, I can assure you, we have no Mexican artifacts on this plane.”

“You have come from the Yucatan, have you not?”

Tom nodded. “Yes, but we were on a legitimate scientific expedition with the sanction of the Mexican Government.”

“Even so, we must search your plane, and if artifacts are found, you, Señor Tom Swift, will be arrested. It is a serious crime to remove artifacts from their place of origin.”

Captain Rivera frowned. “That is ridiculous, I am Captain Fernando Rivera. Professor Eduardo Gonzales of the University and I were with these people for that very reason. Señor Tom Swift is innocent of such a charge.”

“It is all right, Captain Rivera, he is only doing his duty. You may search the plane for artifacts, Detective Hernandez, but you will find none,” Tom said.

A dozen policemen spread throughout the Flying Lab. Captain Rivera offered his six men to help, but was turned down by the detective.

Captain Rivera smiled at Tom. “It appears, my men and I are also suspects.”

Bud wrinkled his nose. “I smell a rat, and its name is Ambrose Tucker.”

Professor Eduardo Gonzales appealed to Captain Rivera. “This is outrageous, can you not do something, Captain Rivera?”

“I am sorry, Professor Gonzales, a detective outranks a poor uniformed officer.”

After two hours of searching, the police had found nothing. Detective Carlos Hernandez approached Tom.

“Señor Swift, we have found no artifacts. It appears we were misinformed.”

Tom nodded. “May I ask how you came by your information?”

The detective hesitated. “We do not as a rule divulge that information. All I can tell you is that it was an anonymous telephone call. The caller gave no name.”

“Thank you, Detective Hernandez.”

“Please accept my apology, Señor Swift? I have spoken with Captain Rivera, and he has assured me of your innocence.”

Tom nodded. “I have a good idea who is behind this as he has caused me trouble in the past.”

“Who do you suspect, Señor Swift? Making a false report to the police is a crime.”

“A pseudo scientist named Ambrose Tucker. He has tried to discredit me for months. We believe he was behind the explosion that trapped us in the Temple and killed the Witchdoctor.”

The detective nodded. “Yes, Captain Rivera mentioned that. Rest assured, Señor Swift, if this Ambrose Tucker is in Mexico, we will find him.”

Tom smiled. “Thank you again, Detective Hernandez.”

The young inventor and the Mexican Detective Carlos Hernandez shook hands.

Bud let out his breath. “Knowing there were no artifacts aboard the Sky Queen did not keep me from worrying about being held in a Mexican prison.”

“You and me both, fly boy,” said Tom.

The police had been careful, but things had been shifted.

It took Tom and the others an hour to get everything ship shape.

Free at last, but too late to explore Mexico City as they had planned to, Tom, Bud, Harlan, Arvid and Chow decided to find a restaurant for dinner. At first, Chow the former range cook objected. "Chow, this is not a rejection of your culinary skills," said Tom. "We are in Mexico and should sample authentic Mexican food."

Chow grinned. "Maybe I can get a hot chili recipe to try on Buddy boy."

Tom laughed. "I don't want to be there when you pull that one, Chow."

They found a restaurant called the Matador not far from the airport. The restaurant was crowded, but they soon got a table. Much of the talk was of Ambrose Tucker and his attempts to discredit Tom Swift.

When the food arrived it was enchiladas with a hot chili sauce on the side, as requested. Only Chow was brave enough to use more than a spoonful. A strong Mexican coffee accompanied the meal.

It was midnight when they returned to the Flying Lab. Captain Rivera's men that had accompanied them to the Yucatan had been charged with looking after the Sky Queen. They had eaten in the airport cafeteria.

Everyone was tired so Tom decided to delay departure until morning. "Get some sleep, we will leave tomorrow."

The next morning, after a leisurely breakfast prepared by Chow Winkler, Tom took the helm. He fired the jet lifters and the giant plane shot into the sky like a rocket. Tom loved the Flying Lab, it had been his first major invention. He had designed it as the ultimate airplane.

The Flying Lab had three decks, and carried scientific equipment for almost any scientific experiment. It could rise straight up on its jet lifters, and fly at more than the speed of sound. The controls were as easy to handle as those in an automobile.

Chow spent his time cleaning the galley after the breakfast he had served. He knew they would be back in Shopton for lunch.

Chapter Twelve

The Return to Shopton

High above the thick clouds the Sky Queen flew northeast over the Gulf of Mexico toward the United States over Georgia and north to Shopton, NY.

Swift Enterprises came into view, and Tom radioed for landing clearance. “Tom Swift to Swift Enterprises, Sky Queen requesting landing instructions.”

“Swift Enterprises to Sky Queen, you are cleared to land.”

“Roger, Enterprises. Landing Sky Queen on Flying Lab landing pad.”

When he was over the landing pad, Tom cut in the jet lifters, and made a gentle landing of the giant plane. Bud leaned back in his copilot’s chair. “It’s good to be home again.”

Tom grinned. “Wait until Dad watches our Timescope tape—he will flip.”

Bud nodded. “I still can’t believe that we got our first look at the Space People.”

Tom nodded. “I turned off the Timescope before the others could see the Alien.”

“I know,” Bud said. “Why did you do that?”

“Dad could not be there, and I wanted him to see the Alien before we show him to the public.”

Bud grinned. “Then, count me in, Tom. No one deserve to see the Alien more than your Dad.”

“Dad was the first to translate the symbols from the space people,” Tom said.

As everyone disembarked from the Sky Queen, a crew of workmen swarmed over the Flying Lab. It would be put through a battery of tests before being returned to its underground hanger.

Harlan Ames and Arvid Hanson carried the Timescope as Tom and Bud went to his lab in the main building at Swift Enterprises.

Mr. Swift welcomed the boys back. “I’m glad to see you back, Son.”

“Thanks, Dad. My Timescope worked, and I can’t wait for you to see the tape.”

Mr. Swift smiled. “I look forward to it, but what about Ambrose Tucker? Did he cause you any more trouble?”

Tom nodded. “He is like a fly that won’t go away.”

Tom proceeded to tell his father all that had happened to them in Mexico City and the Yucatan

Mr. Swift listened with growing anger as Tom concluded his story. “Tom, you could have been killed. Ambrose Tucker is a menace. I hope the Mexican Police can catch him.”

“I know, Dad. But I doubt he is still in Mexico. It appears he is content to follow me and cause trouble for me alone.”

Mr. Swift nodded. “Yes, and his interest in you seems based on your Timescope.”

“I know, but I don’t know why. He has attacked my

reputation, belittled my Timescope, and in the Yucatan tried to trap or kill me in the temple.”

“Don’t forget, he was behind Sandy’s kidnapping,” said Bud.

Tom frowned. “I could hardly forget that, but what has he to gain?”

Mr. Swift picked up a report. “I had the Security office investigate Ambrose Tucker. It makes for some fascinating reading.”

Tom grinned. “I bet it does.” He took the offered report.

Ambrose Tucker claims to be a scientist, but far as we could find, he has not had any formal training. He was a poor student in both grade school and high school. He dropped out of college in his second year. His major was Philosophy.

He left college after his rich uncle died leaving his wealth, some ten-million, to Tucker. Shortly after leaving college, he began dabbling in science. Most notably, time travel.

He has been accused of plagiarism on six occasions. His theories are based more on H. G. Wells than on Stephen Hawking.

His recent attacks on the Swifts is based on an article by Tom Swift, Sr., which appeared in a popular science magazine twenty-years ago debunking the notion of time travel.

It is our conclusion that when word leaked on Tom Swift Jr’s Timescope, he was enraged and launched his vindictive campaign to discredit the Swifts.

He has become unhinged, and should be considered dangerous. This is exemplified by the kidnaping of Sandy Swift, and his disrupting attack on Tom Swift, Jr. at Shopton high School.

As Tom put down the report, Bud who had been reading his copy stated, “Unhinged my Aunt Fanny, he is mad as a hatter.”

Tom shook his head. “How could an article written twenty-years ago debunking time travel cause him to attack me?”

“It appears that *The Time Machine* by H. G. Wells had a profound effect on Ambrose Tucker. If I recall correctly, that article came out shortly after the movie was released.”

“What did you say in the article?”

Mr. Swift frowned. “I said something like, ‘I can state without reservations that *The Time Machine* was an entertaining book and movie, but time travel was impossible on too many levels to go into. The paradoxes alone would keep any sane person from working on such a crazy idea.’”

“Wow,” Bud said. “What crazy person could get upset over that?”

Father and son laughed. “He may be crazy, but he is rich and can afford to hire people to help him,” said Tom.

Chow Winkler wheeled in a lunch cart loaded with hamburgers and fries, sodas, coffee and milk. “All right you Buckaroos, lunch is served.”

Chow made sure everyone stopped to eat. Afterwards, he took the cart away.

Tom played the Timescope tape for Mr. Swift, Harlan Ames and Arvid Hanson. Bud, like Tom, had watched it in the Temple. Everyone else had been worried about escaping from the Temple after the explosion.

Mr. Swift watched the building of the Mayan pyramid across two-thousand years. When the Alien appeared, he leaned forward in his chair as the tape ended.

“Amazing, Tom. If that is an ancestor of our space friends we at last know what they look like. Why did you stop before he carved on the wall?”

“Two reasons, Dad. I wanted you to see the Alien before anyone besides Bud and me. Second, we know what the carvings say. I did not think it important to record them again.”

Mr. Swift nodded. “You may be right, it may be too early to release the tape to the public while we have an enemy to contend with.”

Harlan Ames slapped Tom on the back. “Skipper, it looks as if your Timescope worked like a charm.”

Arvid Hanson nodded. “You have outdone yourself, Tom.”

The young inventor was embarrassed by the accolades from his friends, but he saw the pride in his father’s eyes, and felt better about it.

Harlan and Arvid left after reminding the father and son not to say anything about the Alien.

Bud sat on the edge of Tom’s desk. “Do you think we have heard the last of Ambrose Tucker?”

Tom shook his head. “Not by a long shot, if he still has it in for me, he will try something else.”

Bud nodded. “He is a nut, but a smart nut.”

“All the more reason for you boys to be careful,” said Mr. Swift. “By the way, Tom, when will you be ready to market your Timescope?”

Tom ran a hand through his crewcut. “Gee, Dad, I have not given that much thought. I want to do one more test with it, before making that decision.”

“Whatever you say, but Ned Newton at Swift Construction will need some lead time before any announcement is made public.”

“I’ll keep that in mind, Dad,” said Tom.

Mr. Swift left Tom and Bud in the lab. The boys worked until six o’clock. “Bud, why don’t you come home with me? Sandy will be glad to see you after our Yucatan trip.”

Bud smiled. “You don’t need to ask me twice, and you can ride with me.”

“Good, and if we go by the Mill Road, we can cut twenty-minutes off.”

The boys locked the lab and left Swift Enterprises in Bud’s car. Mill Road, an older road, had been bypassed by a new highway, but the old road was shorter. Buildings on Mill Road had been torn down or had been abandon and left to rot away.

The boys enjoyed the solitude of being the only car on the road. Bud turned on his headlights as it became too dark to drive safely.

As they reached the halfway mark, bright lights signaled another car coming up behind them. “That nut should slow and dim his lights,” said Bud.

When the car drew alongside, it suddenly swerved forcing Bud off the road. The red convertible ran into the ditch. Bud and Tom were knocked out. The other car stopped and backed up to where Bud’s car was sticking out of the ditch.

Bud was slumped over the steering wheel as Tom came to. He sensed someone standing outside the car. “My friend is hurt. Can you get help?”

“Unfortunately, Tom Swift, you and your friend will soon need no help.”

Tom looked through bleary eyes to see a man with a goatee standing by the car holding a gun.

“Ambrose Tucker?”

“That is correct, Tom Swift. I have tried other methods to stop you, but now I must be more direct.”

“You can’t get away, the police are looking for you.”

“So what? I am guilty of nothing.”

“You were behind kidnapping my sister Sandy, and that bombing of the Temple in the Yucatan.”

“There is no proof I was involved in any kidnapping, and that bombing as you said happened in the Yucatan.”

“What about the double murder you are planning?”

Ambrose smiled. “No murder, Tom Swift. Just a bad accident.”

The grinning Ambrose Tucker raised the gun to slug Tom.

Chapter Thirteen

Space Junket

Suddenly the man and car were caught in a blinding light. “Ambrose Tucker, drop the gun, you are covered.”

Harlan Ames and two of his men took charge of Ambrose Tucker.

“Harlan, how did you get here?”

“Your father asked me to look after you. We both knew you would not like being guarded so I followed when you left Swift Enterprises.”

Bud began to come to. “What happened?”

“Ambrose Tucker forced you off the road, but Harlan Ames caught him, and will hand him over to the police.”

Bud rubbed his head. “I must have really blacked out.”

Tom grinned. “I hardly noticed the difference.”

Bud winced. “Very funny, Genius boy.”

Tom hesitated. “You know, Bud, I told Dad I wanted to make one more test with the Timescope.”

“Have you decided where you want to make that test?”

Tom slowly nodded. “How do you feel about another rocket junket?”

Bud grinned. “Flash Gordon has nothing on us, but Dale Arden I’m not.”

Tom laughed. “You can say that again.”

Bud grinned. “No thanks, once is enough.”

Three days later the boys flew to Fearing Island—the thumb-shaped Island of the East coast of the United States. The island once barren sand dunes and scrub grass has been turned into a modern rocket launching installation.

As they disembark from the Sky Queen, Bud couldn’t hold his curiosity back. “All right, Tom, how about letting me in on our destination? You have been very secretive.”

“Sorry, fly boy, we are going to Nestria.”

Nestria was a Phantom Satellite the Swift’s space friends had put in orbit around the Earth. A Swift expedition had claimed the satellite for America.

Tom had beaten an enemy to the Phantom Satellite shortly after it went into orbit. His atmosphere making machines had made it possible for a small crew to live on Nestria.

“Are you planning to use your Timescope on Nestria?”

Tom nodded. “Yes, the space people must have worked on the satellite. I hope to see what they did to it.”

“Will your Timescope work there?”

“I don’t see why not,” said Tom. “Nestria has an atmosphere thanks to my atmosphere making machines placed at each pole.”

Tom and Bud approached the rocket that would take them first to the Swift’s space station, and after refueling on to Nestria. They were met by Hank Sterling. “Hi, Tom, Bud. The rocket is ready for your flight,. Good luck.”

“Thanks, Hank,” Tom said.

They were given two mail sacks, one for the space wheel the other for Nestria.

Tom's first rocket, the Star Spear, sat on its launching pad. The boys put on their spacesuits and rode the elevator up to the hatch. Tom and Bud climbed into the rocket and sat in their seats. Tom radioed the launch control that they were ready. The countdown began: ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, blast off.

Tom and Bud felt as if they each had an elephant sitting on them. Having made several trips into space they did not black out as the rocket shot into the sky. As the first and second stages dropped off, the boys became weightless. The rocket moved through the black velvet of space. Not empty as it appeared, but filled with cosmic dust, and meteors.

The space wheel that Tom had designed rotated nearly twenty-two-thousand-five hundred miles above the Earth. It had been built as a big hub with twelve docking holes filled with the main bodies of twelve space ships, each with a different job. One was living quarters another a dining hall, two were for television broadcast, some were labs and three were for charging solar batteries.

Tom and Bud reached the orbit of the space wheel, and they drifted through space until they saw it. Tom maneuvered the Star Spear into a dock for refueling. After docking, he and Bud entered the space wheel.

They were cheered by the crew. The boys accepted the razzing with good humor. In the dining hall they handed out the mail while they were treated to hot chocolate.

After an hour they returned to the Star Spear and undocked from the space wheel. As the space ship drifted away from the space station, Tom cut in the kicker, and the Star Spear headed for the Phantom Satellite, Nestria.

Instead of burning fuel by chasing the satellite, the simple and more effective method was to get in its orbit, and

wait for the satellite to come to them.

They were drifting in Nestria's orbit when the Star Spear was hit by a small meteor. Alarm bells went off as the Star Spear rolled in space. The boys in spacesuits, quickly made temporary repairs as Nestria came hurling at them. "Tom, the satellite is going to crash into us," Bud cried.

Tom, with the cool head of an experienced pilot, cut on the kicker, and the satellite passed them by several hundred feet. "Wow," Bud exclaimed. "That kicker you invented to save rocket fuel saved our hash."

Tom raced after the Phantom Satellite, and with skill far exceeding his years made a landing that would have made the most experienced pilot proud.

As the rocket landed men who were living and working on little lunar body hurried to the Star Spear. They knew it was Tom Swift, Jr.'s personal rocket which meant a visit from the young inventor.

Tom and Bud climbed out of the rocket to an enthusiastic crowd. The boys were escorted to the small hamlet that had been built on Nestria. Tom was impressed by what had been accomplished since he had last been on the satellite.

The men wanted to hear news from home. Tom passed out mail that he had brought from Earth. Each man received letters from their families. Paul Burkhardt, Swift employee and leader, invited the boys to have lunch with the men in the mess tent. Later, as the men return to work, Paul put down his coffee cup. "Okay, Skipper, what brings you and Bud to Nestria?"

"Paul, have you heard about my invention, the Timescope?"

Paul knitted his brow. "No. We are cut off from most things on Earth. Oh we get news and mail, but little else."

Tom nodded. “Well, my Timescope has been top secret, so I’m not surprised you haven’t heard about it in spite of recent news coverage.”

“What does it do?” Paul asked.

“As the name implies the Timescope can look into the past. We have tested it in a Mayan Temple in the Yucatan, and now I want to test it on Nestria.”

Paul smiled. “You want to see if we have been goofing off?”

Tom laughed. “No, I was thinking more of those carvings in that cave we discovered. I think they were made by our space friends.”

“Well, Skipper, we will give you all the help we can.”

“Thanks, Paul, but the Timescope is portable. I believe Bud and I can manage it alone.”

Paul stood. “Good luck, Skipper. If you need anything, let me know.”

“Come, Bud,” Tom said. “We need to unload the Timescope and take it to the cave.”

Bud laughed. “Even in this outer space paradise, you can only think of work.”

Chapter Fourteen

Secret of the Cave

Tom ran his hand through his short blond crewcut. “fly boy, if you think this hunk of rock is paradise, I’ll have the doctor do a brain test during your next physical.”

Bud frowned. “He won’t find anything.”

Tom grinned. “That’s what I fear. You have nothing between your ears.”

“I meant, he won’t find anything wrong. Bud Barclay is as sound as a dollar.”

“And that is about what you are worth, if you don’t get a move on,” said the young inventor.

The boys were dressed in the special suits worn on Nestria. Since life on Nestria depended on the atmosphere making machines everyone had to be ready at a moment’s notice if one or both atmosphere machines should stop working.

Nestria’s lesser gravity allowed Tom and Bud to unload the Timescope and carry it to the cave. The cave was no more than twenty-feet long, cut into solid rock. A tall man would need to crouch; as it was, Tom came within an inch of the ceiling. Both walls were covered with the symbols the Swift’s associated with their space friends.

A natural light glowed from the walls making it easy to see and read the symbols. The symbols were no longer a mystery to Tom, since he and his father had deciphered the symbols months before and added them to the Space

Dictionary Tom Swift, Sr. had compiled with his famous son.

The boys set the Timescope camera on a tripod, and aimed it at the wall where the carved symbols were thought to begin. Since the satellite had been put in orbit around the Earth, no more than a few months before, Tom thought the symbols were not much older than that.

He set the time on the Timescope back a year, and as it warmed up a picture formed on the screen. Tom and Bud held their breath. As the picture became solid, it showed a blank wall. "I must have set it too far back," said Tom.

The young inventor, slowly advanced the control knob. "Look, Tom," Bud exclaimed.

Several small aliens had entered the cave, at least they had on the Timescope screen. They appeared the same as the alien they has seen on the Timescope in the Mayan Yucatan Temple.

The only difference was these aliens wore a one piece jumpsuit, topped by a fishbowl helmet.

One of the aliens pointed a strange implement at the cave's wall, and as if by magic the carvings began to form. Tom and Bud watched in amazement as carvings that would take hours or days by hand, took only minutes for the aliens.

Bud shook his head. "What do you make of that, Genius boy?"

Tom frowned. "I'd say it is some kind of programmable devise. You plan your message and input it into the gun (for want of a better word) then you aim it at whatever you want to write on. The gun does the rest."

It took the space people only minutes to cover the cave's walls with hundreds of symbols. Tom turned off the

Timescope. “Now, we know how the carvings were made.”

Bud nodded. “You and your father have translated the symbols, so you know what the space people wanted to tell you.”

“We know they once visited Earth in the past, but somehow lost the knowledge of it. They want the Swift’s to help them recover that knowledge.”

Bud grinned. “Maybe your Timescope can help you do it.”

Tom nodded. “Maybe, but we should finish repairs to the meteor damage to the Star Spear and return to Earth. My Timescope has passed every test. Dad wants me to market it.”

Bud patted the Timescope. “Every police force in the country will want one, but will the courts approve of it?”

“That is a hurdle for the legal department to overcome. I see it as a boon to archaeology, maybe even architecture.”

“Architecture?”

“Sure,” Tom smiled. “Who wouldn’t want to see the building of the pyramids or the great cathedrals as it happened?”

Bud grinned. “I’d be more interested in seeing Mount Rushmore being carved out of that mountain.”

“You and a lot of others,” said Tom. “Let’s see to our rocket so we can get off this rock.”

The boys packed up the Timescope and returned to the small settlement. Tom and Bud pitched in and repaired the meteor damage to the Star Spear. A pair of patches did the trick.

They said their goodbyes to the men stationed on the

small asteroid, and were cheered as they climbed into the Star Spear. They had a mail bag to take back to Earth.

Strapped into their seats, Tom did a silent countdown before firing the engines. The blast was not as loud as on Earth because of the thinner air on Nestria. The rocket rose and gathered speed as it left the asteroid.

Tom and Bud were in the blackness of outer space in no more than a minute due to the lesser gravitation of Nestria. Nor did they suffer the bone crushing effects of blast off as they did on Earth.

There is no up or down or direction in space, but if there were in leaving Nestria for the space wheel it could be thought of as down.

Tom set the course, and allowed the Star Spear computer to do the navigation. When the space wheel appeared, Tom took over and did the docking. He and Bud remained aboard the Star Spear while it was refueling. When he received the all clear, Tom undocked from the space wheel and headed for Earth.

Fearing Island was only a dot as the Star Spear broke through the stratosphere. Workers on the Island scrambled to make ready for the rocket's landing. Tom set the rocket down as gently as a mother putting her baby down.

The boys climbed out to cheers. "You know, Tom, rocket travel is okay, but the best part is returning home."

"I'm with you there, fly boy."

The Sky Queen, Tom's Flying Lab, was waiting to return them to Swift Enterprises on the mainland. Tom used the jet lifters to thirty-thousand feet, then cut in the aft jets. The Sky Queen flew above a thick cloud layer, and as they approached land, a storm rolling east broke below them.

“Wow,” said Bud. “How would you like to be flying through that thick soup?”

Tom laughed. “Thick soup is right, with lightning to stir the pot.”

Bud frowned. “Do you think it will be as bad over Swift Enterprises?”

Tom grinned. “I don’t know, but I soon will. I’ll radio Swift Enterprises and ask.”

He spoke into the microphone. “Sky Queen to Swift Enterprises, come in Swift Enterprises.”

The radio crackled. “*Swift Enterprises to Sky Queen, over.*”

“How is the storm over Swift Enterprises?”

“It has mostly passed over, and there may be a little rain left, but that will be all.”

“Rodger, Swift Enterprises. Sky Queen will be landing in twenty-minutes.”

As the giant plane flew over the four square mile Swift Enterprises, Tom pulled back on the throttle, and cut in the jet lifters. The Sky Queen landed smoothly as if it were on an elevator.

The boys unbuckled their seat belts. True to the controller’s word the rain had reduced to a drizzle, but they ran for Tom’s lab.

The Timescope was unloaded by the Sky Queen crew, and was taken to Tom’s lab where the boys had changed into dry clothes.

“Bud why don’t you call Chow and order us some hot chocolate.”

Chapter Fifteen

The Man from Washington

Bud picked up the intercom telephone that connected the many sections of the main science building. “*Hello, Buckaroos, Chow Winkler range cook at your service. What do you need?*”

Bud grinned. “Two hot chocolates in Tom’s lab, but no experimenting with it.”

“Shucks, Buddy boy, I don’t know what you mean. Two hot chocolates coming up.”

Bud frowned as he replaced the telephone. He was sure he had detected something in the cook’s voice that said Chow was up to something.

In short order they heard someone coming, whistling *Home on the Range*. Chow wheeled in his cart with hot chocolate and cookies on it. Chow poured out two cups of steaming chocolate, and handed one to Tom and the other to Bud.

Bud waited for Tom to choke and gasp, but the young inventor smacked his lips. “Chow, you make the best hot chocolate, on or off the Earth.”

Feeling safe Bud took a sip of his hot chocolate and let out a howl.

Tom frowned. “What is the matter with Bud?”

Chow grinned. “It must be the cayenne pepper I put in his cup.”

Bud gasped with tears in his eyes. “Chow, I knew you were going to try something, but never thought of the cup.”

Tom laughed. As Chow wheeled his cart out, he was whistling *Dynamite Dan*. Bud looked contrite. “Chow is getting to good at practical jokes. Maybe, I should cool it for a while.”

A week passed, and Tom had sent his plans for the Timescope to Uncle Ned Newton at the Swift Construction Company. The Timescope would be built there, and placed on the market for sell to police forces and archaeologist.

Father and son were working in the lab. Tom, Sr. had seen the Timescope’s tapes brought back from Nestria, and like his son was amazed to see the space people. It proved that ancestors of the space people had visited earth in the dim past.

The telephone rang, and Tom, Jr picked it up. “Hello, Tom Swift, Jr. speaking.”

“Tom, we have an airplane requesting permission to land.”

“Have they given identification?”

“Yes, they said they are from Washington D. C. Requesting to talk with the Swifts”

“Allow them to land, but have Security escort whoever it is to my lab.”

“Rodger.”

Tom frowned; they had not been told of someone coming from Washington. What could it be about?

“Who was on the telephone, Son?”

“The control tower saying a plane from Washington D. C. has requested to land.”

Mr. Swift frowned. "Are they in trouble?"

"I think not, Dad, but someone on that plane wants to talk to us."

"That is strange. They usually let us know when someone is coming from Washington," said Mr. Swift.

The Swift's put away documents that no outsider should see and waited for their visitor. He arrived shortly with one of the security men. He was thirty, an inch under six feet with sandy blond hair and blue eyes.

He held out his hand. "Miles Togo. Are you the famous father and son inventors?"

Mr. Swift shook the hand. "Miles Togo?"

The man flushed. "My parents were fans of Robert Frost."

Tom shook his hand. "You have surprised us, Mr. Togo. We had no idea you were coming."

"It is a delicate matter I wish to speak with you about. You have many government contracts so Senator Horace Goodall felt he had to send me to address some issues he has."

Mr. Swift frowned. "Please have a seat. What issues are you referring to?"

"Senator Goodall would prefer you to remove your Timescope from the market."

"What?"

Mr. Swift placed a hand on Tom's. "Why would he want us to do that?"

"He feels it can be misused," said Miles Togo.

"That is nonsense," said Tom.

“He believes the Timescope is a danger to both Christians and non-Christians, and to history as we know it.”

Mr. Swift filled his pipe. “How can the truth be bad? The Timescope shows things as they happened, so if it shows something besides what is expected it will still be the truth.”

Miles Togo nodded. “On the surface, you are correct, but if say a historic event is proven false it could cause a complete breakdown in our education system.”

Mr. Swift lit his pipe and took several puffs. “Don’t you think you are being overdramatic?”

“No, and neither does Senator Goodall.”

Mr. Swift nodded. “Did Senator Goodall send you to threaten us?”

Miles Togo smiled. “Not threaten, but to let you know how he feels. Your Timescope will cause an upheaval in what people believe. The Senator intends to fight you, if you go forward with your marketing.”

“Mr. Togo, I have never backed down from a project, and I have taught my son not to do so either. Tell Senator Horseface Goodall,—yes, I know his nickname—that the Swift’s will not knuckle under to him.”

Miles Togo stood. “Senator Goodall is respected in the Senate; he is not a man to cross.”

Mr. Swift smiled. “Goodbye, Mr. Togo. Tell the Senator that we respect his viewpoint, we just don’t agree with him.”

Bud entered as Miles Togo was leaving with the Security man. “Hey, what is the matter with sour-puss? He looked as if he swallowed a whole lemon.”

Mr. Swift chuckled. “He told us he did not want Tom to sell his Timescope.”

“Wow, how could he do that?”

“Senator Goodall sent him with the message that he believes the Timescope will destroy civilization by undermining our knowledge of history,” said Mr. Swift.

“That blowhard! You won’t let him stop you.”

“No, I won’t, Bud. Nor Tom.”

Tom frowned. “But seriously, Dad, this could be bad for Swift Enterprises.”

Mr. Swift tapped out his pipe. “Don’t worry, Son. I have friends in Washington, and Swift Enterprises has a reputation for unmatched dependability.”

Bud nodded. “Your dad is right, Tom. Do you think I would risk my neck as a Swift test pilot if I had doubts?”

Tom laughed. “fly boy, you would fly an atomic bomb if it had wings and a motor.”

Bud grinned. “You know me pretty well, Genius boy.”

Mr. Swift smiled at the two friends’ banter. “You two hold the fort. I’m going to Washington to checkmate any moves Senator Goodall tries to make regarding the Timescope.”

“Maybe I should go with you,” said Tom.

Mr. Swift shook his head. “No, it is best if you stay here. If you need me, you know where to find me. But only in an emergency.” He regarded his son. “I’ll pack some clothes from the apartment next door. Kiss Sandy and your mother for me.”

“You can count on me, Dad.” Tom said.

Mr. Swift hurried from the lab leaving Tom and Bud in the lab.

Chapter Sixteen

Surprise Visitors

The next day.

Bud looked at his watch. “Tom, have you got anything on your drawing board?”

“No, my Timescope is in the hands of the Swift Construction Company. With Dad going back to Washington to make sure we don’t lose government contracts I’m at loose ends.”

Bud smiled. “Good, because you and I are about to have some visitors.”

“Oh no,” said the young inventor. “After my last visitor, Miles Togo, I don’t think I am ready for more.”

“Don’t worry, you will like these visitors,” said Bud.

Suddenly the door opened, with Sandy Swift and Phyl Newton entered followed by Chow Winkler pushing a food cart. It was loaded with hamburgers, hotdogs, potato salad, cole slaw, sodas and both white and chocolate milk.

Tom laughed. “What in the world is this?”

Sandy giggled. “If Tom Swift and Bud Barclay won’t come to us, we decided to come to you.”

Phyl nodded. “All work and no play will make Tom Swift a dull date.”

Tom turned on his pal. “Bud Barclay, you are a part of this ambush.”

Bud raised his hands. “Guilty as charged, but with extenuating circumstance. I was sworn to secrecy by Sandy

and Phyl under pain of no dates for a month.”

“Wow,” said Tom. “I can see how that would make the most stout heart cave in.”

Both girls giggled. “It was a hollow threat because it would have punished Phyl and me, too,” said his sister.

Chow, decked out in a blazing orange and yellow shirt, told them, “Buckaroos, I done hauled this food in here, so get at it before it gets hauled away.”

The four teenagers looked horrified. “Chow Winkler don’t you dare take that food away,” said Sandy.

Chow chuckled. “Well, bless my old swayback horse. You don’t think I would really do that do you?”

Sandy laughed. “No, Chow, but we had no idea how Tom would take to our little party.”

The former chuck-wagon cook smiled as he served the hamburgers and hotdogs and as the four teens dug into the food with hearty appetites.

Bud was the first to surrender and admit he could not eat any more.

Sandy and Phyl, being girls, had been more conservative in their eating.

Tom leaned back and patted his stomach. “Chow, if we ate like that daily, Bud and I would never get off the ground except in the Flying Lab.”