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THE NEW TOM SWIFT INVENTION SERIES

Tom Swift And His EnvirOzone Revivicator

By Victor Appleton II

Swift Enterprises is called to a G-20 nations meeting on the environment to defend their efforts in negating their carbon footprint. Their flights to their outpost in space have been deemed to be responsible for too high levels of pollution. The ozone layer is deteriorating and Tom must find a way to mitigate the problems or face possible international sanctions.

As they depart the meeting, an emissary from a tiny African nation pleads with Tom to save his country from the deadliest drought in its 72-year history. Tom must also struggle against governmental interference coming from a senior senator with a grudge against Tom and his father.

Can Tom pull off a double-play? Is there time to save the African nation while finding a way to stop global warming and save Swift Enterprises? If not, not only will Swift Enterprises be required to pay crippling environmental penalties, but more than four thousand innocent people will most probably die.

To make matters worse a formation of unmarked aircraft seem to appear wherever Tom goes. Who are they and what do they plan to do?

This book is dedicated to Edward Stratemeyer and the original V A who started the whole thing way back when... to all the little V A IIs, and to Scott D for getting me re-interested in Tom.

If you look at the world around you, you are sure to see signs that many things that Tom and his forbearers created over the years are almost commonplace in our lives today. Like the TASER, named for Thomas A Swift's Electric Rifle {look it up!}

Only time will truly tell how prophetic his exploits will turn out to be.

Tom Swift and His EnvirOzone Revivicator

FOREWORD

Tom Swift and I grew up together. We were both children of the 1950's. He became a world-renown scientist and inventor, and I became a journalist. No... not a reporter. I am someone who journalized the exploits of others. Like my father before me and my maternal grandfather, Dr. John Watson.

Tom and Bud had many adventures together and we were all very close for a long time. And then, I grew up. I figured that his adventures were over and placed Tom on a shelf—just sort of abandoned him there.

My bad!

I recently happened upon the works of a wonderful writer named Scott. Imagine my surprise and pleasure when I discovered that he had taken Tom and Bud and then re-imagined their exploits.

Then, image my greater surprise that he had taken a carefully crafted 'universe' of situations and characters, both true and not, and replaced some of it with more truth, more reality and more spirit than Tom ever had.

His Tom Swift Lives series of stories goes beyond anything ever chronicled; he has even added new stories and adventures to the ethos, and it continues to flourish.

That gave me the idea that I should pick up the old word processor and write. I am smart enough to realize that I can't resurrect the old Tom. Time and reality have passed him by.

I fully admit that I have taken Scott's newer, more realistic world of Tom Swift and embraced it as the true world. So, what have I added to it? Perhaps a little more boy-turning-into-man emotion, perhaps a little more realization of his own self—good and bad—and definitely an increase in pages.

These adventures fit side-by-side with the Tom Swift Lives books. These are the stories of Tom, Bud and the rest that occur in between the TSL stories. They just barely slipped through the cracks or Scott would have already told them. Enjoy!

Victor Appleton II

CHAPTER 1 / A REQUEST - A THREAT?

"SO, WHAT the heck has been going on here," exclaimed the muscular, dark-haired youth as he strode into Tom Swift's private lab.

Turning suddenly at the startling question, a broad grin split Tom's face. "Bud! Wow, it's great to see you back. How were California and your folks?"

Bud Barclay, Tom's closest friend and confidant, had just returned from a visit to his parents living in the San Francisco Bay Area. When Bud's father had been transferred there several years earlier, Tom's father, Damon Swift, and his mother had agreed to keep an eye on the youth so that he could finish his high school years at Shopton High where both youths were popular and respected. Bud was now a valued Swift Enterprises employee.

"Well... Mom is great, but Dad is overworking himself. I think he just can't delegate the most important aspects of his job to people who work for him; the ones with all of the necessary skills... kinda like you, professor!" Bud added with a twinkle in his eye. "My original question still stands. What the heck is going on? I haven't heard head or tails from you in the past couple weeks, and I'm feeling kind of out of touch."

Sitting back onto his work stool, Tom tilted his head and looking serious replied, "Hmm? Probably more than you want to hear about in one sitting. But at the top of the list has to be our replacement spoke for the Space Wheel,"

Many months before, Tom had designed and overseen the construction of a giant outpost in space, orbiting the Earth at the geosynchronous altitude of 22,300 miles. This space station allowed both Swift Enterprises to have a stable platform in which to manufacture their popular solar batteries—and where dozens of experiments were held in the almost-zero G environment of the station—and facilities for scientists and industrialists from more than nine different nations to carry on work ranging from Ultra-HD television and radio

transmissions to medical experiments to development of new foods.

"Sure," Bud stated, "I knew that you were planning to update Spoke Nine, the one where they track weather patterns and shipping. What's this about 'replacing?'"

"We took a look at what it would take to strip out more than seventy percent of the stuff in that spoke, transfer it back down here, send up the new stuff and try to do all of the installation in zero G, and it just kept coming up as a practical improbability. Not to mention a schedule that would have had everything from that spoke being out of service for more than a month."

"Yeah, I see how that might not go down too well with the people who are paying to use that spoke."

Tom nodded. "Dad and I figured that we could outfit an entirely new rocket with everything in less than a week with direct help from the companies involved, get it up there, installed, and the old spoke pulled out to a holding orbit. And at about sixty percent the overall cost to Swift Enterprises!"

Bud whistled. "So, it's all done?" he asked.

"Done. And we only had one piece of equipment that came loose during take-off and was damaged. Luckily, it was a model-for-model replacement of something already up there. We just pulled the old one out of the de-commed spoke and slapped it into the new one."

"Alright. What happens to the old spoke?"

"Over the next few months the station crew will go out and start taking it apart, at least into manageable chunks that can be ferried back down in our regular supply rockets."

Bud suggested, "You mean up with the new stuff, down comes the old?"

"That's it, exactly!" Tom exclaimed. "Ten points with a follow-up question..."

"Shoot."

"Why won't we just leave it up there in case we need other spare parts?" Tom inquired.

"Well, I know that there is enough space junk up there and we probably don't want to add to it. Is that it?"

"Yes and no," said Tom. "You know that anything with mass generates micro-gravity, right?" Bud nodded. "So, if we leave a fourteen-foot wide, sixty-four-foot long hunk of old rocket up there, parked within useful distance to the station, microgravity would almost immediately begin to pull the two together."

"Could that drag the space wheel out of its orbit?" Bud wanted to know.

"Only slightly. With about fifteen times the mass, the outpost would pretty much stay in one place—perhaps move a foot or two—but the old spoke would start to get closer and closer, until..."

Bud's eyes widened. "Jetz! That would mean an eventual collision!"

"Sure, but very, very slowly. Even at that, it could cause problems, So, the best thing is to just bring it back down."

"Why not de-orbit it and let it burn up, just like they did with MIR and SkyLab?"

Shaking his head, Tom replied, "Not the right thing to do. Mankind has already messed up the air and water over the years. Anything that large is going to have a negative impact. Dad calculated that the 28-ton spoke would release almost 25 metric tons of carbon and other harmful chemicals and elements.

"Ouch!" said Bud. "Just color me kinda stupid, OK?"

Tom was about to reply when the intercom on his desk lit up. Pressing the 'receive' button, he asked, "What can I do for you, Munford?" Tom asked his secretary and personal assistant.

"His Excellency, Herr *Doktor* Wolfram of NATO wishes to speak with your father, but he is in transit out to The Citadel

right now and has asked for complete privacy. The *Doktor* will speak with you as a substitute. Sorry."

"It's no problem. Doktor Wolfram and I have met many times at various events and governmental meetings. Please put him through."

Following a series of barely-noticeable clicks, indicating to Tom that both the scrambling and tracing circuitry had been engaged, a deep, booming voice with a slight German accent said, "Are you there yet, young Mr. Swift?"

"Herr Doktor. How nice to hear from you," Tom replied. "I apologize for my father's unavailability right now. To what do I owe the honor?"

"Tom..." began the caller, "in light of the high esteem both I and the rest of the scientific world—well, at least in the free world—hold you and your father, I must give you a, I believe it is called, a heads up notice."

Beginning to worry, Tom said, "That sounds serious. May I ask about the nature of the heads up?"

"NATO is working with the G-20 countries on both pressing economic issues as well as environmental issues. This involves the latter. For far too long have developing nations been lagging behind in keeping their industries clean. Even the illustrious United States—acknowledged leader in the world—can be faulted for both intentional and unintended environmental disasters."

"Certainly, there are problems around the world. And, I won't claim that the U.S. is squeaky clean, but overall we try to do what's right. So, what can Swift Enterprises do for the G-20?"

The Doktor continued, "Global warming has been an issue for more than two centuries. First, and pertaining to large cities such as London, and later Mexico City and Beijing, individual governments have mandated changes. Some have helped, some have failed as with Beijing, but global temperatures have continued to grow, only at a slightly slower pace."

"Are you asking us to find a solution?"

"Not directly. I am calling to inform you that a Penelope Clothiet-Warner of the G-20 Executive Committee will be in touch with you with a—how to put this properly—it is more than an invitation. It will be more like an order to appear. You, your father and your Swift Enterprises legal team are being summoned to appear before the G-20 Environment Committee!"

Dumbfounded, Tom asked, "Whatever for? Are we going to be treated as invited guests, or as indicted criminals?"

"Tom," Doktor Wolfram tried to soothe the youth. "I may have misstated the situation. The committee wants you to appear as guests, and you will certainly be asked to provide insight and assistance where possible. They are interested in Swift enterprises both because of your record for beneficial projects, products and programs."

"We try to be both good citizens as well as providing the world with what is needed," Tom began, "and we will certainly be at the committee meeting if possible..."

"Please explain!" demanded the Doktor. "What do you mean by 'if possible?'"

"I simply mean that my father is deeply involved in a series of top secret government projects right now. One of them is the reason you are speaking with me and not him today. What I really mean is that having all of us in one room depends on when this meeting is scheduled and how flexible the committee is."

"Ah," replied the Doktor. "I now see your meaning. Well, I have no direct knowledge of the date and time for the meeting, but I do know that Ms. Clothiet-Warner will be calling you at 10:00 a.m. GMT tomorrow."

"Hmm. That's minus four here or 6:00 a.m. Is she calling the main Enterprises' number or would you be able to relay my private number to her in time?"

"Under normal circumstances I would be pleased to act as

intermediary, but this call is strictly off-the-record, please. As I stated, I do this out of respect for you and your father, but definitely not at the request, or with the knowledge of, the committee."

"I fully understand, Herr Doktor. And, thank you!"

"A pleasure to be of some assistance. On an official note I must pass along thanks from the representatives of Rhinehart Industries. They are extremely pleased with the new facilities at your space outpost. In the relatively short time the station has been in orbit, their equipment had become almost worse than outdated. It had begun positively hindering their weather research. The new accommodations up there came just in time."

Tom grinned to himself. He had fielded more than a dozen calls from the various entities who called that part of the Swift's space station 'home.' Everyone was pleased.

"I appreciate the thanks, sir. Please let their people know that we stand by to assist them in the future."

The conversation concluded moments later. Tom turned to ask Bud a question only to discover that his friend had slipped out of the room during the phone call. Tom activated his TeleVoc and paged the husky athlete and copilot on many of Tom's missions.

"Hey, Buddy boy? You there?"

"Sure, skipper. I just hopped out for a minute to grab a bite to eat. What's up?" The TeleVoc pin did not require the sender or receiver to talk aloud; it picked up on jaw and muscle movements at the sender's end and sent minute vibrations into the receiver's inner ear bones that sounded exactly like the voice of the sender.

"I just wanted to ask you if you could take a rain check on dinner tonight? I know Sandy is going to be disappointed, but it looks like I am going to have to cram for an early-morning phone call and may just sleep here at Enterprises."

Bud paused, then replied, "Maybe I'll take Sandy out for a

burger or something. Wouldn't want the poor girl to starve."

After giving his 'blessing,' Tom signed off and reached for the intercom. "Munford... are you there?" he asked.

"Where else would I be at this time of day," came the reply. "And, I really, truly wish you would call me..."

"Trent. Sorry, Trent," Tom finished the man's statement. "Say, it's 12:40 and that's part of the lunch hour... or don't you eat," he teased, knowing full well that the secretary took great pride in both the quality of his home-cooked self-packed meals, as well as being available at all times during normal business hours.

"*Mister Swift,*" came the curt reply. "Please remember that I am here to serve you. If I were to stray from my desk for a leisurely hour or so every day, the whole of Swift Enterprises would fall to pieces. I am, you must know by now, indispensable." There followed a brief pause during which Tom could have sworn that he heard a muffled laugh. "And now, what might I assist you with, young sir?"

"That last call was about a G-20 nations' meeting that Dad and I are practically going to be ordered to attend. Is he reachable right now? If not, can you get word to The Citadel that I really need him to call in upon arrival?"

"I can get him right now if you want. He only said to block calls from other people, not you or your mother. Give me about a minute and I should have him on the line."

While waiting, Tom began pondering what sort of solutions he might be able to offer to the global warming issue should they be pressed for answers.

"Dad," he said when the elder Swift came on the line, "I'm not quite sure how to interpret all this, but I just had a call—perhaps a warning—from Doktor Wolfram at NATO. He told me that we are about to be summoned to a G-20 Environment Committee meeting."

"Sounds like an invitation..." Damon Swift began.

"I don't know, Dad. He made it sound like it is going to be something pretty serious. They are trying to tackle global warming, but it doesn't sound like one of those 'and what can you geniuses think of that will save the world' sort of meetings."

"Well, did he come right out and say that, or could it be a problem with his English?"

"I just don't know, Dad. All I really know is that he says he wasn't authorized to call us about it... it was more of a heads up. Oh, that and the call is coming in at 6:00 am tomorrow morning. The official call, that is."

"Egads! That's 4:00 am at The Citadel. If you think it will help, I'll turn around and come back to answer that call. I can always head back tomorrow after the call and not cause too many problems with the schedule."

"Dad. Normally I would just try to handle this myself, but with the conflicting messages I think I was getting earlier, I could rely on your help. But, you could be part of a three-way call from The Citadel, couldn't you?"

"I could... but I have a feeling that it will be best for you and me to be in the same room when fielding that call. Hold on, just a minute..."

Tom could hear his father talking to Hank Sterling who was piloting the high-speed aircraft. Finally, he came back with, "OK. That's settled. Hank is turning us around right now. We'll be back at Enterprises in about three hours. I'll come over to our office immediately upon arrival and we can go over the recording of that call."

"Thanks, Dad. Sorry to gum up your plans. I know how important your projects out there are."

"See you soon, Son," the elder Swift signed off.

Later that afternoon Tom was sitting at his CAD station stretching a 3-D model of a large, puffy ring when his father strode into the room.

"Hi, Dad. I've just been doodling, waiting for you."

"So, let's listen to that recording." Both Swifts walked over to the desk normally occupied by Damon and signed onto his computer. Bringing up the call log for the day, he quickly found the file he wanted and activated it. From the surround-sound speakers came the entire call.

From time to time, he looked at the younger Swift, trying to judge Tom's impressions now that he could listen to it as a 3rd-party.

At the end of the call, both men looked meaningfully at each other.

"That," Tom's father said, "is a definite warning. But, about what?"

"Listening to that call makes me more confused about his intention. And the intent of the committee," said Tom. He bit his lower lip. "Am I making more out of this than I should?"

"Absolutely not," his father replied. "This committee is known for riding roughshod on people and companies coming before them, both friends as well as foes. We will, of course, try to get some indication of their purpose for 'inviting' us during the morning call, but we may have to play the entire thing by ear."

"What about the 'bring your legal eagles' stuff?"

"I'm pretty sure that is just a matter of form for the committee."

The two talked for a few minutes before Damon Swift excused himself to go talk to The Citadel regarding his revised schedule, returning after Tom had left the office.

Following an early meal that evening, Tom and his father both went to bed to try to get a reasonable night's sleep. Tom was less successful than his father who had been through dozens of incidents in the past that had begun on a similar ominous note.

They arose early enough to grab a bite to eat that Tom's

mother had left for them, and then drove to Swift Enterprises to receive the phone call. Walking into the foyer of their shared office both were surprised to see Munford Trent sitting at his desk, waiting with two steaming cups of coffee.

"Munford," Tom said. "You are right. Enterprises would fall apart without you!"

Although annoyed at the lack of formality in using his given name, Trent allowed a slight smile to play around the corners of his mouth as he handed each Swift his coffee. "I have already talked to the communications board and the call will be routed directly to the phone on Mr. Swift, Senior's desk. They have all normal security measures in place so there will be no bothersome delay for your caller."

"You're a gem, Mun..." Mr. Swift started, "I mean, Trent."

At precisely 3:59 a.m. the phone rang, and Tom quickly pressed the answer button, placing the phone into speaker mode.

"Good morning. This is Damon Swift. With whom do I have the pleasure of speaking?"

A slightly nasally female voice came through the speaker after a slight pause, "This is Penelope Clothiet-Warner, Executive Co-Chair of the G-20 Nations Environment Committee. Good morning to you, Mr. Swift," came the reply. "I have no doubt that any one of several individuals here in Germany may have tipped you the nod regarding the substance of this call."

"Actually, we did receive a call telling us of the call's timing, but nothing of its substance."

"Well, this isn't a social call as you might imagine. We—the committee, that is—are deep into discussions regarding the environment. I, myself, have just stepped out to make this call. We are most distressed to note that after years of progress the environment, especially as it effects global warming, have begun showing less and less effectiveness. To be frank, we must have Swift Enterprises, along with more than a dozen other

international concerns working on this."

"Of course, we will be pleased to lend our expertise to the committee, and can be counted upon to work to develop greater measures to overcome the problems."

"Quite. Our schedule calls for us to meet with you at our Munich offices tomorrow at 1330 GMT. Please arrive at least one hour early at which time you will be briefed as to procedures. Tardiness will not be tolerated. Good day to you!"

With that, the line went dead.