certain of the first thing he had to do: he hurried to his office to destroy his letter of resignation.

She did not notice his exit; she was looking at Eddie. "Is Knowland here?" she asked.

"No. He's gone."

"Andrews?"

"Gone."

"McGuire?"

"Gone."

He went on quietly to recite the list of those he knew she would ask for, those most needed in this hour, who had resigned and vanished within the past month. She listened without astonishment or emotion, as one listens to the casualty list of a battle where all are doomed and it makes no difference whose names fall first.

When he finished, she made no comment, but asked, "What has been done since this morning?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"Dagny, any office boy could have issued orders here since this morning and everybody would have obeyed him. But even the office boys know that whoever makes the first move today will be held responsible for the future, the present and the past—when the buck-passing begins. He would not save the system, he would merely lose his job by the time he saved one division. Nothing has been done. It's stopped still. Whatever is moving, is moving on anyone's blind guess—out on the line where they don't know whether they're to move or to stop. Some trains are held at stations, others are going on, waiting to be stopped before they reach Colorado. It's whatever the local dispatchers decide. The Terminal manager downstairs has cancelled all transcontinental traffic for today, including tonight's Comet. I don't know what the manager in San Francisco is doing. Only the wrecking crews are working. At the tunnel. They haven't come anywhere near the wreck as yet. I don't think they will."

"Phone the Terminal manager downstairs and tell him to put all transcontinental trains back on the schedule at once, including tonight's Comet. Then come back here."

When he came back, she was bending over the maps she had spread on a table, and she spoke while he made rapid notes:

"Route all westbound trains south from Kirby, Nebraska, down the spur track to Hastings, down the track of the Kansas Western to Laurel, Kansas, then to the track of the Atlantic Southern at Jasper, Oklahoma. West on the Atlantic Southern to Flagstaff, Arizona, north on the track of the Flagstaff-Homedale to Elgin, Utah, north to Midland, northwest on the track of the Wasatch Railway to Salt Lake City. The Wasatch Railway is an abandoned narrow-gauge. Buy it. Have the gauge spread to standard. If the owners are afraid, since sales are illegal, pay them twice the money and proceed with the work. There is no rail between Laurel, Kansas, and Jasper, Oklahoma—three miles, no rail between Elgin and Midland, Utah—five and a half miles. Have the rail laid. Have construction crews start at once—recruit every local man available, pay twice the legal

wages, three times, anything they ask—put three shifts on—and have the job done overnight For rail, tear up the sidings at Winston, Colorado, at Silver Springs, Colorado, at Leeds, Utah, at Benson, Nevada. If any local stooges of the Unification Board come to stop the work—give authority to our local men, the ones you trust, to bribe them. Don't put that through the Accounting Department, charge it to me, I'll pay it. If they find some case where it doesn't work, have them tell the stooge that Directive 10–289 does not provide for local injunctions, that an injunction has to be brought against our headquarters and that they have to sue *me*, if they wish to stop us."

"Is that true?"

"How do I know? How can anybody know? But by the time they untangle it and decide whatever it is they please to decide—our track will be built."

"I see."

"I'll go over the lists and give you the names of our local men to put in charge—if they're still there. By the time tonight's Comet reaches Kirby, Nebraska, the track will be ready It will add about thirty-six hours to the transcontinental schedule—but there will be a transcontinental schedule. Then have them get for me out of the files the old maps of our road as it was before Nat Taggart's grandson built the tunnel."

"The . . . what?" He did not raise his voice, but the catch of his breath was the break of emotion he had wanted to avoid.

Her face did not change, but a faint note in her voice acknowledged him, a note of gentleness, not reproof: "The old maps of the days before the tunnel. We're going back, Eddie. Let's hope we can. No, we won't rebuild the tunnel. There's no way to do it now. But the old grade that crossed the Rockies is still there. It can be reclaimed. Only it will be hard to get the rail for it and the men to do it. Particularly the men."

He knew, as he had known from the first, that she had seen his tears and that she had not walked past in indifference, even though her clear, toneless voice and unmoving face gave him no sign of feeling. There was some quality in her manner, which he sensed but could not translate. Yet the feeling it gave him, translated, was as if she were saying to him: I know, I understand, I would feel compassion and gratitude, if we were alive and free to feel, but we're not, are we, Eddie?—we're on a dead planet, like the moon, where we must move, but dare not stop for a breath of feeling or we'll discover that there is no air to breathe.

"We have today and tomorrow to get things started," she said. "I'll leave for Colorado tomorrow night."

"If you want to fly, I'll have to rent a plane for you somewhere. Yours is still in the shops, they can't get the parts for it."

"No, I'll go by rail. I have to see the line. I'll take tomorrow's Comet."

It was two hours later, in a brief pause between long-distance phone calls, that she asked him suddenly the first question which did

not pertain to the railroad: "What have they done to Hank Rearden?"

Eddie caught himself in the small evasion of looking away, forced his glance back to meet hers, and answered, "He gave in. He signed their Gift Certificate, at the last moment."

"Oh." The sound conveyed no shock or censure, it was merely a vocal punctuation mark, denoting the acceptance of a fact. "Have you heard from Quentin Daniels?"

"No."

"He sent no letter or message for me?"

"No."

He guessed the thing she feared and it reminded him of a matter he had not reported. "Dagny, there's another problem that's been growing all over the system since you left. Since May first. It's the frozen trains."

"The what?"

"We've had trains abandoned on the line, on some passing track, in the middle of nowhere, usually at night—with the entire crew gone. They just leave the train and vanish. There's never any warning given or any special reason, it's more like an epidemic, it hits the men suddenly and they go. It's been happening on other railroads, too. Nobody can explain it. But I think that everybody understands. It's the directive that's doing it. It's our men's form of protest. They try to go on and then they suddenly reach a moment when they can't take it any longer. What can we do about it?" He shrugged. "Oh well, who is John Galt?"

She nodded thoughtfully; she did not look astonished.

The telephone rang and the voice of her secretary said, "Mr. Wesley Mouch calling from Washington, Miss Taggart."

Her lips stiffened a little, as at the unexpected touch of an insect. "It must be for my brother," she said.

"No, Miss Taggart. For you."

"All right. Put him on."

"Miss Taggart," said the voice of Wesley Mouch in the tone of a cocktail-party host, "I was so glad to hear you've regained your health that I wanted to welcome you back in person. I know that your health required a long rest and I appreciate the patriotism that made you cut your leave of absence short in this terrible emergency. I wanted to assure you that you can count on our co-operation in any step you now find it necessary to take. Our fullest co-operation, assistance and support. If there are any . . . special exceptions you might require, please feel certain that they can be granted."

She let him speak, even though he had made several small pauses inviting an answer. When his pause became long enough, she said, "I would be much obliged if you would let me speak to Mr. Weatherby."

"Why, of course, Miss Taggart, any time you wish . . . why . . that is . . . do you mean, *now*?"

"Yes. Right now."

He understood. But he said, "Yes, Miss Taggart."