

Galt. He had screamed in blind terror, begging a circle of impassive faces not to make him do it, sobbing that he would do anything but that. The faces had not condescended to argue or even to threaten him; they had merely given him orders. He had spent a sleepless night, telling himself that he would not obey; but he was walking toward that door. The burning pressure on his temples and the faint, dizzying nausea of unreality came from the fact that he could not recapture the sense of being Dr. Robert Stadler.

He noticed the metallic gleam of the bayonets held by the guards at the door, and the sound of a key being turned in a lock. He found himself walking forward and heard the door being locked behind him.

Across the long room, he saw John Galt sitting on the window sill, a tall, slender figure in slacks and shirt, one leg slanting down to the floor, the other bent, his hands clasping his knee, his head of sun-streaked hair raised against a spread of gray sky—and suddenly Dr. Stadler saw the figure of a young boy sitting on the porch-railing of his home, near the campus of the Patrick Henry University, with the sun on the chestnut hair of a head lifted against a spread of summer blue, and he heard the passionate intensity of his own voice saying twenty-two years ago: "The only sacred value in the world, John, is the human mind, the inviolate human mind . . ."—and he cried to that boy's figure, across the room and across the years:

"I couldn't help it, John! I couldn't help it!"

He gripped the edge of a table between them, for support and as a protective barrier, even though the figure on the window sill had not moved.

"I didn't bring you to this!" he cried. "I didn't mean to! I couldn't help it! It's not what I intended! . . . John! I'm not to blame for it! I'm not! I never had a chance against them! They own the world! They left me no place in it! . . . What's reason to them? What's science? You don't know how deadly they are! You don't understand them! They don't think! They're mindless animals moved by irrational feelings—by their greedy, grasping, blind, unaccountable feelings! They seize whatever they want, that's all they know: that they want it, regardless of cause, effect or logic—they *want* it, the bloody, grubbing pigs! . . . The mind? Don't you know how futile it is, the mind, against those mindless hordes? Our weapons are so helplessly, laughably childish: truth, knowledge, reason, values, rights! Force is all *they* know, force, fraud and plunder! . . . John! Don't look at me like that! What could I do against their fists? I had to live, didn't I? It wasn't for myself—it was for the future of science! I had to be left alone, I had to be protected, I had to make terms with them—there's no way to live except on their terms—there isn't!—do you hear me?—there isn't! . . . What did you want me to do? Spend my life begging for jobs? Begging my inferiors for funds and endowments? Did you want my work to depend on the mercy of the ruffians who have a knack for making money? I had no time to compete with them for money or markets or any of their miserable material pursuits! Was that your idea of justice—that they should spend their money on liquor, yachts and women, while the priceless hours of *my* life were wasted for lack of scientific equipment? Persuasion? How

could I persuade them? What language could I speak to men who don't think? . . . You don't know how lonely I was, how starved for some spark of intelligence! How lonely and tired and helpless! Why should a mind like mine have to bargain with ignorant fools? They'd never contribute a penny to science! Why shouldn't they be forced? It wasn't you that I wanted to force! That gun was not aimed at the intellect! It wasn't aimed at men like you and me, only at mindless materialists! . . . Why do you look at me that way? I had no choice! There isn't any choice except to beat them at their own game! Oh yes, it is *their* game, *they* set the rules! What do we count, the few who can think? We can only hope to get by, unnoticed—and to trick them into serving our aims! . . . Don't you know how noble a purpose it was—my vision of the future of science? Human knowledge set free of material bonds! An unlimited end unrestricted by means! I am not a traitor, John! I'm not! I was serving the cause of the mind! What I saw ahead, what I wanted, what I *felt*, was not to be measured in their miserable dollars! I wanted a laboratory! I needed it! What do I care where it came from or how? I could do so much! I could reach such heights! Don't you have any pity? I *wanted* it! . . . What if they had to be forced? Who are they to think, anyway? Why did you teach them to rebel? It would have worked, if you hadn't withdrawn them! It would have worked, I tell you! It wouldn't be—like this! . . . Don't accuse me! We can't be guilty . . . all of us . . . for centuries. . . . We can't be so totally wrong! . . . We're not to be damned! We had no choice! There is no other way to live on earth! . . . Why don't you answer me? What are you seeing? Are you thinking of that speech you made? I don't *want* to think of it! It was only logic! One can't live by logic! Do you hear me? . . . Don't look at me! You're asking the impossible! Men can't exist your way! You permit no moments of weakness, you don't allow for human frailties or human feelings! What do you want of us? Rationality twenty-four hours a day, with no loophole, no rest, no escape? . . . Don't look at me, God damn you! I'm not afraid of you any longer! Do you hear me? I am not afraid! Who are you to blame me, you miserable failure? Here's where *your* road has brought you! Here you are, caught, helpless, under guard, to be killed by those brutes at any moment—and you dare to accuse me of being impractical! Oh yes, you're going to be killed! You won't win! You can't be allowed to win! *You* are the man who has to be destroyed!"

Dr. Stadler's gasp was a muffled scream, as if the immobility of the figure on the window sill had served as a silent reflector and had suddenly made him see the full meaning of his own words.

"No!" moaned Dr. Stadler, moving his head from side to side, to escape the unmoving green eyes. "No! . . . No! . . . No!"

Galt's voice had the same unbending austerity as his eyes: "You have said everything I wanted to say to you."

Dr. Stadler banged his fists against the door; when it was opened, he ran out of the room.

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For three days, no one entered Galt's suite except the guards who brought his meals. Early on the evening of the fourth day, the door