

# CHAPTER XXIII -Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

In Chapter XXIII of "Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive," Mr. Wakefield Damon exhibits notable bravery and quick thinking after their locomotive, the Hercules 0001, collides with a bumper at the end of a timber siding. The collision causes significant damage to the front end of the locomotive, particularly to the pilot or cow-catcher. As Mr. Damon assesses the damage, a group of men, led by a bullying figure with a dyed mustache named Montagne Lewis, approaches him demanding to know the whereabouts of Tom Swift.

Determined to protect Tom's invention and unaware of Tom and Ned's location, Mr. Damon retreats to the cab of the locomotive, refusing entry to the menacing visitors. Despite their threats and attempts to board the locomotive, Mr. Damon successfully fends off the leader with an ammonia pistol invented by Tom Swift. The situation escalates as Montagne Lewis, blinded temporarily by the ammonia spray, orders his gang to break into the cab. However, their attention shifts when they hear the whistle of an oncoming freight train, realizing it could cause further destruction to the electric locomotive due to an open switch on the track.

In a turn of malicious strategy, Lewis and his gang decide to allow the approaching freight, loaded with empties and traveling at high speed, to crash into the siding where the electric locomotive sits, hoping it will do more damage than they could themselves. The chapter closes with the freight train unknowingly headed towards the site of the derailment, and a crucial detail emerges: the communication breakdown that has prevented the Cliff City yardmaster from being alerted to the Hercules 0001's predicament due to an incomplete installation of Tom's new telephone system.