the town, through the curves of the mountains, past the green signals where people had stood cheering and the valleys where rockets had risen to the summer sky. Twisted remnants of leaves now hung on the branches beyond the train's roof line, and the passengers wore furs and mufflers, as they climbed aboard. They moved with the casual manner of a daily event, with the security of expecting a performance long since taken for granted. . . . We've done it—she thought—this much, at least, is done.

It was the chance conversation of two men somewhere behind her that came beating suddenly against her closed attention.

"But laws shouldn't be passed that way, so quickly."

"They're not laws, they're directives."

"Then it's illegal."

"It's not illegal, because the Legislature passed a law last month giving him the power to issue directives."

"I don't think directives should be sprung on people that way, out of the blue, like a punch in the nose."

"Well, there's no time to palaver when it's a national emergency."

"But I don't think it's right and it doesn't jibe. How is Rearden going to do it, when it says here—"

"Why should you worry about Rearden? He's rich enough. He can find a way to do anything."

Then she leaped to the first newsstand in sight and seized a copy of the evening paper.

It was on the front page. Wesley Mouch, Top Co-ordinator of the Bureau of Economic Planning and National Resources, "in a surprise move," said the paper, "and in the name of the national emergency," had issued a set of directives, which were strung in a column down the page:

The railroads of the country were ordered to reduce the maximum speed of all trains to sixty miles per hour—to reduce the maximum length of all trains to sixty cars—and to run the same number of trains in every state of a zone composed of five neighboring states, the country being divided into such zones for the purpose.

The steel mills of the country were ordered to limit the maximum production of any metal alloy to an amount equal to the production of other metal alloys by other mills placed in the same classification of plant capacity—and to supply a fair share of any metal alloy to all consumers who might desire to obtain it.

All the manufacturing establishments of the country, of any size and nature, were forbidden to move from their present locations, except when granted a special permission to do so by the Bureau of Economic Planning and National Resources.

To compensate the railroads of the country for the extra costs involved and "to cushion the process of readjustment," a moratorium on payments of interest and principal on all railroad bonds—secured and unsecured, convertible and non-convertible—was declared for a period of five years.

To provide the funds for the personnel to enforce these directives, a special tax was imposed on the state of Colorado, "as the state best able to assist the needier states to bear the brunt of the national

emergency," such tax to consist of five per cent of the gross sales of Colorado's industrial concerns.

The cry she uttered was one she had never permitted herself before, because she made it her pride always to answer it herself—but she saw a man standing a few steps away, she did not see that he was a ragged bum, and she uttered the cry because it was the plea of reason and he was a human figure:

"What are we going to do?"

The bum grinned mirthlessly and shrugged:

"Who is John Galt?"

It was not Taggart Transcontinental that stood as the focus of terror in her mind, it was not the thought of Hank Rearden tied to a rack pulled in opposite directions—it was Ellis Wyatt. Wiping out the rest, filling her consciousness, leaving no room for words, no time for wonder, as a flaring answer to the questions she had not begun to ask, stood two pictures: Ellis Wyatt's implacable figure in front of her desk, saying, "It is now in your power to destroy me; I may have to go; but if I go, I'll make sure that I take all the rest of you along with me"—and the circling violence of Ellis Wyatt's body when he flung a glass to shatter against the wall.

The only consciousness the pictures left her was the feeling of the approach of some unthinkable disaster, and the feeling that she had to outrun it. She had to reach Ellis Wyatt and stop him. She did not know what it was that she had to prevent. She knew only that she had to stop him.

And because, were she lying crushed under the ruins of a building, were she torn by the bomb of an air raid, so long as she was still in existence she would know that action is man's foremost obligation, regardless of anything he feels—she was able to run down the platform and to see the face of the stationmaster when she found him—she was able to order: "Hold Number 57 for me!"—then to run to the privacy of a telephone booth in the darkness beyond the end of the platform, and to give the long-distance operator the number of Ellis Wyatt's house.

She stood, propped up by the walls of the booth, her eyes closed, and listened to the dead whirl of metal which was the sound of a bell ringing somewhere. It brought no answer. The bell kept coming in sudden spasms, like a drill going through her ear, through her body. She clutched the receiver as if, unheeded, it were still a form of contact. She wished the bell were louder. She forgot that the sound she heard was not the one ringing in his house. She did not know that she was screaming, "Ellis, don't! Don't! Don't!"—until she heard the cold, reproving voice of the operator say, "Your party does not answer."

She sat at the window of a coach of Train Number 57, and listened to the clicking of the wheels on the rails of Rearden Metal. She sat, unresisting, swaying with the motion of the train. The black luster of the window hid the countryside she did not want to see. It was her second run on the John Galt Line, and she tried not to think of the first.

The bondholders, she thought, the bondholders of the John Galt