

25¢

*Famous*  
**FANTASTIC**  
*Mysteries*

---

VOL. 9

OCTOBER, 1947

No. 1

---

*Book-Length Novel*

- The City of Wonder** **E. Charles Vivian 6**  
Hidden by the centuries, guarded by nameless horror, lay the secret heart of Kir-Asa, whose password to strangers was—Death!

*Short Story*

- The Day of the Deepies** **Murray Leinster 98**  
Can Doomsday be at hand . . . can the world lie dying of its own fury . . . as long as one brave youth and one girl with a dream still live?

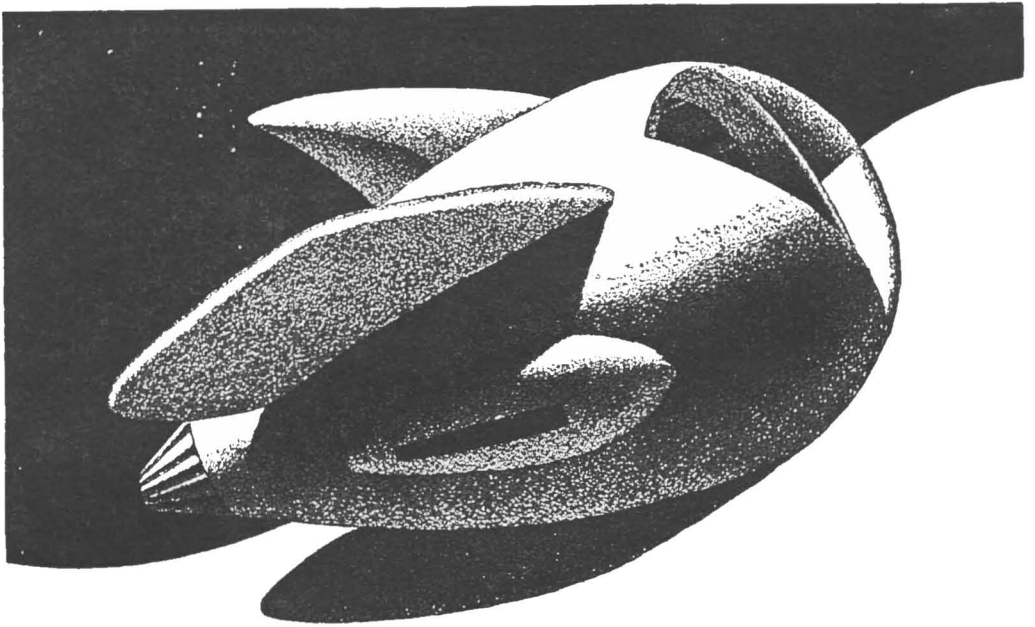
*Verse*

- Death** **Clarence E. Flynn 107**  
**Dark Waters** **M. Ludington Cain 111**  
**In the Next Issue** **95**  
**Masters of Fantasy** **Neil Austin 97**  
A. Merritt—"The Dweller in the Mirage."  
**The Readers' Viewpoint** **108**

Cover by Lawrence. Inside illustrations by Finlay, Bok, and Napoli.

---

Published bi-monthly by All-Fiction Field, Inc., a subsidiary of Popular Publications, Inc., at 2250 Grove Street, Chicago 10, Illinois. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Stecker, President and Secretary. Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice-President and Treasurer. Entered as second-class matter April 24, 1946 at the Post Office, at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1947, by All-Fiction Field, Inc. This issue is published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada. Copyright under International Copyright Convention and Pan American Copyright Conventions. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction, in whole or in part, in any form. Single copy, 25c. Annual subscription for U.S.A., its possessions and Canada, \$1.50; other countries 35c additional. Send subscriptions to 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. For advertising rates, address Sam J. Perry, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return, if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of unsolicited manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Any resemblance between any character appearing in fictional matter, and any person, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and unintentional. Printed in the U.S.A.



# THE DAY OF THE DEEPIES

By  
Murray Leinster

**K**ENIE waked with all the shivering ecstasy one feels at the age of thirteen on a morning when excitement looms deliciously ahead. She lay still for a moment, listening to the noises that told her the house was awake. Her brother Tom, down the hall, was doggedly enduring the squawks and howls of the television set he'd put together from wreckage their father had brought back from what used to be Camden. Then there was the whooshing roar of the tractor, pulling past the front of the house with its monstrous wood-gas generator on the back and the squeak that Bub Taylor said was metal-fatigue setting in. But it couldn't be dismantled, for youthening,

until the fall wheat had been planted.

Her mother's voice came out of what had been the air-conditioning duct when air conditioners still worked.

*"Kenie! It's late!"*

"I'm up and practically dressed," said Kenie, anticipating the fact by seconds. "Right down, Mother!"

She slid out of bed. She almost danced across the room to look at herself in the mirror.

The mirror was a trifle leprous, in spots, where the silver had tarnished through, but she found her own eyes bright and anticipating. She beamed at her reflection. She didn't know how things would turn out, but excitement was sure.

***Can Doomsday be at hand . . . can the world lie dying of its own fury . . . as long as one brave youth and one girl with a dream still live?***

Her very best boy friend, Bub, had told her in strict confidence that the neighbors were coming over today to warn her father that Tom had to stop fiddling with science. And that ghastly deepie, Mr. Wedderson, was coming to receive the family's answer to his proposal for Aunt Sarah's hand. And Kenie was practically certain that Roland—whom her sister Cissie used to be in love with—was hiding out somewhere in the woods. So it would be a full day.

She went blithely down the stairs in work-stained shorts and jumper. It was just as exciting to be thirteen in the year 2096 as it had been when Kenie's great-great-grandmother watched soldiers march off to some war or other, back in the days when they had wars. Now, of course, war was just a word. There couldn't be a war when there was nothing to fight with and you didn't know whom to fight.

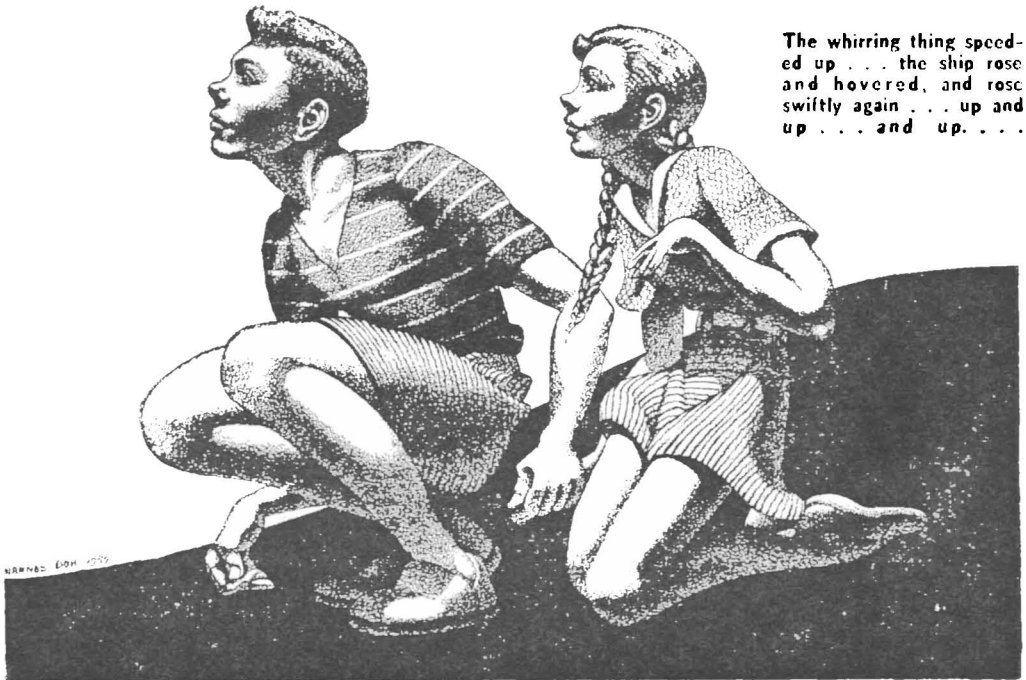
Anyhow, Kenie doubted that a war would be as exciting as knowing that Bub was

secretly working on an electric generator in the cellar he'd dug under his father's barn, or having a delicious suspicion that Roland was hiding near-by and that Cissie had seen him at least once.

Roland would be hung as a matter of public safety if he were discovered, because he was a scientist. And if she merely hinted her suspicion of his presence to her brother Tom, he'd go crazy trying to find Roland to pump scientific information out of him, because Tom meant to be a scientist, too.

She felt that she could burst, but she seemed completely demure as she went into the kitchen. The great electric range and storage cabinet, off to one side, was used as a cupboard and working space for the preparation of meals. Her mother said it was wonderful, before a bomb fell over at Westport and then there wasn't any more electricity. Kenie'd always thought vaguely that it wasn't scrapped because they hoped that some day there might be

The whirring thing speeded up . . . the ship rose and hovered, and rose swiftly again . . . up and up . . . and up . . .



electricity again. But she was not sure. "Stay close to the house, Kenie," said her mother, as she put breakfast before her. "I may need you. Some of the neighbors are coming over to your father and we'll have to offer refreshments."

Kenie said mildly, "Does Tom know yet?"

Her mother looked at her sharply.

"What do you mean by that, Kenie?"

"Aren't they coming over to tell father that Tom has to stop messing with science? I told him not to get so confidential with that revolting Mr. Wedder-son. I'll bet he's the one who passed the word that Tom was experimenting."

Her mother pressed her lips together.

"Kenie—"

"He's a deepie," said Kenie scornfully. "Oh, I know, Mother! Deepies are just displaced persons, and some of them are quite nice. They are people who've never settled down or who are afraid to settle down even if people would let them. They think if they keep moving, they'll be safe. 'Fraidy-cats! But some deepies are snoopers, too, and you know it!'"

"Kenie!" said her mother. "Mr. Wedder-son wants to marry your Aunt Sarah! He's quite a good blacksmith, he says, and with a family connection so he'd be allowed to settle down here—"

Kenie started to stuff her mouth full, and remembered that she was growing up, and took a dainty mouthful instead. She said with a vast calmness:

"Darling Mother, you don't fool me. You don't like him any more than I do. You're just as afraid he's a snooper. And with Roland—"

Her mother went white. Kenie's heart turned one complete somersault. Then it was true! Roland was back, and hiding out! Her mother knew it, as well as Cissie! Kenie's hand shook with the thrill as she gulped her milk in outward composure.

"Don't worry, Mother," she said calmly. "I won't say that to anyone else. But I notice things. I'm thirteen, now."

"I don't know where you get silly ideas about Roland," her mother began. But there were footsteps in the hall and she stopped short. She went on in an even, unhurried tone, "I think that if you took over the new calf this morning, since your father is so busy— Good morning, Sarah!"

Kenie's Aunt Sarah came into the kitchen. Kenie spoke to her politely. Aunt Sarah looked thrilled and haggard and defiant and sorrowful all at once, with a hint of tragedy queen thrown in. Kenie

used to feel sorry for her because she'd never gotten married—Kenie intended to marry Eub when they both grew up—but Mr. Wedder-son had ended her sympathy. He couldn't be anybody's ideal! He was untidy with a hint of greasiness. He wore thick eyeglasses and a smug air which wasn't suitable to a deepie, and he petted Kenie. With the pretense of treating her as a child, he patted her. Kenie frankly despised him—with an uneasy feeling underneath.

"Good morning, Martha," said Aunt Sarah. "Where is John? I simply must have a talk with him! Mr. Wedder-son is coming—"

Kenie's mother said vaguely, "He's running the tractor, Sarah. I think he's been asking the neighbors if they object—"

"What have they to do with it?" demanded Aunt Sarah sharply. "My brother John is a leading citizen! If I choose to marry, why should the neighbors have anything to say?"

"You know how it is," said Kenie's mother soothingly. "People resent newcomers settling—"

"Would John send his own sister wandering?" demanded Aunt Sarah fiercely. "Must I wander through the woods and forests to be with the man I love, when he is a good blacksmith and one is needed here?"

Kenie choked on her milk. Aunt Sarah always managed to mess things up when she tried to be dramatic. Her mother said:

"Kenie! The calf—"

"Yes, Mother," said Kenie.

**S**HE drained the mug and managed not to giggle until she got out of doors. Then she went down to the barn. It was a good barn, very old and with the wires for electric lights still in place. There were iron stalls for the cows and there had been an electric milking machine. It would be nice to have electricity to do things for you, Kenie reflected.

She milked an anxious cow who was bitterly indignant because her calf was muzzled. She led the calf into another stall and set to work to teach him to drink. It was rather fun, but she felt all churned up inside herself.

Roland was nice. He'd been gone for two years, now, because of course, when he practically said he was a scientist he couldn't stay around. It wouldn't have mattered before things happened and the big cities were either abandoned or de-

stroyed, and before the railroads stopped running, and all that. But since the world had got to be as it was, scientists weren't good neighbors. Everybody knew that. When scientists set to work to find out things, sooner or later a bomb fell from the sky. Then there was an empty place three or four miles across where people had lived, and things wouldn't grow there for a long time because the ground was all baked to a bricky, glassy kind of stuff that Kenie had never seen but had heard about. Only eight years ago a bomb had fallen on a locality only fifty miles away. And people said it was because there was a scientist there.

It wasn't his fault directly, though. It was because of the deepies. There were always deepies coming around—bright-eyed, usually skinny people who worked awhile and got a store of food and moved on. Lots of deepies were very respectable and nice, but there were some snoopers among them, and if a snooper found out that there was a scientist around, somehow or other they got word to whoever had planes and bombs—and then a bomb fell. So one must always be careful not to say anything nice about science. Bub was especially bitter because one mustn't even have electricity, and he was making a generator down in a secret cellar he'd dug. He was going to have electricity and keep it a secret.

The trouble with Roland was that he talked. As long as he just kept machinery in repair and made funny stuff that made welding easier, he was all right. He was crazy about Cissie, too, and she about him. But one day somebody said that people were better off nowadays than back when cities had millions of people in them, and Roland got mad. Right in front of everybody he said that people lived like pigs, now, compared to the old days. Running tractors on wood-gas and burning tallow lamps wasn't his idea of living, he said.

Science had made a world fit to live in, and fools had smashed it, Roland said. And then he declared defiantly that some day science would come back and the world would be better than ever, with electricity and airplanes and great cities and universities and books and television everywhere. And he said it where everybody could hear him!

Deepies were listening, so the neighbors had to act at once. They tried him right on the spot for advocating science, after what it had done to the world, and they ordered him to leave the locality and said

they'd hang him if he came back. And they made sure all the deepies knew it. Kenie's own father was the sternest of Roland's judges, though he liked Roland a lot. Cissie'd cried for weeks, too, because she'd been going to marry him. But of course being ordered away from home made Roland a deepie, and nobody would let a deepie settle anywhere. Everybody was afraid that almost any deepie might be a snooper, reporting to whoever had bombs and planes. So naturally Cissie couldn't marry Roland.

Teaching the calf to drink, Kenie's anticipations rose. Roland's return was exciting. And Mr. Wedderson wanting to marry Aunt Sarah. He was a deepie who pretended to be enormously smitten with Aunt Sarah's charms. Now she was hounding Kenie's father to stand sponsor for him and get him permission to settle down here. Otherwise, of course, she'd have to go off and be a deepie, too, if she married him. But Kenie was scornfully sure that Mr. Wedderson was a snooper, and if he found out that Roland was back. . . .

That was something to shiver about! Cissie'd seen Roland. Kenie knew it. She used to be in love with him and still must be or she wouldn't have risked seeing him.

There was a trampling of many hoofs in front of the house. The far-away tractor stopped. Kenie looked out of the barn and saw her father walking across the fields. She heard Tom's television set still squawking. When he got it to work, it only brought silly things like talks on farming and how to keep well. But her father said that whoever was visticasting was very brave. They might be safe if they talked only about crop rotation and sanitation, but he warned Tom to tell him if they ever started to 'cast about science. Tom probably wouldn't tell him, though. Tom was always mooning around, trying out things and trying to find old books with science in them, but not talking.

Kenie watched, wide-eyed, as the neighbors rode up to the house. They were going to remind father that there were nearly five thousand people in this locality, and they couldn't have their lives jeopardized by a boy working on science. Tom could either give up his experiments or leave. They didn't want any bombs falling from a seemingly empty sky.

There was a rustling in the barn. There was Cissie; she put her arm around Kenie and hugged her a little. That wasn't unheard of, but it was unusual, Kenie wriggled.

"They've come to talk to father about Tom, Cissie!" Kenie was thrilled. "It's going to be awful! Maybe he'll get mad—"

"He won't," said Cissie. "He promised me he wouldn't."

They heard their father's voice inside the house. He was calling Tom. Then a great stillness settled on everything. The neighbors were gathered in the front parlor. They'd be grim. Just as grim as when they told Roland to leave or be hanged. Tom would be white and stricken. But their father would do what he could. He'd probably tell how Tom helped him in metal recovery—smelting down iron rust for fresh metal to make things that had to be made new. He'd been the first one to do that, with charcoal from the woods for fuel. The neighbors respected Kenie's father, and they wouldn't be mean. Just firm. Anyhow, they knew how Kenie's father felt about science. He'd been the first one to say that Roland had to go away, even though Roland and Cissie were planning to get married.

"Darling," said Cissie, and she hugged Kenie. "You like me, don't you? I want to tell you something."

"About Roland?" asked Kenie quickly.

Cissie seemed not to realize what she meant.

"Partly," she said softly. "But not altogether. I'm not sorry about Roland, you know. There used to be a wonderful world, and it got spoiled. But there's going to be a wonderful world again, and Roland will help to make it. That's worth while, isn't it?"

"The world's all right now," said Kenie blithely. "It's fun. But it might be nice to have electricity. Bub says so."

Cissie laughed a little.

"That's what I want to tell you. Not about electricity, but about Bub. I used to watch you tagging after him, and now he tags after you, Kenie. And as your older sister—"

Kenie said matter-of-factly, "Bub's going to marry me when we grow up. He doesn't know it yet, but I can make him do almost anything I want to."

Cissie's arm tightened about her.

"I— just want to say something serious, for once," she said quite gravely. "It's nice, loving someone, Kenie. And if you—grow up and marry Bub—you won't want to regret it. If he wants to be like everybody else, he'll be safe and so will you. But if he doesn't, Kenie—let him be different! Like Roland. Make him be careful, of course! Make him be terribly careful!

But it will be worth it if he—risks his life and yours, too, to try to build back to a better world than the one that got smashed. Even for a little thing like electricity! Remember it, Kenie! Please!"

Kenie almost started to tell her that Bub was already building an electric generator in his secret cellar—Cissie could be trusted—but just then Mr. Wedderson came in view. He was marching toward the house, and he was fat and smug and revolting.

"That," said Kenie scornfully, "is Aunt Sarah's ideal! She wants us to call him Uncle! He'll want me to sit on his lap! I despise him!"

Cissie drew a quick breath. She looked oddly at Kenie, as if what she'd just said was a very special admonition that she might not be able to give again, but Kenie was sticking out her tongue at the waddling, stocky figure. Then she turned.

"We'd better go to the house," she said resentfully. "Mother's going to serve refreshments. I'd like to put a bug in Mr. Wedderson's mug. Or something worse!"

CISSIE followed silently. Their mother was moving about the kitchen. She nodded when they came in.

"Just in time," she told them. "You take in the coffee, Cissie, and Kenie, you carry the cakes."

Cissie was grown-up and calm, and Kenie envied her a little. Her own elbows seemed to get in the way going through doors. But she got to the parlor without mishap. Then she thrilled.

It was dreadful in there. Her brother Tom stood ashen-faced at one side of the room. The neighbors were unsmiling and grim. Not unkindly, of course. That made it worse. Kenie saw twin wet streaks on Tom's cheeks. He was seventeen, but the tears had come when he met the unalterable ultimatum of the neighbors and found that his own father backed it.

"It ain't," said a heavy voice doggedly, "that we're against anybody doin' what they want to, Tom. You got a life to live. If you want to go off and study science, you got a right to an' we ain't stoppin' you. But we got our families to think of. Where there's science and people know of it, bombs fall. You can go, an' you'll have no spite go with you. But you can't come back. You'll do a lot better by your family and friends if you stay amongst us an' be a good neighbor—"

Tom's hands were clenched tightly. He was the very picture of stunned grief. But suddenly he said in a choked voice:

"I'll bet it was Mr. Wedderson who told you! He started talking about science! He s-seemed to know a lot and I g-got interested and t-told him too much—"

The faces in the parlör hardened. There were thumpings outside. Kenie's mother went to the door. Cissie moved among the neighbors, offering them dandelion root coffee. Kenie's mother said:

"Why, yes, Mr. Wedderson! Quite a gathering! Come in!"

Eyes turned to the door. Mr. Wedderson entered. His eyes glittered behind their thick lenses. He swaggered a little.

"Gentlemen," he said pompously, "as a mere poor deepee, I have come to do you a service. Did you know that a plane landed near here two days ago?"

It had been quiet in the parlör, before. The only sounds had been the small clickings of the coffee mugs. But then the stillness became absolute. Kenie's breath stoppped. A plane landed here! That was science at its worst! She had never seen a plane in her life. They were deadly. Bub said they could have electricity again if it wasn't for snoopers, but nothing was more sure to bring a bomb from empty sky than a plane....

"It has not taken off," added Mr. Wedderson blandly. "It is still here. I have seen it. Does it surprise you?"

Kenie saw the faces of the neighbors. Every one was stony. A plane landed here—and known to a deepee! A bomb might fall at any instant. It might be falling now.... For a moment Kenie tried to imagine a bomb falling. She tried to picture this house, the barn, the fields yonder and the new-ploughed land, all gone and nothing but glassy, baked-hard emptiness in its place. She tried to imagine herself, Kenie, completely obliterated. But her imagination boggled at the last. She could not imagine a world without Kenie in it. She found herself licking her lips.

"We know nothing of it!" said her father fiercely. "You gentlemen have your horses here! We'll see if this is true! And if it is, Mr. Wedderson, you'll see what we do when people bring science into this locality!"

Mr. Wedderson said, blinking in a sort of smug meekness, "I had hoped to form a family connection and be allowed to settle here, but even we deepies do not like localities where science is favored. Here, even the young boys—"

"Tom!" said Kenie's father harshly. "Saddle three horses. One for Mr. Wedderson. Right away!"

Tom stumbled from the room. Kenie boiled. Mr. Wedderson had persuaded Tom to talk about science, and then told the neighbors on him! Now he told about a plane landing, and mentioned what deepies would think about it. And if deepies knew about it, sooner a later a snooper would know! He was threatening! He was telling them they'd better be nice to him! It was things like this that made people not let anybody stay in a locality unless he had kinfolk and relatives who'd share any danger he brought on the rest.

"Come, Kenie," said Cissie in her ear. Kenie followed to the kitchen and shook with a murderous rage.

"I hate him!" she said furiously. "He told on Tom! If he's ever my uncle I'll—I'll—"

Cissie pushed her firmly out of doors. She followed. But her tone was shaky rather than indignant as she said:

"You mustn't talk like that, Kenie! Aunt Sarah thinks she's in love with him! If she heard you—"

Kenie grumbled, "You were in love with Roland, but it didn't make you crazy!"

"That," said Cissie quietly, "was real. Not just desperation. She isn't like—you and Bub, either, is she?"

"Huh!" said Kenie. "I can make Bub do almost anything I want!"

Tom rode blindly past them, leading two horses. One for his father and one for Mr. Wedderson. Tom was seventeen, and Kenie normally admired him with a trace of female condescension. But even she could see something close to dignity in his grief-stricken look.

"Poor Tom!" said Cissie.

Her voice was soft enough, but her eyes were oddly hard as she looked back at the house. There was a clattering of hoofs and the neighbors rode off with Mr. Wedderson in their midst. He said a plane had landed—and a plane was sure to bring a bomb. He was going to show them where it was. Most deepies would simply run. There was something—

Kenie watched breathlessly. She would have liked to go, but she was a girl, and if they found out who had landed the plane there'd be a hanging. A sudden thought struck her. Roland! Suppose it was Roland who came in the plane! Suppose her father helped to hang Roland because he was a scientist and he'd come back after being warned not to....

Kenie jerked her head to stare at Cissie. If it was Roland, Cissie knew it. She knew that they were going to hunt for whoever

had landed the plane. Cissie looked quite pale, though entirely composed. Entirely. She looked startingly grown up.

There was a yell, and a gangling horse jumped the fence behind the barn. Bub waved to Kenie. He always arrived that way. He was sixteen. And Kenie squealed at sight of him and dashed to meet him. Speculations were unimportant now. She poured out an almost incoherent account of the morning's happenings, from the formal warning to Tom, to Mr. Wedderson's notification of the incredible fact that a plane had landed near-by and they might all be blown up any second.

Bub simply wheeled his horse about, his lips set. Kenie jumped in front of him.

"You've got to take me!" she cried fiercely. "I told you about it! You've got to take me! You won't dare show yourself anyhow—"

He thrust down a bony hand. She caught it and scrambled up. He dug his heels into the horse's sides and they went off at a shambling gallop, Kenie astride behind him and clinging to his waist. She was filled with an ecstasy amounting almost to delirium. This was excitement! She and Bub trailing the neighbors on the way to destroy an airplane! Perhaps to hang Roland! Nothing so deliciously thrilling had ever happened in the world before!

Bub said tragically, "All my life I've wanted to see a plane, and the only chance I'll ever get is to see the neighbors smash one!"

Kenie was abashed by such grief, but nothing could make her unhappy while such thrilling events went forward. They sighted the cavalcade a long distance ahead. They trailed it. It swung aside into the woods. Bub dared close up until he could see the thrashing of branches as the horsemen forced their way through low-hanging trees.

**A** LONG time later the cavalcade halted. Kenie could feel the tension in Bub's body. He reined aside.

"Come on!" he said feverishly. "We'll hide the horse and sneak up to see before it's all smashed—"

It was a matter only of seconds before he and Kenie were dashing, hand in hand, from one thick patch of brushwood to another to get where they could see what impended.

It was Kenie who jerked him aside and pointed.

"There!"

They saw perfectly through a gap among

the trees. There were the horses, stamping and snuffing in an uneasy group. The men advanced silently toward a silvery white object on the ground. The plane wasn't big, and somehow it looked awkward. It looked as if it had been built of inadequate materials, by men who'd made ingenuity take the place of equipment. There were little pipes sticking out of it astern. There were fins—not wings—and there was a folded-up contrivance which Kenie guessed excitedly was a helicopter screw. She'd seen pictures.

"Rocket-drive," said Bub in a broken, mourning whisper. "Atmospheric rocket, Kenie. Not like the ones men went to the evening star with, once. But, oh, isn't it beautiful!"

It wasn't. Kenie stared with all her eyes, but to her it was not beautiful. It was merely extraordinarily thrilling. Her eyes went to the human figures. Mr. Wedderson looked brisk and shrewd and very different from the way he usually did. He stood back while the others went grimly to the plane and pulled open its door and went in. They went over it in every possible fashion, looking for some clue to who had brought it. Kenie's father said harshly:

"Anyhow, we can pile brush on it and set it afire!"

Then he stopped. Mr. Wedderson stood composedly with something like a little switch in his hand, only it had a cup on it and he held that to his mouth. He seemed to be talking into it.

There was a dreadful stillness. Then Mr. Wedderson grinned.

"This," he told the neighbors, still holding the cup near his mouth, "is a radio and I am talking to the people who have planes and bombs. They can hear everything I say. They do not want the plane destroyed. So you will not destroy the plane."

Men made a concerted small noise like a growl.

"I brought you here and had you go into it and handle it," said Mr. Wedderson with an infuriating smugness, "because it was possible that whoever left it had mined it—set explosives to destroy meddlers. But you are not destroyed. So I shall fly it to where I came from, and we shall examine it. Our radar said that it was even faster than our planes! But you will let me take it because your whole community will be bombed within minutes if you do not."

He grinned at them. Enragingly. But



there was absolute dead silence save for the stamping and snorting of the horses. Mr. Wedderson walked over to the plane. The neighbors made way for him, their hands clenched. He got in and touched something. The folded-up thing reached up and expanded. It began to move, at first slowly and then more swiftly. A little puff of vapor came from one of the pipes at the stern.

All this in dead silence.

The plane shifted itself around bodily. It slid forward over fallen leaves until it was no longer under a tree, but under open sky. Mr. Wedderson grinned at the neighbors.

"You are very docile," he said blandly, "so I have reported that you need not be bombed. And your funny sister—" He looked at Kenie's father—"was very amusing. Tell her I laugh."

The whirring thing speeded up. The plane rose, and hovered, and rose swiftly again. It danced lightly up above the tree-tops.

Up and up and up. . . . It was a bare speck when vapor streamed from behind it.

It moved forward. The blurred disk of the lift-screw vanished suddenly and it was merely a mote which moved so fast that the eye lost trace of it. Then it was gone.

Bub was crying almost happily, "B-beautiful!" he gasped. "Oh, b-beautiful! B-but he took it away. . . ."

Then he sobbed. And then Kenie's fa-

ther loomed up sternly. He'd seen her. He opened his mouth to ask how she'd gotten there, and saw Bub. He said nothing.

He waved his hand, and Tom came numbly over with the three horses from home.

They went to Bub's tethered horse. Kenie mounted the now spare animal. They went back toward home. The neighbors were riding off singly, every man's face like stone.

"And now," said Kenie's father tiredly, "we ought to hang Roland."

Then Tom spoke thickly, "I'm—I'm sorry, Dad," he said, "but if—if this is—what you have to do—not to have bombs fall, I—I'm going away. Maybe I'll only be a deepie, but—if there's science anywhere on earth—"

Bub gulped and said uncertainly, "I—guess I'll go too, Tom."

For an instant Kenie was fiercely proud of her brother and of Bub. She, too, felt the bitter scorn of youth for the compromises older people make for the sake of youth. But then she realized that their going away would mean they'd be like Roland.

They couldn't come back. They'd be hanged, if they did.

She made no sound. She rode on stolidly, a small figure in shorts and jumper, with her hair hanging in a pigtail down her back. But tears flowed down her cheeks. She licked them furtively from the corners of her mouth.

"Eh? Desperate?" said her father. Then he grunted. "I forgot. You boys have thought science was play. It's not. You had to learn a lesson, and I think Tom has. You'll never talk too much to a deepee again, Tom!"

"I'm—going to be one," said Tom, doggedly.

"Being careful gets to be a habit," said Kenie's father, dryly. "It's one you'd better learn, Tom. But Roland won't be hung. Of course! We'll all say so—all the neighbors. But actually he's going to be married. To Cissie. Kenie's to be bridesmaid. It will all happen after supper tonight. They'll be off before morning."

Then he added, "Roland flew that plane here."

Kenie's eyes opened wide. She felt a complete topsy-turviness in all the world. She blinked incredulously up at her father.

"The idea," said her father deliberately, "is that the people who've dropped bombs have had things their way too long. If they find we can hit back, they'll pull in their horns a bit. We're planning to use electricity again. They have to have a lesson."

**K**ENIE rode on in a dream. She heard her father's voice. Tom and Bub babbled questions—eager, thirsty questions. Kenie heard her father say, ". . . don't have to rebuild the old generators. Simpler ways to make electricity have turned up . . ." and "couldn't conquer anybody with bombs, of course . . ." and incomprehensible things like, ". . . of course all the neighbors have known all along, but we've had to be careful. . . ."

But Kenie was wrestling with a desperate problem of her own.

She barely heard Bub say in a tone of anguish:

"But he carried off the plane!" And then her father again, in a tone she'd never heard before—amused without any laughter in it:

"What do you think Roland flew it here for?"

Kenie's problem was unsolvable. They were coming out of the woods, and she turned appealingly to her father, but the boys had his attention. She couldn't get it. He said quietly:

"There's no secret about the bombs, but you can't fight a war with them, and who wants a war, anyhow? We want electricity—to start with. So Roland flew that

plane until he knew a radar beam had touched it, and noted its speed, so they'd want to capture it instead of simply blowing it up. Then he landed it. It was risky, but it had to be done. Fortunately, it worked."

They were on the road toward home. The boys begged simultaneously:

"Was there a bomb in the plane? To go off when—"

"The plane," said Kenie's father softly, "was a bomb. Which will go off when they investigate its high-speed drive. When they look at it. That'll be in the middle of their workshops and laboratories, wherever they may be. There may not be many of them left.

"But anyhow there will be two hundred localities like ours all starting to use electricity on the same day, and they won't quite dare to bomb any of them because then they'll know we can now strike back."

The two boys rocked and whooped in their saddles. They shouted. Kenie's plaintive, "But what am I going to do?" went unheard.

They reached home, and as they dismounted in the barnyard there was a momentary feeling of insecurity underfoot. The ground seemed to tremble just a little. The barn-joists creaked and groaned. Then everything was still again. Kenie's father nodded as young faces turned quickly to him.

"Probably," he said softly. "Quite likely that was it. A few hundred miles away. They'll never know how we did it, but they won't risk trying to find out by bombing us for trying to use electricity again!"

Aloud, he said in a tired, natural voice, "Tom, I'm going to ask you to put up the horses."

Tom moved joyfully to obey. Bub leaped to help.

Kenie caught hold of her father's hand.

A great feat had been accomplished and the world had moved a step nearer to something more spacious and more sane. Universities and cities and television were closer.

Dread was now pushed a little farther back. The new climb of humanity was really begun.

But Kenie had a terrific problem all her own.

"Daddy!" she wailed desperately. "What can I do? You say I'm going to be Cissie's bridesmaid! And I haven't a thing to wear!"