

CHAPTER V -Tom Swift and His Electric Locomotive

As Tom Swift and Mr. Damon continued their journey, Mr. Damon revealed his peculiar problem to Tom. He was plagued by chicken-house burglars targeting his prized buff Orpingtons, notably a special cockerel, Blue Ribbon Junior. Despite Mr. Damon's efforts, including surrounding his chicken yard with a barbed wire entanglement and arming his servant with a rock-salt loaded shotgun, the burglars remained a persistent nuisance. Mr. Damon sought Tom's assistance to secure his chicken house more effectively.

Tom proposed electrifying the barbed wire encircling Mr. Damon's chicken yard to deter the thieves without causing serious harm. He planned to modify the existing electrical setup and advised Mr. Damon to obtain a permit from the Electric Supply Company. Despite Mr. Damon's readiness to bear any expense for the solution, Tom intended to ensure the safety of the implementation.

The discussion was interrupted by the sudden appearance of Koku, Tom's giant associate, who reported suspicious activities around the Swift premises. Koku, who was once accustomed to dealing with enemies in a more direct and lethal manner, had discovered mysterious footprints indicating an intruder. Although Koku was eager to confront the intruder, Tom instructed him to refrain from any violent actions without explicit permission.

Upon investigating, Tom and Mr. Damon discovered large boot prints matching those from an earlier encounter, suggesting they were being spied on, likely due to their involvement with Mr. Bartholomew. Although concerned, Tom remained calm, instructing Koku to avoid any confrontation until further notice. This encounter revealed that the dangers facing Tom were not only about thwarting chicken thieves

but also about combating a lurking spy potentially linked to Mr. Bartholomew's unspecified adversaries.

