

Practice on Your Own

Use the Notes column to take notes and use SALSA™ strategies.

Adapted from *Tom Swift and the Sky Racer*

Word
Count

by Victor Appleton

Chapter 23: The Great Race

“Well,” Mr. Sharp remarked when Tom and Mr. Damon finished speaking. They’d stated that Andy Foger’s airplane was on the grounds, and demanded to view it. “I’ll certainly present your case before the committee.”

“Understand,” said Tom, “I don’t want to interfere unless I’m convinced that Andy is trying an underhanded trick. The plans to my *Hummingbird* are missing, and I have strong suspicions that Andy took them. If his machine is constructed according to my plans, then I want him ejected from the contest.”

“He shall be!” exclaimed Mr. Sharp. “Provide the evidence against him, and we’ll act.”

That afternoon, Tom was summoned to hear the committee’s decision. “Contest rules,” Mr. Sharp began, “guarantee privacy to all contestants. They need not bring out their machines until just before the race. I’m sorry, Tom, but their decision is final unless you can provide other evidence against Andy.”

152 words

The young inventor knew there was no other evidence to be gained. He had tried several times unsuccessfully to get a glimpse of Andy’s craft. Waiting until the last moment would likely be just as futile.

“Just before the race, there will be total confusion,” Tom reasoned. “Officials will be scattered everywhere, so it will be impossible to protest then.”

“So, protest after the race,” suggested Mr. Damon.

“If Andy beats me, the public would believe I was just jealous. No, either I stop Andy before the race, or not at all.”

* * * * *

The morning of the race dawned clear and beautiful. All about the airfield was a scene of great activity. The grandstands were filled, and a big crowd waited anxiously for some sight of the “bird-men” in their wonderful flying machines

132 words

Notes

Word
Count

People in odd leather costumes darted here and there—aviators willing to risk life and limb for glory and gold. The majority of their aircraft were monoplanes or biplanes, though one triplane was entered, and there were several stranger designs—including a helicopter. Tom was familiar with most of them, but occasionally he spotted a fresh design that excited his curiosity. He was more interested in what Andy would bring out, however.

146 words The air show officially began with a preliminary event at no great height, and for no particular prize. Next came an exhibition flight by a French aviator in a Curtis biplane, who raced against one in a Baby Wright. Then came a flight for height, which broke no records. These events were engaging enough, but the big \$10,000 and 100-mile race was the principal attraction of the meet, and everyone waited anxiously for it.

“Get ready for the 100-mile, \$10,000-prize race!” shouted the announcer. There was a craning of necks and an uneasy movement in the crowd, for Tom’s story was now generally known. A commotion arose about Andy’s tent as the flaps were pulled back to allow a curious machine to wheel into view. Tom hurried over, intent on catching the first look. Would it be a duplicate of his speedy, agile *Hummingbird*?

137 words An unusual machine, totally unlike any he had anticipated, met Tom’s gaze. The aircraft was large and clumsy-looking, but it radiated power. It was a hybrid, merging a biplane with elements of a monoplane. As Tom studied the details, he pushed his way through the crowd. He saw Andy standing by the unusual airplane, near a spot on the side at which was painted the name *SLUGGER*.

“I’m going to beat you!” the bully boasted when he caught sight of Tom, “and not in a copy of your machine, either.”

“Perhaps,” stammered Tom, hardly knowing what to think. “What did you need my plans for, then?”

“I never had them!” Andy denied hotly.

Tom walked away, glad not to be racing against a duplicate of the *Hummingbird*, but sorry to lose the trail of the missing plans once again. The preliminary whistle blew, leading Tom to rush back for a last check on his *Hummingbird*. She was ready, and fit to race any machine on the field. Mr. Damon took his place as Tom started the propeller. The explosions of so many motors in action were deafening.

145 words Finally, the starting flag waved. Tom pulled a lever and felt his craft soar upward. The big race for the \$10,000 prize was under way!

- 1** “People in odd leather costumes darted here and there—aviators willing to risk life and limb for glory and gold.”

The sentence above supports which idea?

- (A) Aviators at that time were very quick.
- (B) Early airplane pilots were usually brave.
- (C) Flying planes was a very popular hobby.
- (D) Flying early airplanes required more luck than skill.

Skill *Main Idea and Supporting Details*

- 2** What happens as a result of Tom’s demands to see Andy’s plane before the race?

- (A) The crowd hears about it and looks eagerly when the plane is revealed.
- (B) Andy names his plane “Slugger.”
- (C) Andy changes planes so he won’t be thrown out of the contest.
- (D) The public believes that Tom is just jealous of Andy.

Skill *Cause and Effect*

- 3** To find the most information about the aircraft mentioned in the story, you would type what words into an online search engine?

- (A) exhibition flights
- (B) *Hummingbird*
- (C) Andy Foger
- (D) monoplanes and biplanes

Skill *Main Idea and Supporting Details*

- 4** Which of the following best summarizes the selection?

- (A) Tom tries unsuccessfully to stop Andy from stealing the plans for his airplane before the big race begins.
- (B) Tom tries to find out whether Andy has stolen the plans for his airplane and learns he did not just as the race begins.
- (C) Tom must stop Andy before the race or everyone will simply think he is being jealous of Andy.
- (D) The big \$10,000 and 100-mile race is the main event of the air show and Tom is determined not to let Andy win.

Skill *Summarizing*

- 5** What would readers likely conclude based on Tom and Andy’s behavior?

- (A) They really respect and admire each other.
- (B) They had never met before the contest.
- (C) They were rivals before the contest.
- (D) They are both willing to use nasty tricks to win the race.

Skill *Conclusion, Prediction, and Synthesis*

6 Which of the following is most likely to happen in the next chapter of the story?

- Ⓐ Tom and Andy will compete for the lead during the race.
- Ⓑ The author will skip over the details of the race and just tell who won.
- Ⓒ Andy's plane will turn out to be a copy of Tom's after all.
- Ⓓ Tom will win the race easily.

Skill *Conclusion, Prediction, and Synthesis*

7 Which of the following statements from the story is an opinion?

- Ⓐ "The majority of their aircraft were monoplanes or biplanes. . ."
- Ⓑ "It was a hybrid, merging a biplane with elements of a monoplane."
- Ⓒ "A commotion arose about Andy's tent as the flaps were pulled back. . ."
- Ⓓ "She was ready, and fit to race any machine on the field."

Skill *Fact and Opinion*

8 Compare and contrast Tom and Andy's planes. Identify one thing the two aircraft have in common and one way they are different. Support each answer with one detail from the story.

Skill *Compare and Contrast*