

look of twilight, a look of fear in the process of being accepted as permanent, the look of raw wounds being dimmed by the veil of infection. They knew, as he knew it, that *they* were the targets of the shapeless funnels protruding from the mushroom building's dome—and he wondered in what manner they were now extinguishing their minds and escaping that knowledge; he knew that the words they were eager to absorb and believe were the chains slipping in to hold them, like the goats, securely within the range of those funnels. They were eager to believe; he saw the tightening lines of their lips, he saw the occasional glances of suspicion they threw at their neighbors—as if the horror that threatened them was not the sound ray, but the men who would make them acknowledge it as horror. Their eyes were veiling over, but the remnant look of a wound was a cry for help.

"Why do you think they think?" said Dr. Ferris softly. "Reason is the scientist's only weapon—and reason has no power over men, has it? At a time like ours, with the country falling apart, with the mob driven by blind desperation to the edge of open riots and violence—order must be maintained by any means available. What can we do when we have to deal with people?"

Dr. Stadler did not answer.

A fat, jellied woman, with an inadequate brassiere under a dark, perspiration-stained dress, was saying into the microphone—Dr. Stadler could not believe it at first—that the new invention was to be greeted with particular gratitude by the mothers of the country.

Dr. Stadler turned away; watching him, Ferris could see nothing but the noble line of the high forehead and the deep cut of bitterness at the corner of the mouth.

Suddenly, without context or warning, Robert Stadler whirled to face him. It was like a spurt of blood from a sudden crack in a wound that had almost closed: Stadler's face was open, open in pain, in horror, in sincerity, as it, for that moment, both he and Ferris were human beings, while he moaned with incredulous despair:

"In a civilized century, Ferris, in a civilized century!"

Dr. Ferris took his time to produce and prolong a soft chuckle. "I don't know what you're talking about," he answered in the tone of a quotation.

Dr. Stadler lowered his eyes.

When Ferris spoke again, his voice had the faintest edge of a tone which Stadler could not define, except that it did not belong in any civilized discussion: "It would be unfortunate if anything were to happen to jeopardize the State Science Institute. It would be most unfortunate if the Institute were to be closed—or if any one of us were to be forced to leave it. Where would we go? Scientists are an inordinate luxury these days—and there aren't many people or establishments left who're able to afford necessities, let alone luxuries. There are no doors left open to us. We wouldn't be welcome in the research department of an industrial concern, such as—let us say—Rearden Steel. Besides, if we should happen to make enemies, the same enemies would be feared by any person tempted to employ our talents. A man like Rearden would have fought for us. Would

a man like Orren Boyle? But this is purely theoretical speculation, because, as a matter of practical fact, all private establishments of scientific research have been closed by law—by Directive 10-289, issued, as you might not realize, by Mr. Wesley Mouch. Are you thinking, perhaps, of universities? They are in the same position. They can't afford to make enemies. Who would speak up for us? I believe that some such man as Hugh Akston would have come to our defense—but to think of that is to be guilty of an anachronism. He belonged to a different age. The conditions set up in our social and economic reality have long since made his continued existence impossible. And I don't think that Dr. Simon Pritchett, or the generation reared under his guidance, would be able or willing to defend us. I have never believed in the efficacy of idealists—have you?—and this is no age for impractical idealism. If anyone wished to oppose a government policy, how would he make himself heard? Through these gentlemen of the press, Dr. Stadler? Through this microphone? Is there an independent newspaper left in the country? An uncontrolled radio station? A private piece of property, for that matter—or a personal opinion?" The tone of the voice was obvious now: it was the tone of a thug. "A personal opinion is the one luxury that *nobody* can afford today."

Dr. Stadler's lips moved stiffly, as stiffly as the muscles of the goats. "You are speaking to Robert Stadler."

"I have not forgotten that. It is precisely because I have not forgotten it that I am speaking. 'Robert Stadler' is an illustrious name, which I would hate to see destroyed. But what is an illustrious name nowadays? In whose eyes?" His arm swept over the grandstands. "In the eyes of people such as you see around you? If they will believe, when so told, that an instrument of death is a tool of prosperity—would they not believe it if they were told that Robert Stadler is a traitor and an enemy of the State? Would you then rely on the fact that this is not true? Are you thinking of truth, Dr. Stadler? Questions of truth do not enter into social issues. Principles have no influence on public affairs. Reason has no power over human beings. Logic is impotent. Morality is superfluous. Do not answer me now, Dr. Stadler. You will answer me over the microphone. You're the next speaker."

Looking off at the dark strip of the farm in the distance, Dr. Stadler knew that what he felt was terror, but he would not permit himself to know its nature. He, who had been able to study the particles and subparticles of cosmic space, would not permit himself to examine his feeling and to know that it was made of three parts: one part was terror of a vision that seemed to stand before his eyes, the vision of the inscription cut, in his honor, over the door of the Institute: "To the fearless mind, to the inviolate truth"—another part was plain, brute, animal fear of physical destruction, a humiliating fear which, in the civilized world of his youth, he had not expected ever to experience—and the third was the terror of the knowledge that by betraying the first, one delivers oneself into the realm of the second.

He walked toward the speaker's scaffold, his steps firm and slow,