ing where he produced six planes that never left the ground and eight that did, but crashed with forty passengers each?"

"Where is it, then?"

"Wherever I am."

He pointed across the road. Glancing down through the tops of the pine trees, she saw the concrete rectangle of an airfield on the bottom of the valley.

"We have a few planes here and it's my job to take care of them," he said. "I'm the hog farmer and the airfield attendant. I'm doing quite well at producing ham and bacon, without the men from whom I used to buy it. But those men cannot produce airplanes without me—and, without me, they cannot even produce their ham and bacon."

"But you—you have not been designing airplanes, either."

"No, I haven't. And I haven't been manufacturing the Diesel engines I once promised you. Since the time I saw you last, I have designed and manufactured just one new tractor. I mean, *one*—I tooled it by hand—no mass production was necessary. But that tractor has cut an eight-hour workday down to four hours on"—the straight line of his arm, extended to point across the valley, moved like a royal scepter; her eyes followed it and she saw the terraced green of hanging gardens on a distant mountainside—"the chicken and dairy farm of Judge Narragansett"—his arm moved slowly to a long, flat stretch of greenish gold at the foot of a canyon, then to a band of violent green—"in the wheat fields and tobacco patch of Midas Mulligan"—his arm rose to a granite flank striped by glistening tiers of leaves—"in the orchards of Richard Halley."

Her eyes went slowly over the curve his arm had traveled, over and over again, long after the arm had dropped; but she said only, "I see."

"Now do you believe that I can fix your plane?" he asked.

"Yes. But have you seen it?"

"Sure. Midas called two doctors immediately—Hendricks for you, and me for your plane. It can be fixed. But it will be an expensive job."

"How much?"

"Two hundred dollars."

"Two hundred dollars?" she repeated incredulously; the price seemed much too low.

"In gold, Miss Taggart."

"Oh . . . ! Well, where can I buy the gold?"

"You can't," said Galt.

She jerked her head to face him defiantly. "No?"

"No. Not where you come from. Your laws forbid it."

"Yours don't?"

"No."

"Then sell it to me. Choose your own rate of exchange. Name any sum you want—in my money."

"What money? You're penniless, Miss Taggart."

"What?" It was a word that a Taggart heiress could not ever expect to hear.

"You're penniless in this valley. You own millions of dollars in Taggart Transcontinental stock—but it will not buy one pound of bacon from the Sanders hog farm."

"I see."

Galt smiled and turned to Sanders. "Go ahead and fix that plane. Miss Taggart will pay for it eventually."

He pressed the starter and drove on, while she sat stiffly straight, asking no questions.

A stretch of violent turquoise blue split the cliffs ahead, ending the road; it took her a second to realize that it was a lake. The motionless water seemed to condense the blue of the sky and the green of the pine-covered mountains into so brilliantly pure a color that it made the sky look a dimmed pale gray. A streak of boiling foam came from among the pines and went crashing down the rocky steps to vanish in the placid water. A small granite structure stood by the stream.

Galt stopped the car just as a husky man in overalls stepped out to the threshold of the open doorway It was Dick McNamara, who had once been her best contractor.

"Good day, Miss Taggart!" he said happily. "I'm glad to see that you weren't hurt badly."

She inclined her head in silent greeting—it was like a greeting to the loss and the pain of the past, to a desolate evening and the desperate face of Eddie Willers telling her the news of this man's disappearance—hurt badly? she thought—I was, but not in the plane crash—on that evening, in an empty office . . Aloud, she asked, "What are you doing here? What was it that you betrayed me for, at the worst time possible?"

He smiled, pointing at the stone structure and down at the rocky drop where the tube of a water main went vanishing into the underbrush. "I'm the utilities man," he said. "I take care of the water lines, the power lines and the telephone service."

"Alone?"

"Used to. But we've grown so much in the past year that I've had to hire three men to help me."

"What men? From where?"

"Well, one of them is a professor of economics who couldn't get a job outside, because he taught that you can't consume more than you have produced—one is a professor of history who couldn't get a job because he taught that the inhabitants of slums were not the men who made this country—and one is a professor of psychology who couldn't get a job because he taught that men are capable of thinking."

"They work for you as plumbers and linesmen?"

"You'd be surprised how good they are at it."

"And to whom have they abandoned our colleges?"

"To those who're wanted there." He chuckled. "How long ago was it that I betrayed you, Miss Taggart? Not quite three years, wasn't it? It's the John Galt Line that I refused to build for you. Where is your Line now? But *my* lines have grown, in that time, from the couple of miles that Mulligan had built when I took over,

to hundreds of miles of pipe and wire, all within the space of this valley."

He saw the swift, involuntary look of eagerness on her face, the look of a competent person's appreciation; he smiled, glanced at her companion and said softly, "You know, Miss Taggart, when it comes to the John Galt Line—maybe it's I who've followed it and you who're betraying it."

She glanced at Galt. He was watching her face, but she could read nothing in his.

As they drove on along the edge of the lake, she asked, "You've mapped this route deliberately, haven't you? You're showing me all the men whom"—she stopped, feeling inexplicably reluctant to say it, and said, instead—"whom I have lost?"

"I'm showing you all the men whom I have taken away from you," he answered firmly.

This was the root, she thought, of the guiltlessness of his face: he had guessed and named the words she had wanted to spare him, he had rejected a good will that was not based on his values—and in proud certainty of being right, he had made a boast of that which she had intended as an accusation.

Ahead of them, she saw a wooden pier projecting into the water of the lake. A young woman lay stretched on the sun-flooded planks, watching a battery of fishing rods. She glanced up at the sound of the car, then leaped to her feet in a single swift movement, a shade too swift, and ran to the road. She wore slacks, rolled above the knees of her bare legs, she had dark, disheveled hair and large eyes. Galt waved to her.

"Hello, John! When did you get in?" she called.

"This morning," he answered, smiling and driving on.

Dagny jerked her head to look back and saw the glance with which the young woman stood looking after Galt. And even though hopelessness, serenely accepted, was part of the worship in that glance, she experienced a feeling she had never known before: a stab of jealousy.

"Who is that?" she asked.

"Our best fishwife. She provides the fish for Hammond's grocery market."

"What else is she?"

"You've noticed that there's a 'what else' for every one of us here? She's a writer. The kind of writer who wouldn't be published outside. She believes that when one deals with words, one deals with the mind."

The car turned into a narrow path, climbing steeply into a wilderness of brush and pine trees. She knew what to expect when she saw a handmade sign nailed to a tree, with an arrow pointing the way: THE BUENA ESPERANZA PASS

It was not a pass, it was a wall of laminated rock with a complex chain of pipes, pumps and valves climbing like a vine up its narrow ledges, but it bore, on its crest, a huge wooden sign—and the proud violence of the letters announcing their message to an impassable