



Tom Swift and His Rocket Ship

Victor Appleton II

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Tom Swift, Jr, & his friend, Bud Barclay, enter an international space race hoping to orbit the earth in two hours.

A vanished pilot

The fuel kicker

Following a clue

The first test

Sabotage

The rocket launching

A crack-up

Stowaways

An inventive escape

A robot at work

A coded threat

Dangerous acid

A startling ascent

Emergency orders

An attempted theft

Operation shuttle

An important capture

Zero-hour interruption!

Sealed instruments

Ghost winds

An unexpected mishap

Messages from space

Ominous signs

An attack

A record victory

Tom Swift and His Rocket Ship Details

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ISBN : 9780448091037

Author : Victor Appleton II

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From Reader Review Tom Swift and His Rocket Ship for online ebook

Becca says

These are awful books, but so hilarious at the same time.

Gary Parker says

I gave this 3 stars because of its value as a snapshot of American youth culture in the early 1950s. The writing is atrocious, the science is laughable, and the unbridled optimism of youth at the time (an 18-year-old is the greatest rocket scientist in the world, inventing fantastic technological wonders completely on his own and at a whim to solve any problem that arises). The timelines are ridiculous as well. Possibly the laziest science fiction I've ever read.

But the nostalgia factor is off the charts, and the entire series of Tom Swift adventures is delightfully naive, often fun, and frequently unintentionally hilarious. As a time capsule for what it was like to be a young reader in the mid-20th Century, its a gem.

So don't read this if you're looking for quality story-telling, or anything even remotely resembling realistic science. But if you've got a bag of caramel corn at hand and an evening to kill, and you have a hankering for a quick burst of mid-century childhood fun, go ahead and give Tom Swift a read. It probably won't cause too much brain damage...

Matt Newell says

nice book as always so far.

Erik Graff says

While in elementary school, before I got captivated by science fiction, but probably contributing to the move in that direction by fifth grade, I read a whole bunch of Tom Swift and Tom Swift Jr. books, starting with the latter. Of the dozens of titles read I can only recall a few with any certainty, this being one of those few, the space program being very much on my mind--and on our teachers' minds--since the Soviet Sputnik. The picture of the cover helps of course.

Frankly, I can't much recommend the second generation Tom Swift books. Indeed, when a neighbor lady loaned me a couple of her old copies of first generation Tom Swift books--two of which, Tom Swift and His Giant Searchlight and Tom Swift and His Submarine, I do clearly remember--I remember being impressed with their superiority to the contemporary Swift Jr. books I had been devouring.

The fact that I spent hundreds, maybe thousands, of hours reading Swift books and comics is indicative of

the fact that my parents really paid no attention to what I read, probably just being happy that I read so much, so quietly. There was one exception, this regarding comics, but that's another story...

Kiri says

I want to give this 2.5 stars. I liked it in that it's charming and it makes some effort to convey science concepts. But it was written in 1954, and that shows, from the (cute) optimism about space travel to the (less cute) gender roles. While of course it's a product of its time, some of these aspects make it a little hard for the modern reader. Beyond that, it's so, so naive; bad guys are purely bad, and good guys superhumanly good. Bad guys are captured, but never really hurt or killed, since that would be a bad deed on the good guy's part. The good guys always come out on top, whether the foe is a bad guy or physics or space-time itself. I think even for the intended (young) target audience, more complexity could have been used. There are also some cringe-worthy moments where the (less educated) cook is repeatedly used as an opportunity to info-dump to the reader, due to his ignorance (and painfully bad accent).

That said, the book is creative and enjoyable to read, and it certainly gets the reader excited about space travel. Like a lot of 50's sci-fi, everything just seems so *possible* and so *easy*! There's a part of me that would love to live in that world. :)

Craig says

The Tom Swift, Jr., books were a fun, upbeat, and interesting adventure series published for kids from 1954 to 1971 that promoted science, fair-play, patriotism, and team-work; they were good, positive books. The series served as a sequel to the original Tom Swift series that appeared from 1910 to the beginnings of World War II; Tom and his sister, Sandy, are the children of the first Tom and his wife, Mary Nestor; Tom's girlfriend Phyllis Newton is the daughter of Tom Sr.'s sidekick Ned Newton (now Uncle Ned to Tom and Sandy); the family home is still located in Shopton along Lake Carlopa, etc. It's nice that the continuity is preserved rather than just being over-written as happened to The Hardy Boys; in the first Tom Jr., book beings make contact that were first hinted at in the final real Tom Sr., book, Planet Stone, and throughout the series references to the history are made such as naming a device the Damonscope in honor of a character from the first series, Mr. Wakefield Damon. In addition to the Swifts and Newtons, Tom Jr. has his own sidekick, Bud Barclay, and there are several interesting supporting characters such as Phil Radnor, Harlan Ames (I wonder if Harlan Ellison was the inspiration for the name?), Hank Sterling, Miss Trent (who I don't believe ever had a first name), and especially Chow Winkler, Tom's cook, a former "Texas chuck-wagon" cook who was given to a variety of wild and unlikely expressions such as, "Well, brand my space biscuits!" The earlier books had nice covers, end-papers, and illustrations: Graham Kaye and Charles Brey provided the art for the first twenty-five volumes, followed by Edward Moretz, after which the artistic (as well as the literary) quality starting going downhill. Tom invented and built many fantastic inventions (but remember it was the '50s and '60s), and had many exciting adventures along with his friends and family. They faced off against saboteurs and spies and the evil Brungarians but their good spirits and hard work and can-do attitude always paid off in the end. The continuity didn't always hold logically from book to book, and looking back it's easy to pick apart one thing or another, but they were fun and fine books in their time. This third volume has a neat cover that looks like one of those soda-powered plastic rockets with a huge window that they used to sell for kids to launch in their back yards. It was kind of dated even for it's time, but.... It's a space race!

Courtney says

Good night, Tom! I never thought I'd get done reading this book.

A very bland book about *gasp* the rocket race! The U.S.A. must beat all the other nations!!! U.S.A.!!! U.S.A.!!!

The best friend is the brawn (short, stocky and always asking questions so the author can write out intelligent--and probably, at the time, educational--explanations from his brainy best friend), gender roles are continuously enforced (Sandy and Phyl are the doting sisters/girlfriends who can't believe Tom and Bud are doing something so dangerous), and the single Southerner in the book is the cook (which, granted, was a reasonable choice--who wouldn't want good ole Texan cooking?) who is also always asking stupid questions.

Chuck says

Copyright 1954. Very much within the escapist, black and white morality adventure book for young boys.

Linda says

Wowie- I gave this book 5 stars mostly because of the wow factor. The Tom Swift books are filled with technical jargon and inventions that young readers, especially boys, will love. The books are Science Fiction. Possibly some of these things are now possible. The author certainly makes you think that they were feasible in 1954 when it was published! From an adult- a mother's and grandmother's point of view- I can't imagine allowing an 18 year-old boy, I don't care how smart he is, go off into uncharted space in a very complex rocket ship that he built! Untested, basically.

So- the race to space is on. The first person (team) to manage to orbit the earth in space for 2 hours will win a prize of \$100,000! A huge, huge amount in 1954, I'm sure. Tom is game. He has been working on a rocket. Now, I don't know anything about rocket building but the techno things sound possible to me and they are terms that I have heard before- payload rockets, sequencing of parts that will fall away as the rocket is lifted beyond the atmosphere. etc. Other things in this book made me laugh. Outer space beings have been communicating with the Swifts at their lab using strange symbols. They are from Mars! Really? Did we think there might be life on Mars in 1954? Mr. Swift is able to figure out what they are saying. These beings can escape the gravity of their planet, have a faster spaceship, and figured out how to send messages to another planet that they realized was inhabited but they cannot figure out how to get through earth's atmosphere. And NASA (did they exist then?) or the government did not place a secrecy gag on the Swifts about the aliens. Well, back to the story. Other governments are trying to reach space first to win the prize. And there is a space pirate (of course!) who tries over and over to sabotage Tom's space craft and/or ruin his chances.

John Yelverton says

Another wonderful, old science fiction story from Victor Appleton.

Rex Libris says

In this updated version of the 50's/60's TS Jr book, Tom is in compeition with his dad to build a rocket ship and win an award for privately-constructed rockets. In the process, Tom's Dad's rocket gets hijacked by a duped agent of an evil ex-Brungarian scientist. So Tom and Bud go in Tom's rocket to rescue the haplessly duped agent and stop of the evill machinations of the bad guy.

Robert Zaslavsky says

This series was one of my childhood favorites. Rereading it is part of a literary trip down memory lane. This holds up surprisingly well. (Note: This is actually the third of the Tom Swift, Jr. series, published in the fifties.)
