

to rob one another—when the advocates of the morality of sacrifice perish with their final ideal—then and on that day we will return.

"We will open the gates of our city to those who deserve to enter, a city of smokestacks, pipe lines, orchards, markets and inviolate homes. We will act as the rallying center for such hidden outposts as you'll build. With the sign of the dollar as our symbol—the sign of free trade and free minds—we will move to reclaim this country once more from the impotent savages who never discovered its nature, its meaning, its splendor. Those who choose to join us, will join us; those who don't, will not have the power to stop us; hordes of savages have never been an obstacle to men who carried the banner of the mind.

"Then this country will once more become a sanctuary for a vanishing species: the rational being. The political system we will build is contained in a single moral premise: no man may obtain any values from others by resorting to physical force. Every man will stand or fall, live or die by his rational judgment. If he fails to use it and falls, he will be his only victim. If he fears that his judgment is inadequate, he will not be given a gun to improve it. If he chooses to correct his errors in time, he will have the unobstructed example of his betters, for guidance in learning to think; but an end will be put to the infamy of paying with one life for the errors of another.

"In that world, you'll be able to rise in the morning with the spirit you have known in your childhood: that spirit of eagerness, adventure and certainty which comes from dealing with a rational universe. No child is afraid of nature; it is your fear of men that will vanish, the fear that has stunted your soul, the fear you acquired in your early encounters with the incomprehensible, the unpredictable, the contradictory, the arbitrary, the hidden, the faked, the *irrational* in men. You will live in a world of responsible beings, who will be as consistent and reliable as facts: the guarantee of their character will be a system of existence where objective reality is the standard and the judge. Your virtues will be given protection, your vices and weaknesses will not. Every chance will be open to your good, none will be provided for your evil. What you'll receive from men will not be alms, or pity, or mercy, or forgiveness of sins, but a single value: *justice*. And when you'll look at men or at yourself, you will feel, not disgust, suspicion and guilt, but a single constant: *respect*.

"Such is the future you are capable of winning. It requires a struggle; so does any human value. All life is a purposeful struggle, and your only choice is the choice of a goal. Do you wish to continue the battle of your present or do you wish to fight for my world? Do you wish to continue a struggle that consists of clinging to precarious ledges in a sliding descent to the abyss, a struggle where the hardships you endure are irreversible and the victories you win bring you closer to destruction? Or do you wish to undertake a struggle that consists of rising from ledge to ledge in a steady ascent to the top, a struggle where the hardships are investments in your future, and the victories bring you irreversibly closer to the world of your moral ideal, and should you die without reaching full sunlight, you will die on a level touched by its rays? Such is the choice before you. Let your mind and your love of existence decide.

"The last of my words will be addressed to those heroes who might still be hidden in the world, those who are held prisoner, not by their evasions, but by their virtues and their desperate courage. My brothers in spirit, check on your virtues and on the nature of the enemies you're serving. Your destroyers hold you by means of your endurance, your generosity, your innocence, your love—the endurance that carries their burdens—the generosity that responds to their cries of despair—the innocence that is unable to conceive of their evil and gives them the benefit of every doubt, refusing to condemn them without understanding and incapable of understanding such motives as theirs—the love, your love of life, which makes you believe that they are men and that they love it, too. But the world of today is the world they wanted; life is the object of their hatred. Leave them to the death they worship. In the name of your magnificent devotion to this earth, leave them, don't exhaust the greatness of your soul on achieving the triumph of the evil of theirs. Do you hear me . . . my love?

"In the name of the best within you, do not sacrifice this world to those who are its worst. In the name of the values that keep you alive, do not let your vision of man be distorted by the ugly, the cowardly, the mindless in those who have never achieved his title. Do not lose your knowledge that man's proper estate is an upright posture, an intransigent mind and a step that travels unlimited roads. Do not let your fire go out, spark by irreplaceable spark, in the hopeless swamps of the approximate, the not-quite, the not-yet, the not-at-all. Do not let the hero in your soul perish, in lonely frustration for the life you deserved, but have never been able to reach. Check your road and the nature of your battle. The world you desired can be won, it exists, it is real, it is possible, it's yours.

"But to win it requires your total dedication and a total break with the world of your past, with the doctrine that man is a sacrificial animal who exists for the pleasure of others. Fight for the value of your person. Fight for the virtue of your pride. Fight for the essence of that which is man: for his sovereign rational mind. Fight with the radiant certainty and the absolute rectitude of knowing that yours is the Morality of Life and that yours is the battle for any achievement, any value, any grandeur, any goodness, any joy that has ever existed on this earth.

"You will win when you are ready to pronounce the oath I have taken at the start of my battle—and for those who wish to know the day of my return, I shall now repeat it to the hearing of the world:

"I swear--by my life and my love of it--that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine."

Chapter VIII THE EGOIST

"It wasn't real, was it?" said Mr. Thompson.

They stood in front of the radio, as the last sound of Galt's voice had left them. No one had moved through the span of silence; they had stood, looking at the radio, as if waiting. But the radio was now