

CHAPTER II -Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

In Chapter II of "Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive," titled "Trouble Starts," Tom Swift encounters a threatening situation that, although startling, doesn't surprise him due to recent reports of footpads in the area. His encounter with a thug who forcibly searches him and steals his wallet under the threat of violence is linked in Tom's mind to warnings from Mr. Richard Bartholomew about a spy from the West, possibly connected to Montagne Lewis and his associates, seeking information harmful to the Swift Construction Company and Bartholomew's railroad business, the H. & P. A.

Reflecting on his numerous adventures since first appearing in "Tom Swift and His Motor Cycle," Tom's thoughts primarily center on the exciting possibility of developing an electric locomotive for Bartholomew, which is believed to be crucial for the financial salvation of the H. & P. A. Railroad. Despite the perilous confrontation under the darkened archway, Tom assesses the situation with the seasoned judgment of a veteran inventor and adventurer. He understands the thug's actions as an aggressive attempt to intimidate rather than a direct threat to his life, drawing some courage from the likelihood that Bartholomew's enemies wouldn't dare cause a scandal.

The assailant's specific interest in Tom's notes regarding the impending contract with Bartholomew suggests a calculated move to undermine the railroad's plans. However, Tom's composed demeanor, even in the face of robbery, indicates his resilience and focus on broader inventorial ambitions over material losses. His return to contemplation of the electric locomotive project after the incident underscores Tom's unwavering dedication to innovation and his significant role in the Swift Construction Company's success. This brush with danger is subtly woven into the narrative of Tom's ongoing ventures, setting a tone of intrigue and challenge regarding the electric

locomotive development and the wider industrial espionage that threatens it.

