

**TOM SWIFT AND HIS MOTOR-  
BOAT**

Or

**The Rivals of Lake Carlopa**

By

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## CHAPTER I

### A MOTOR-BOAT AUCTION

"Where are you going, Tom?" asked Mr. Barton Swift of his son as the young man was slowly pushing his motor-cycle out of the yard toward the country road. "You look as though you had some object in view."

"So I have, dad. I'm going over to Lanton."

"To Lanton? What for?"

"I want to have a look at that motor-boat."

"Which boat is that, Tom? I don't recall your speaking about a boat over at Lanton. What do you want to look at it for?"

"It's the motor-boat those fellows had who tried to get away with your turbine model invention, dad. The one they used at the old General Harkness mansion, in the woods near the lake, and the same boat that fellow used when he got away from me the day I was chasing him here."

"Oh, yes, I remember now. But what is the boat doing over at Lanton?"

"That's where it belongs. It's the property of Mr. Bently Hastings. The thieves stole it from him, and when they ran away from the old mansion, the time Mr. Damon and I raided the place, they left the boat on the lake. I turned it over to the county authorities, and they found out it belonged to Mr. Hastings. He has it back now, but I understand it's somewhat damaged, and he wants to get rid of it. He's going to sell it at auction today, and I thought I'd go over and take a look at it. You see—"

"Yes, I see, Tom," exclaimed Mr. Swift with a laugh. "I see what you're aiming at. You want a motor-boat, and you're going all around Robin Hood's barn to get at it."

"No, dad, I only—"

"Oh, I know you, Tom, my lad!" interrupted the inventor, shaking his finger at his son, who seemed somewhat confused. "You have a nice rowing skiff and a sailboat, yet you are hankering for a motor-boat. Come now, own up. Aren't you?"

"Well, dad, a motor-boat certainly would go fine on Lake Carlopa. There's plenty of room to speed her, and I wonder there aren't more of them. I was going to see what Mr. Hastings' boat would sell for, but I didn't exactly think of buying it' Still—"

"But you wouldn't buy a damaged boat, would you?"

"It isn't much damaged," and in his eagerness the young inventor (for Tom Swift had taken out several patents) stood his motor-cycle up against the fence and came closer to his father. "It's only slightly damaged," he went on. "I can easily fix it. I looked it all over before I gave it in charge of the authorities, and it's certainly a fine boat. It's worth nine hundred dollars—or it was when it was new."

"That's a good deal of money for a boat," and Mr. Swift looked serious, for though he was well off, he was inclined to be conservative.

"Oh, I shouldn't think of paying that much. In fact, dad, I really had no idea of bidding at the auction. I only thought I'd go over and get an idea of what the boat might sell for. Perhaps some day—"

Tom paused. Since his father had begun to question him some new plans had come into the lad's head. He looked at his parent and saw a smile beginning to work around the corners of Mr. Swift's lips. There was also a humorous look in the eyes of the older inventor. He understood boys fairly well, even if he only had one, and he knew Tom perfectly.

"Would you really like to make a bid on that boat Tom?" he asked.

"Would I, dad? Well—" The youth did not finish, but his father knew what he meant.

"I suppose a motor-boat would be a nice thing to have on Lake Carlopa," went on Mr. Swift musingly. "You and I could take frequent trips in it. It

isn't like a motor-cycle, only useful for one. What do you suppose the boat will go for, Tom?"

"I hardly know. Not a high price, I believe, for motor-boats are so new on our lake that few persons will take a chance on them. But if Mr. Hastings is getting another, he will not be so particular about insisting on a high price for the old one. Then, too, the fact that it is damaged will help to keep the price down, though I know I can easily put it in good shape. I would like to make a bid, if you think it's all right."

"Well, I guess you may, Tom, if you really want it. You have money of your own and a motor-boat is not a bad investment. What do you think ought to be the limit?"

"Would you consider a hundred and fifty dollars too high?"

Mr. Swift looked at Tom critically. He was plainly going over several matters in his mind, and not the least of them was the pluck his son had shown in getting back some valuable papers and a model from a gang of thieves. The lad certainly was entitled to some reward, and to allow him to get a boat might properly be part of it.

"I think you could safely go as high as two hundred dollars, Tom," said Mr. Swift at length. "That would be my limit on a damaged boat for it might be better to pay a little more and get a new one. However, use your own judgment, but don't go over two hundred. So the thieves who made so much trouble for me stole that boat from Mr. Hastings, eh?"

"Yes, and they didn't take much care of it either. They damaged the engine, but the hull is in good shape. I'm ever so glad you'll let me bid on it. I'll start right off. The auction is at ten o'clock and I haven't more than time to get there."

"Now be careful how you bid. Don't raise your own figures, as I've sometimes seen women, and men too, do in their excitement. Somebody may go over your head; and if he does, let them. If you get the boat I'll be very glad on your account. But don't bring any of Anson Morse's gang back in it with you. I've seen enough of them."

"I'll not dad!" cried Tom as he trundled his motor-cycle out of the gate and into the country road that led to the village of Shopton, where he lived, and to Lanton, where the auction was to be held. The young inventor had not gone far before he turned back, leaving his machine standing on the side path.

"What's the matter?" asked his father, who had started toward one of several machine shops on the premises—shops where Mr. Swift and his son did inventive work.

"Guess I'd better get a blank check and some money," replied Tom as he entered the house. "I'll need to pay a deposit if I secure the boat."

"That's so. Well, good luck," and with his mind busy on a plan for a new kind of storage battery, the inventor went on to his workroom. Tom got some cash and his checkbook from a small safe he owned and was soon speeding over the road to Lanton, his motor-cycle making quite a cloud of dust. While he is thus hurrying along to the auction I will tell you something about him.

Tom Swift, son of Barton Swift, lived with his father and a motherly housekeeper, Mrs. Baggert, in a large house on the outskirts of the town of Shopton, in New York State. Mr. Swift had acquired considerable wealth from his many inventions and patents, but he did not give up working out his ideas simply because he had plenty of money. Tom followed in the footsteps of his parent and had already taken out several patents.

Shortly before this story opens the youth had become possessed of a motor-cycle in a peculiar fashion. As told in the first volume of this series, entitled "Tom Swift and His Motor-cycle," Tom was riding to the town of Mansburg on an errand for his father one day when he was nearly run down by a motorcyclist. A little later the same motorcyclist, who was a Mr. Wakefield Damon, of Waterfield, collided with a tree near Tom's home and was severely cut and bruised, the machine being broken. Tom and his father cared for the injured rider, and Mr. Damon, who was an eccentric individual, was so disheartened by his attempts to ride the motor-cycle that he sold it to Tom for fifty dollars, though it had cost much more.

About the same time that Tom bought the motor-cycle a firm of rascally lawyers, Smeak & Katch by name, had, in conjunction with several men, made an attempt to get control of an invention of a turbine motor perfected by Mr. Swift. The men, who were Ferguson Appleson, Anson Morse, Wilson Featherston, alias Simpson, and Jake Burke, alias Happy Harry, who sometimes disguised himself as a tramp, tried several times to steal the model.

Their anxiety to get it was due to the fact that they had invested a large sum in a turbine motor invented by another man, but their motor would not work and they sought to steal Mr. Swift's. Tom was sent to Albany on his motor-cycle to deliver the model and some valuable papers to Mr. Crawford, of the law firm of Reid & Crawford, of Washington, attorneys for Mr. Swift. Mr. Crawford had an errand in Albany and had agreed to meet Tom there with the model.

But, on the way, Tom was attacked by the gang of unscrupulous men and the model was stolen. He was assaulted and carried far away in an automobile. In an attempt to capture the gang in a deserted mansion, in the woods on the shore of Lake Carlopa, Tom was aided by Mr. Damon, of whom he had purchased the motor-cycle. The men escaped, however, and nothing could be done to punish them.

Tom was thinking of the exciting scenes he had passed through about a month previous as he spun along the road leading to Lanton.

"I hope I don't meet Happy Harry or any of his gang to-day," mused the lad as he turned on a little more power to enable his machine to mount a hill. "I don't believe they'll attend the auction, though. It would be too risky for them."

As Tom swung along at a rapid pace he heard, behind him, the puffing of an automobile, with the muffler cut out. He turned and cast a hasty glance behind.

"I hope that ain't Andy Fogger or any of his cronies," he said to himself. "He might try to run me down just for spite. He generally rushes along with the muffler open so as to attract attention and make folks think he has a racing car."

It was not Andy, however, as Tom saw a little later, as a man passed him in a big touring car. Andy Foger, as my readers will recollect, was a red-haired, squinty-eyed lad with plenty of money and not much else. He and his cronies, including Sam Snedecker, nearly ran Tom down one day, when the latter was on his bicycle, as told in the first volume of this series. Andy had been off on a tour with his chums during the time when Tom was having such strenuous adventures and had recently returned.

"If I can only get that boat," mused Tom as he swung back into the middle of the road after the auto had passed him, "I certainly will have lots of fun. I'll make a week's tour of Lake Carlopa and take dad and Ned Newton with me." Ned was Tom's most particular chum, but as young Newton was employed in the Shopton bank, the lad did not have much time for pleasure. Lake Carlopa was a large body of water, and it would take a moderately powered boat several days to make a complete circuit of the shore, so cut up into bays and inlets was it.

In about an hour Tom was at Lanton, and as he neared the home of Mr. Hastings, which was on the shore of the lake, he saw quite a throng going down toward the boathouse.

"There'll be some lively bidding," thought Tom as he got off his machine and pushed it ahead of him through the drive and down toward the river. "I hope they don't go above two hundred dollars, though."

"Get out the way there!" called a sudden voice, and looking back, Tom saw that an automobile had crept up silently behind him. In it were Andy Foger and Sam Snedecker. "Why don't you get out the way?" petulantly demanded the red-haired lad.

"Because I don't choose to," replied Tom calmly, knowing that Andy would never dare to speed up his machine on the slope leading down to the lake.

"Go ahead, bump him!" the young inventor heard Sam whisper.

"You'd better try it, if you want to get the best trouncing you ever had!" cried Tom hotly.

"Hu! I s'pose you think you're going to bid on the boat?" sneered Andy.



"Is there any law against it?" asked Tom.

"Hu! Well, you'll not get it. I'm going to take that boat," retorted the squint-eyed bully. "Dad gave me the money to get it."

"All right," answered Tom non-committally. "Go ahead. It's a free country."

He stood his motor-cycle up against a tree and went toward a group of persons who were surrounding the auctioneer. The time had arrived to start the sale. As Tom edged in closer he brushed against a man who looked at him sharply. The lad was just wondering if he had ever seen the individual before, as there seemed to be something strangely familiar about him, when the man turned quickly away, as if afraid of being recognized.

"That's odd," thought Tom, but he had no further time for speculation, as the auctioneer was mounting on a soapbox and had begun to address the gathering.

## CHAPTER II

### SOME LIVELY BIDDING

"Attention, people!" cried the auctioneer. "Give me your attention for a few minutes, and we will proceed with the business in hand. As you all know, I am about to dispose of a fine motor-boat, the property of Mr. Bently Hastings. The reason for disposing of it at auction is known to most of you, but for the benefit of those who do not, I will briefly state them. The boat was stolen by a gang of thieves and recovered recently through the efforts of a young man, Thomas Swift, son of Barton Swift, our fellow-townsmen, of Shopton." At that moment the auctioneer, Jacob Wood, caught sight of Tom in the press, and, looking directly at the lad, continued:

"I understand that young Mr. Swift is here to-day, and I hope he intends to bid on this boat. If he does, the bidding will be lively, for Tom Swift is a lively young man. I wish I could say that some of the men who stole the boat were here to-day."

The auctioneer paused and there were some murmurs from those in the throng as to why such a wish should be uttered. Tom felt some one moving near him, and, looking around, he saw the same man with whom he had come in contact before. The person seemed desirous of getting out on the edge of the crowd, and Tom felt a return of his vague suspicions. He looked closely at the fellow, but could trace no resemblance to any of the men who had so daringly stolen his father's model.

"The reason I wish they were here to-day," went on Mr. Wood, "is that the men did some slight damage to the boat, and if they were here to-day we would make them pay for it. However, the damage is slight and can easily be repaired. I mention that, as Mr. Hastings desired me to. Now we will proceed with the bidding, and I will say that an opportunity will first be given all to examine the boat. Perhaps Tom Swift will give us his opinion on the state it is in as we know he is well qualified to talk about machinery."

All eyes were turned on Tom, for many knew him.

"Humph! I guess I know as much about boats and motors as he does," sneered Andy Foger. "He isn't the only one in this crowd! Why didn't the auctioneer ask me?"

"Keep quiet," begged Sam Snedecker. "People are laughing at you, Andy."

"I don't care if they are," muttered the sandy haired youth. "Tom Swift needn't think he's everything."

"If you will come down to the dock," went on the auctioneer, "you can all see the boat, and I would be glad to have young Mr. Swift give us the benefit of his advice."

The throng trooped down to the lake, and, blushing somewhat, Tom told what was the matter with the motor and how it could be fixed. It was noticed that there was less enthusiasm over the matter than there had been, for certainly the engine, rusty and out of order as it was, did not present an attractive sight. Tom noted that the man, who had acted so strangely, did not come down to the dock.

"Guess he can't be much interested in the motor," decided Tom.

"Now then, if it's all the same to you folks, I'll proceed with the auction here," went on Mr. Wood. "You can all see the boat from here. It is, as you see, a regular family launch and will carry twelve persons comfortably. With a canopy fitted to it a person could cruise all about the lake and stay out over night, for you could sleep on the seat cushions. It is twenty-one feet in length and has a five-and-a-half-foot beam, the design being what is known as a compromise stern. The motor is a double-cylinder two-cycle one, of ten horsepower. It has a float-feed carburetor, mechanical oiler, and the ignition system is the jump-spark—the best for this style of motor. The boat will make ten miles an hour, with twelve in, and, of course, more than that with a lighter load. A good deal will depend on the way the motor is managed.

"Now, as you know, Mr. Hastings wishes to dispose of the boat partly because he does not wish to repair it and partly because he has a newer and larger one. The craft, which is named CARLOPA by the way, cost originally nine hundred dollars. It could not be purchased new to-day, in many places, for a thousand. Now what am I offered in its present condition? Will any one make an offer? Will you give me five hundred dollars?"

The auctioneer paused and looked critically at the throng. Several persons smiled. Tom looked worried. He had no idea that the price would start so high.

"Well, perhaps that is a bit stiff," went on Mr. Wood. "Shall we say four hundred dollars? Come now, I'm sure it's worth four hundred. Who'll start it at four hundred?"

No one would, and the auctioneer descended to three hundred, then to two and finally, as if impatient, he called out:

"Well, will any one start at fifty dollars?"

Instantly there were several cries of "I will!"

"I thought you would," went on the auctioneer. "Now we will get down to work. I'm offered fifty dollars for this twenty-one foot, ten horsepower family launch. Will any one make it sixty?"

"Sixty!" called out Andy Fogger in a shrill voice. Several turned to look at him.

"I didn't know he was going to bid," thought Tom. "He may go above me. He's got plenty of money, and, while I have too, I'm not going to pay too much for a damaged boat."

"Sixty I'm bid, sixty—sixty!" cried Mr. Wood in a sing-song tone, "who'll make it seventy?"

"Sixty-five!" spoke a quiet voice at Tom's elbow, and he turned to see the mysterious man who had joined the crowd at the edge of the lake.

"Sixty-five from the gentleman in the white straw hat!" called Mr. Wood with a smile at his wit, for there were many men wearing white straw hats, the day being a warm one in June.

"Here, who's bidding above me?" exclaimed Andy, as if it was against the law.

"I guess you'll find a number going ahead of you, my young friend," remarked the auctioneer. "Will you have the goodness not to interrupt me, except when you want to bid?"

"Well, I offered sixty," said the squint-eyed bully, while his crony, Sam Snedecker, was vainly, pulling at his sleeve.

"I know you did, and this gentleman went above you. If you want to bid more you can do so. I'm offered sixty-five, sixty-five I'm offered for this boat. Will any one make it seventy-five?"

Mr. Wood looked at Tom, and our hero, thinking it was time for him to make a bid, offered seventy. "Seventy from Tom Swift!" cried the auctioneer. "There is a lad who knows a motor-boat from stem to stern, if those are the right words. I don't know much about boats except what I'm told, but Tom Swift does. Now, if he bids, you people ought to know that it's all right. I'm bid seventy—seventy I'm bid. Will any one make it eighty?"

"Eighty!" exclaimed Andy Foger after a whispered conference with Sam. "I know as much about boats as Tom Swift. I'll make it eighty."

"No side remarks. I'll do most of the talking. You just bid, young man," remarked Mr. Wood. "I have eighty bid for this boat—eighty dollars. Why, my friends, I can't understand this. I ought to have it up to three hundred dollars, at least. But I thank you all the same. We are coming on. I'm bid eighty—"

"Ninety!" exclaimed the quiet man at Tom's elbow. He was continually fingering his upper lip, as though he had a mustache there, but his face was clean-shaven. He looked around nervously as he spoke.

"Ninety!" called out the auctioneer.

"Ninety-five!" returned Tom. Andy Foger scowled at him, but the young inventor only smiled. It was evident that the bully did not relish being bid against. He and his crony whispered together again.

"One hundred!" called Andy, as if no one would dare go above that.

"I'm offered an even hundred," resumed Mr. Wood. "We are certainly coming on. A hundred I am bid, a hundred—a hundred—a hundred—"

"And five," said the strange man hastily, and he seemed to choke as he uttered the words.

"Oh, come now; we ought to have at least ten-dollar bids from now on," suggested Mr. Wood. "Won't you make it a hundred and ten?" The auctioneer looked directly at the man, who seemed to shrink back into the crowd. He shook his head, cast a sort of despairing look at the boat and hurried away.

"That's queer," murmured Tom. "I guess that was his limit, yet if he wanted the boat badly that wasn't a high price."

"Who's going ahead of me?" demanded Andy in loud tones.

"Keep quiet!" urged Sam. "We may get it yet."

"Yes, don't make so many remarks," counseled the auctioneer. "I'm bid a hundred and five. Will any one make it a hundred and twenty-five?"

Tom wondered why the man had not remained to see if his bid was accepted, for no one raised it at once, but he hurried off and did not look back. Tom took a sudden resolve.

"A hundred and twenty-five!" he called out.

"That's what I like to hear," exclaimed Mr. Wood. "Now we are doing business. A hundred and twenty-five from Tom Swift. Will any one offer me fifty?"

Andy and Sam seemed to be having some dispute.

"Let's make him quit right now," suggested Andy in a hoarse whisper.

"You can't," declared Sam'

"Yes, I can. I'll go up to my limit right now."

"And some one will go above you—maybe Tom will," was Sam's retort.

"I don't believe he can afford to," Andy came back with. "I'm going to call his bluffs. I believe he's only bidding to make others think he wants it. I don't believe he'll buy it."

Tom heard what was said, but did not reply. The auctioneer was calling monotonously: "I'm bid a hundred and twenty-five—twenty-five. Will any one make it fifty?"

"A hundred and fifty!" sang out Andy, and all eyes were directed toward him.

"Sixty!" said Tom quietly.

"Here, you—" began the red-haired lad. "You—"

"That will do!" exclaimed the auctioneer sternly. "I am offered a hundred and sixty. Now who will give me an advance? I want to get the boat up to two hundred, and then the real bidding will begin."

Tom's heart sank. He hoped it would be some time before a two hundred dollar offer would be heard. As for Andy Foger, he was almost speechless with rage. He shook off the restraining arm of Sam, and, worming his way to the front of the throng, exclaimed:

"I'll give a hundred and seventy-five dollars for that boat!"

"Good!" cried the auctioneer. "That's the way to talk. I'm offered a hundred and seventy-five."

"Eighty," said Tom quietly, though his heart was beating fast.

"Well, of all—" began Andy, but Sam Snedecker dragged him back.

"You haven't got any more money," said the bully's crony. "Better stop now."

"I will not! I'm going home for more," declared Andy. "I must have that boat."

"It will be sold when you get back," said Sam.

"Haven't you got any money you can lend me?" inquired the squint-eyed one, scowling in Tom's direction. "No, not a bit. There, some one raised Tom's bid."

At that moment a man in the crowd offered a hundred and eighty-one dollars.

"Small amounts thankfully received," said Mr. Wood with a laugh. Then the bidding became lively, a number making one-dollar advances.

The price got up to one hundred and ninety-five dollars and there it hung for several minutes, despite the eloquence of Mr. Wood, who tried by all his persuasive powers to get a substantial advance. But every one seemed afraid to bid. As for the young inventor, he was in a quandary. He could only offer five dollars more, and, if he bid it in a lump, some one might go to two hundred and five, and he would not get the boat. He wished he had secured permission from his father to go higher, yet he knew that as a fair proposition two hundred dollars was about all the motor-boat in its present condition was worth, at least to him. Then he made a sudden resolve. He thought he might as well have the suspense over.

"Two hundred dollars!" he called boldly.

"I'm offered two hundred!" repeated Mr. Wood. "That is something like it. Now who will raise that?"

There was a moment of silence. Then the auctioneer swung into an enthusiastic description of the boat. He begged for an advance, but none was made, though Tom's heart seemed in his throat, so afraid was he that he would not get the CARLOPA.

"Two hundred—two hundred!" droned on Mr. Wood. "I am offered two hundred. Will any of you go any higher?" He paused a moment, and Tom's heart beat harder than ever. "If not," resumed the speaker, "I will



declare the bidding closed. Are you all done? Once—twice—three times. Two hundred dollars. Going—going—gone!" He clapped his hands. "The boat is sold to Thomas Swift for two hundred dollars. If he'll step up I'll take his money."

There was a laugh as Tom, blushing, advanced. He passed Andy Foger, who had worked his way over near him.

"You got the boat," sneered the bully, "and I s'pose you think you got ahead of me."

"Keep quiet!" begged Sam.

"I won't!" exclaimed Andy. "He outbid me just out of spite, and I'll get even with him. You see if I don't!"

Tom looked Andy Foger straight in the eyes, but did not answer, and the red-haired youth turned aside, followed by his crony, and started toward his automobile.

"I congratulate you on your bargain," said Mr. Wood as Tom proceeded to make out a check. He gave little thought to the threat Andy Foger had made, but the time was coming when he was to remember it well.

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