want it. An order of d'Anconia copper is being shipped to me right now. It left San Juan on December fifth."

"*What?!*"

It was a scream of plain shock. Francisco had shot to his feet, past any attempt to hide anything. "On December fifth?"

"Yes," said Rearden, stupefied.

Francisco leaped to the telephone. "I *told* you not to deal with d'Anconia Copper!" It was the half-moaning, half-furious cry of despair.

His hand was reaching for the telephone, but jerked back. He grasped the edge of the table, as if to stop himself from lifting the receiver, and he stood, head down, for how long a time neither he nor Rearden could tell. Rearden was held numb by the fact of watching an agonized struggle with the motionless figure of a man as its only evidence. He could not guess the nature of the struggle, he knew only that there was something which Francisco had the power to prevent in that moment and that it was a power which he would not use.

When Francisco raised his head, Rearden saw a face drawn by so great a suffering that its lines were almost an audible cry of pain, the more terrible because the face had a look of firmness, as if the decision had been made and this was the price of it.

"Francisco . . . what's the matter?"

"Hank, I . . ." He shook his head, stopped, then stood up straight. "Mr. Rearden," he said, in a voice that had the strength, the despair and the peculiar dignity of a plea he knew to be hopeless, "for the time when you're going to damn me, when you're going to doubt every word I said . . I swear to you—by the woman I love—that I am your friend."

The memory of Francisco's face as it looked in that moment, came back to Rearden three days later, through a blinding shock of loss and hatred—it came back, even though, standing by the radio in his office, he thought that he must now keep away from the Wayne-Falkland or he would kill Francisco d'Anconia on sight—it kept coming back to him, through the words he was hearing—he was hearing that three ships of d'Anconia copper, bound from San Juan to New York, had been attacked by Ragnar Danneskjold and sent to the bottom of the ocean—it kept coming back, even though he knew that much more than the copper had gone down for him with those ships.

Chapter V ACCOUNT OVERDRAWN

It was the first failure in the history of Rearden Steel. For the first time, an order was not delivered as promised. But by February 15, when the Taggart rail was due, it made no difference to anyone any longer.

Winter had come early, in the last days of November. People said that it was the hardest winter on record and that no one could be blamed for the unusual severity of the snowstorms. They did not care to remember that there had been a time when snowstorms did

not sweep, unresisted, down unlighted roads and upon the roofs of unheated houses, did not stop the movement of trains, did not leave a wake of corpses counted by the hundreds.

The first time that Danagger Coal was late in delivering fuel to Taggart Transcontinental, in the last week of December, Danagger's cousin explained that he could not help it; he had had to cut the workday down to six hours, he said, in order to raise the morale of the men who did not seem to function as they had in the days of his cousin Kenneth; the men had become listless and sloppy, he said, because they were exhausted by the harsh discipline of the former management; he could not help it if some of the superintendents and foremen had quit him without reason, men who had been with the company for ten to twenty years; he could not help it if there seemed to be some friction between his workers and his new supervisory staff, even though the new men were much more liberal than the old slave drivers; it was only a matter of readjustment, he said. He could not help it, he said, if the tonnage intended for Taggart Transcontinental had been turned over, on the eve of its scheduled delivery, to the Bureau of Global Relief for shipment to the People's State of England; it was an emergency, the people of England were starving, with all of their State factories closing down—and Miss Taggart was being unreasonable, since it was only a matter of one day's delay.

It was only one day's delay. It caused a three days' delay in the run of Freight Train Number 386, bound from California to New York with fifty-nine carloads of lettuce and oranges. Freight Train Number 386 waited on sidings, at coaling stations, for the fuel that had not arrived. When the train reached New York, the lettuce and oranges had to be dumped into the East River: they had waited their turn too long in the freight houses of California, with the train schedules cut and the engines forbidden, by directive, to pull a train of more than sixty cars. Nobody but their friends and trade associates noticed that three orange growers in California went out of business, as well as two lettuce farmers in Imperial Valley; nobody noticed the closing of a commission house in New York, of a plumbing company to which the commission house owed money, of a lead pipe wholesaler who had supplied the plumbing company. When people were starving, said the newspapers, one did not have to feel concern over the failures of business enterprises which were only private ventures for private profit.

The coal shipped across the Atlantic by the Bureau of Global Relief did not reach the People's State of England: it was seized by Ragnar Danneskjöld.

The second time that Danagger Coal was late in delivering fuel to Taggart Transcontinental, in mid-January, Danagger's cousin snarled over the telephone that he could not help it: his mines had been shut down for three days, due to a shortage of lubricating oil for the machinery. The supply of coal to Taggart Transcontinental was four days late.

Mr. Quinn, of the Quinn Ball Bearing Company which had once moved from Connecticut to Colorado, waited a week for the freight