than the profit brought by the best freight train of the busiest industrial division.

Jim boasted that this had been the most prosperous six months in Taggart history. Listed as profit, on the glossy pages of his report to the stockholders, was the money he had not earned—the subsidies for empty trains; and the money he did not own—the sums that should have gone to pay the interest and the retirement of Taggart bonds, the debt which, by the will of Wesley Mouch, he had been permitted not to pay. He boasted about the greater volume of freight carried by Taggart trains in Arizona—where Dan Conway had closed the last of the Phoenix-Durango and retired; and in Minnesota—where Paul Larkin was shipping iron ore by rail, and the last of the ore boats on the Great Lakes had gone out of existence.

"You have always considered money-making as such an important virtue," Jim had said to her with an odd half-smile. "Well, it seems to me that I'm better at it than you are."

Nobody professed to understand the question of the frozen railroad bonds; perhaps, because everybody understood it too well. At first, there had been signs of a panic among the bondholders and of a dangerous indignation among the public. Then, Wesley Mouch had issued another directive, which ruled that people could get their bonds "defrozen" upon a plea of "essential need": the government would purchase the bonds, if it found the proof of the need satisfactory. There were three questions that no one answered or asked: "What constituted proof?" "What constituted need?" "Essential—to whom?"

Then it became bad manners to discuss why one man received the grant defreezing his money, while another had been refused. People turned away in mouth-pinched silence, if anybody asked a "why?" One was supposed to describe, not to explain, to catalogue facts, not to evaluate them: Mr. Smith had been defrozen, Mr. Jones had not; that was all. And when Mr. Jones committed suicide, people said, "Well, I don't know, if he'd really needed his money, the government would have given it to him, but some men are just greedy."

One was not supposed to speak about the men who, having been refused, sold their bonds for one-third of the value to other men who possessed needs which, miraculously, made thirty-three frozen cents melt into a whole dollar; or about a new profession practiced by bright young boys just out of college, who called themselves "defreezers" and offered their services "to help you draft your application in the proper modern terms." The boys had friends in Washington.

Looking at the Taggart rail from the platform of some country station, she had found herself feeling, not the brilliant pride she had once felt, but a foggy, guilty shame, as if some foul kind of rust had grown on the metal, and worse: as if the rust had a tinge of blood. But then, in the concourse of the Terminal, she looked at the statue of Nat Taggart and thought: It was *your* rail, you made it, you fought for it, you were not stopped by fear or by loathing—I won't surrender it to the men of blood and rust—and I'm the only one left to guard it.

She had not given up her quest for the man who invented the motor. It was the only part of her work that made her able to bear the rest. It was the only goal in sight that gave meaning to her struggle. There were times when she wondered why she wanted to rebuild the motor. What for?—some voice seemed to ask her. Because I'm still alive, she answered. But her quest had remained futile. Her two engineers had found nothing in Wisconsin. She had sent them to search through the country for men who had worked for Twentieth Century, to learn the name of the inventor. They had learned nothing. She had sent them to search through the files of the Patent Office; no patent for the motor had ever been registered.

The only remnant of her personal quest was the stub of the cigarette with the dollar sign. She had forgotten it, until a recent evening, when she had found it in a drawer of her desk and given it to her friend at the cigar counter of the concourse. The old man had been very astonished, as he examined the stub, holding it cautiously between two fingers; he had never heard of such a brand and wondered how he could have missed it. "Was it of good quality, Miss Taggart?" "The best I've ever smoked." He had shaken his head, puzzled. He had promised to discover where those cigarettes were made and to get her a carton.

She had tried to find a scientist able to attempt the reconstruction of the motor. She had interviewed the men recommended to her as the best in their field. The first one, after studying the remnants of the motor and of the manuscript, had declared, in the tone of a drill sergeant, that the thing could not work, had never worked and he would prove that no such motor could ever be made to work. The second one had drawled, in the tone of an answer to a boring imposition, that he did not know whether it could be done or not and did not care to find out. The third had said, his voice belligerently insolent, that he would attempt the task on a ten year contract at twenty-five thousand dollars a year—"After all, Miss Taggart, if you expect to make huge profits on that motor, it's you who should pay for the gamble of my time." The fourth, who was the youngest, had looked at her silently for a moment and the lines of his face had slithered from blankness into a suggestion of contempt. "You know, Miss Taggart, I don't think that such a motor should ever be made, even if somebody did learn how to make it. It would be so superior to anything we've got that it would be unfair to lesser scientists, because it would leave no field for their achievements and abilities. I don't think that the strong should have the right to wound the self-esteem of the weak." She had ordered him out of her office, and had sat in incredulous horror before the fact that the most vicious statement she had ever heard had been uttered in a tone of moral righteousness.

The decision to speak to Dr. Robert Stadler had been her last recourse.

She had forced herself to call him, against the resistance of some immovable point within her that felt like brakes slammed tight. She had argued against herself. She had thought: I deal with men like Jim and Orren Boyle—his guilt is less than theirs—why can't I speak