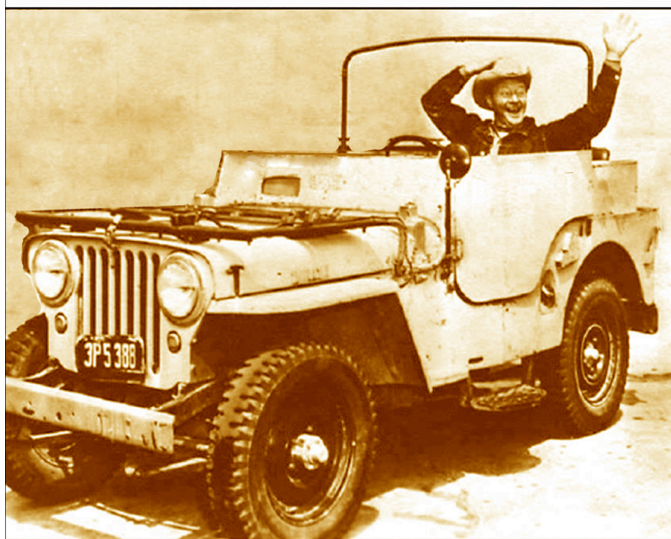


Damon Swift and the Citadel 2: A Bud & Chow Story



By T. Edward Fox

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The story of how Damon and Tom Swift first met Bud Barclay and Chow Winkler while working to get permissions for installing the second reactor at their New Mexico nuclear facility, the Citadel.

Cover By THud

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The jeep appeared almost as if out of nowhere and Tom had a brief thought this might be a trap, but he and his new friend climbed in and they all raced off across the uneven ground!

— CHAPTER 5 —

Foreword

A good friend took me to task over not extending the *Damon Swift and the Citadel* novel to include the story about how his son met both the boy who would be come his best friend and also the man who would become like a second father to him, Bud Barclay and Chow Winkler.

And although another fan author had already written a bit of that story (Jon Cooper's *Tom Swift and His Nuclear Hyperplane*) nearly a decade ago, I thought about that and decided mine is a different world than his Tom Jr. one and so the story of the meetings obviously had to be different.

So, with a nod of thanks and a small bit of plot borrowing from Jon, (forgive my sin, please!) I give to you that part of my story.

Why is it listed as a Damon Swift story and not a Tom Swift one? Because a lot of this book involves Damon and his attempts to get a larger nuclear reactor okayed and built. Even in the real world of Tom Swift, his meeting with Bud and their eventual encounter with Chow Winkler were never long-term epic tales.

Oh, please be aware if you have read Jon's story, I am not bringing in the character of Irene Goddard in this story other than to say she is an assistant to Damon, and only a bare hint of romantic attraction between her and Tom is mentioned. And, nothing else!

T. Edward Fox

Chapter 4/

TOM FINDS A NEW FRIEND

TOM GOT the Hyperplane back to the Citadel airfield and set down as smoothly as if nothing had happened before taxiing to the hangar. After shutting the jet completely down he climbed out of the cockpit and make a thorough inspection of the airframe. His bumping and flipping had done nothing visible but he was determined to give it a better inspection the following day.

He hooked the manual tow bar to the front landing gear, turned the aircraft so it could be shoved into the hangar tail first, and had it stowed and unhooked three minutes later.

The last step to be safe was to feel how hot the exhaust was; it was very warm but not so hot it could catch anything on fire.

The teen walked around the side of the hangar and across the grass and tarmac to the cafeteria, discovering about half way there that his legs had begun to wobble and he was feeling unsteady on his feet.

Tom made a detour to the small infirmary inside the Administration building and asked if the doctor might give him a few minutes.

He was shown into the one and only exam cubicle and Dr. Mathers came in about a minute later.

“What seems to be the troubles of our young boss?” he asked.

Tom explained his flight and the mystery intruder and how his legs had nearly given out under him.

“I’m pretty sure I didn’t hit my head or anything,” he stated.

The doctor laughed. “And, I’m fairly certain that you also did not hit your head. What you have is very likely to be adrenaline that pumped through your body at the first sign of the... should I call it an attack? Anyway, once you got back on the ground your body felt safe and stopped the flow. That led to almost instant withdrawal and thus the legs. If you think back you might also find your head became slightly dizzy at that point.”

Tom nodded. “Yes, you’re right, it did for about half a minute. Gee, now I feel I shouldn’t have come to bother you. Can we keep this sort of doctor and patient confidential until I get a chance to explain it to dad?”

The doctor assured him he would say nothing until at least a full day after Damon returned. “Tell him, Tom. Perhaps not your mother; they worry so.”

Tom might have put off having a talk with his father except he received a phone call an hour later from the Air Force base asking him to supply a formal report and complaint against the other aircraft.

“And, since you are a juvenile, Mr. Swift, we ask that a parent or legal guardian also review

and sign the report. Please include your pilot's license information and have that submitted to us no later than tomorrow at noon. Thank you for your cooperation, and we're sorry that we couldn't get that other jet. We would love to study it. Kind of a unique approach that isn't anything like U.S. Government issue!"

Now, Tom had another worry. He felt instinctively that his father would disapprove of him taking the Hyperplane out for a solo flight without some sort of supervision. He also worried that his memory of the incident might not be as good as the Air Force expected. He had, after all, been more interested in keeping his jet in the air and getting it turned over the right way than he'd been on gazing at that black aircraft.

After reaching the room he was staying in, he pulled out some writing paper and a pen and sat down the sketch the aircraft.

An hour later he shoved his fifth piece of paper to one side and leaned back.

"That is about as accurate as I can get the drawing," he muttered, as he slid the wadded-up other sheets into the recycle bin next to the desk.

He was sitting there five minutes later when his cell phone rang startling him so much he let out a little noise.

"Tom Swift," he answered not recognizing the number indicated was the caller's origin.

"Hello, Son," his father's voice said. "Sorry for not calling on my phone, but I forgot to

charge it and it ran out about the time I'd dialed the third number of your cell. How are things going? Taken your Hyperplane out for a little spin yet? I had the thought I should have told you it was okay with me, but forgot to say anything in my haste to get out here."

Tom nervously poured out the story including the Air Force's request—or demand—he write up a report. "I'm sorry I didn't check things out with you first."

There were a few seconds of silence and then, "Nonsense! You are a very good pilot and that Hyperplane of yours can't hold enough fuel for you to get very far. Besides, you are smart enough to not get yourself too far from turnaround. Even then, that other pilot was totally unexpected. I'll bet flying through that vortex his jet created got the heart and adrenaline pumping, huh?"

Tom let out a rueful chuckle. "Not by half, Dad. So, how long do you think this report needs to be?"

"Well, about as long as it takes for you to tell the complete, as you recall it, story. I'd do it now rather than later and if you have the desire, try making a sketch of that other jet. Not just for them, but I'd certainly like to study it. Uhh, Tom? Something just registered in my old brain. You said the other pilot radioed out a warning that he knew who you were and would be coming back?"

"Yeah, and it a really guttural foreign accent. Like someone who grew up in a place like

Russia and then learned almost perfect English but can't get rid of his accent. The thing is... I don't think he knew it was me; he only said the word 'Swift,' as if he might have thought it was *you*."

Tom also mentioned he'd already made a sketch of the other jet, and his father congratulated him on his foresight.

"Uh, Dad? How am I going to get your signature on this? I mean, you're not coming back tonight by chance?"

"No, and if you give me the email address or a phone number, I'll tell the base out there the situation and let them know I've reviewed the report. Just be sure to send it to me before tomorrow morning. Okay?"

Before hanging up, Tom asked if it might be okay to take a shorter flight around the Citadel to check the Hyperplane out. After, of course, getting the report submitted.

Damon took a deep breath and let it out slowly before answering.

"Give it a full day to make certain that jet doesn't show up overhead and then... sure. Do everything you can including notifying the Air Force of your flight plans in case they want to have an aircraft or two ready, and do not refuse an escort if they suggest it." They soon said good-bye and hung up.

Damon turned to Peter Quintana and related the story.

"It sounded something like that from your

side of the conversation. I trust he's okay?" He got a nod. "Fine. Then let's get back to this final page of the proposal. I have to tell you I think we are going to do an end-around on a lot of the red tape!"

Tom completed his report and emailed it, along with a scanned copy of his most detailed drawing. He'd notated, and drawn arrows pointing at, a few features like the placement of the cockpit that had been farther back than most aircraft might have it. And, he mentioned that the cockpit cover could not be seen through at all as if it were as black as the rest of the craft, only not quite as shiny.

The next morning he did another all-over check of the Hyperplane and found that one of the wheels had picked up a screw. It likely had been on the airstrip and so he spent the rest of the day walking the strip, finding three more screws and making a mental note to suggest to his father that one or more of them had been accidentally dropped by workers.

At least, he hoped they had been there by accident. To consider they had been left by someone within the Citadel grounds on purpose made him shiver uncomfortably.

By morning of the next day he'd put the screws out of his mind as he hurried through a breakfast of a poached egg and some tasty thin-sliced and grilled ham with cheddar cheese all on an English muffin, eating every bite including the last one he popped into his mouth

as he took his tray to the wash room.

He fueled up the Hyperplane and was about to pull it outside—something he could do himself as it was a fairly light jet—when the airfield sirens went off and an announcement came blasting from the speaker in the hangar.

“Incoming unidentified aircraft. Incoming unidentified aircraft declaring an emergency. All hands outside take shelter. Drones are being dispatched...” and it repeated again.

Tom made sure the Hyperplane’s tanks were sealed before racing from the hangar and across the grass and asphalt toward the main building.

He made it into the radio room in time to hear the other pilot calling out his emergency. The pilot’s voice was high with the stress he must be under, but rock steady and assured.

“This is a private and experimental small jet aircraft running low on fuel. I must have broken a seal and I am down to about three gallons. If I can make a direct approach to your field I see out there in the desert, I might make it. I estimate I am twelve miles out.”

“Pilot of unidentified aircraft, I have you in sight but our field is experiencing strong gusts coming from your direction. Can you come over slightly to our north and make a sharp turn in time to land?”

“I’ll try but have your crash truck ready. No chance of a fuel fire... I’m at half throttle to try to extend this... Rats! Something is jamming my stick and I’m not aimed straight at your runway. I’m going to have to set down ASAP.”

Tom ran back out side and could now see the light green jet coming in. But it was easily five hundred feet too far to the north to land if the pilot did not regain control.

There was a company 4x4 sitting in a parking spot. He jumped in, gunned the engine and headed off to see where the pilot came down.

“He should eject and be safe!” he said to himself as he left the paved area and was driving over the native soil, ruts and scrub grass.

Tom watched in dismay as the little jet had a puff of smoke coming out the back end, a sure sign the turbine had flamed out from fuel starvation. Seconds later the jet took a dip toward the ground, recovered and did a roller coaster impression three more times before it touched down.

The truck could not go much about fifty on the current ground but Tom pressed down a bit on the accelerator.

He could not keep an eye on the bouncing jet as he was bouncing around in the truck’s cab.

When he got to the place where dust was still settling to the ground, he came to a skidding halt on seeing to form of the pilot, out of the obviously damaged jet, walking around looking at his tail section.

Tom jumped out and ran to the man, or boy; he could not tell as the pilot still had their helmet on.

“Are you okay or should I call for an

ambulance?” he shouted out when he was just fifty feet away.

The pilot jumped a little but turned around and flipped his visor up. Inside, Tom could see an attractive face of someone but was still not positive just how old the pilot was.

That was solved when he reached up, gave the helmet a slight turn and lifted it off.

It was a young man. Or, rather, it was a teenager and possibly as young as Tom.

“Come take a look at this and tell me what you think,” he requested.

The boy was dark-haired and handsome in a way teens can be who will someday be unavoidably attractive to women.

Tom finished walking over and looked where the youth was pointing.

“But,” he gasped, “that’s a bullet hole, isn’t it?”

“That’s what I thought as well. Oh, I’m Bud Barclay and am the test pilot for my uncle’s small aircraft company. Uhhh,” now he looked at Tom a little embarrassed, “I was sort of paying a lot of attention to flying and not so much to my charts. Where the heck am I? And, in case I didn’t mention it, thanks for coming out to get me.”

Tom chuckled. The other boy seemed sublimely unfazed by his near crash.

“This is the Citadel, and it is a private research facility here in New Mexico. It is also

an off-limits, no-fly zone and you're lucky you radioed in or else our automated drones would have either forced you down or rammed you!"

"Geez!" Bud gulped. "Say, I don't suppose that you've got a cold soda or water bottle in that truck?" His jaw came up to point to Tom's vehicle.

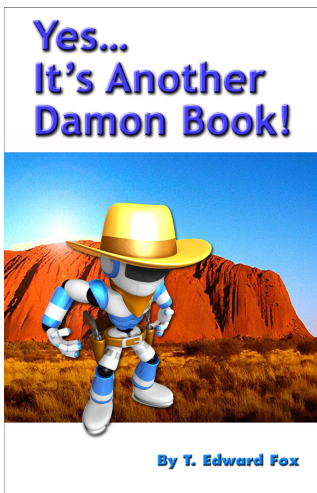
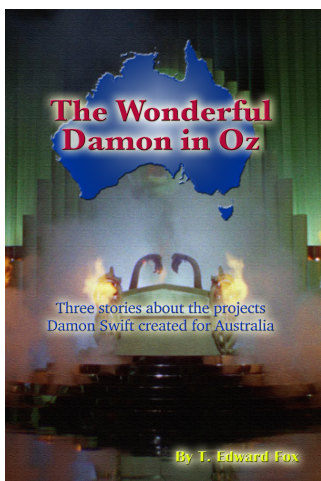
"No, I don't, but let's get you over there and I'll take you back to the infirmary. Our doctor will want to give you a little check before we let you wander around."

He turned and took a couple steps before noticing that Bud was not following him. Stopping, he turned back. "Well, come on..."

Bud shook his head. "Nope. Not until I know who I'm getting into a truck with. I have my reputation to think of, you know."

Tom laughed. "It seems I forgot to do my part of the introduction. I'm Tom Swift of Shopton, New York." He held out his hand which Bud shook.

Enjoy the other books in the Damon Swift Inventions Series...



Each book is a collection of novellas filled with the inventions Damon considers to be his favorites, or at least the strangest ones he's done in recent years.

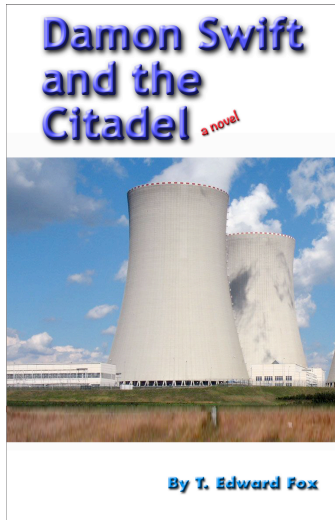
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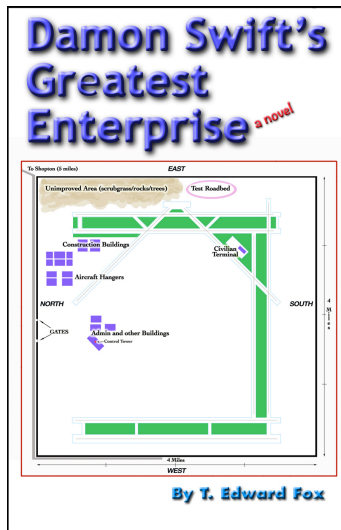
Also, the first Damon Swift novel:



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And the third!



All written by Thomas Hudson under the pen name
T. Edward Fox.