

splinter from the glass of a protective wall shattered by the knowledge that the next words would be hers; it came back for the brief length of a name in her mind, the name of the man she had called the destroyer: she did not want him to hear what she would now have to say. If you hear it—the pain was like a voice crying it to him—you won't believe the things I have said to you—no, worse, the things which I have not said, but which you knew and believed and accepted—you will think that I was not free to offer them and that my days with you were a lie—this will destroy my one month and ten of your years—this was not the way I wanted you to learn it, not like this, not tonight—but you will, you who've watched and known my every movement, you who're watching me now, wherever you are—you will hear it—but it has to be said.

“—the last descendant of an illustrious name in our industrial history, the woman executive possible only in America, the Operating Vice-President of a great railroad—Miss Dagny Taggart!”

Then she felt the touch of Rearden Metal, as her hand closed over the stem of the microphone, and it was suddenly easy, not with the drugged ease of indifference, but with the bright, clear, living ease of action.

“I came here to tell you about the social program, the political system and the moral philosophy under which you are now living.”

There was so calm, so natural, so total a certainty in the sound of her voice that the mere sound seemed to carry an immense persuasiveness.

“You have heard it said that I believe that this system has depravity as its motive, plunder as its goal, lies, fraud and force as its method, and destruction as its only result. You have also heard it said that, like Hank Rearden, I am a loyal supporter of this system and that I give my voluntary co-operation to present policies, such as Directive 10-289. I have come here to tell you the truth about it.

“It is true that I share the stand with Hank Rearden. His political convictions are mine. You have heard him denounced in the past as a reactionary who opposed every step, measure, slogan and premise of the present system. Now you hear him praised as our greatest industrialist, whose judgment on the value of economic policies may safely be trusted. It is true. You may trust his judgment. If you are now beginning to fear that you are in the power of an irresponsible evil, that the country is collapsing and that you will soon be left to starve—consider the views of our ablest industrialist, who knows what conditions are necessary to make production possible and to permit a country to survive. Consider all that you know about his views. At such times as he was able to speak, you have heard him tell you that this government's policies were leading you to enslave ment and destruction. Yet he did not denounce the final climax of these policies—Directive 10-289. You have heard him fighting for his rights—his and yours—for his independence, for his property. Yet he did not fight Directive 10-289. He signed voluntarily, so you have been told, the Gift Certificate that surrendered Rearden Metal to his enemies. He signed the one paper which, by all of his previous record, you had expected him to fight to the death. What could this

mean—you have constantly been told—unless it meant that even he recognized the necessity of Directive 10-289 and sacrificed his personal interests for the sake of the country? Judge his views by the motive of that action, you have constantly been told. And with this I agree unreservedly: *judge his views by the motive of that action.* And—for whatever value you attach to my opinion and to any warning I may give you—judge my views also by the motive of that action, because his convictions are mine.

“For two years, I had been Hank Rearden’s mistress. Let there be no misunderstanding about it: I am saying this, not as a shameful confession, but with the highest sense of pride. I had been his mistress. I had slept with him, in his bed, in his arms. There is nothing anyone might now say to you about me, which I will not tell you first. It will be useless to defame me—I know the nature of the accusations and I will state them to you myself. Did I feel a physical desire for him? I did. Was I moved by a passion of my body? I was. Have I experienced the most violent form of sensual pleasure? I have. If this now makes me a disgraced woman in your eyes—let your estimate be your own concern. I will stand on mine.”

Bertram Scudder was staring at her; this was not the speech he had expected and he felt, in dim panic, that it was not proper to let it continue, but she was the special guest whom the Washington rulers had ordered him to treat cautiously; he could not be certain whether he was now supposed to interrupt her or not: besides, he enjoyed hearing this sort of story. In the audience booth, James Taggart and Lillian Rearden sat frozen, like animals paralyzed by the headlight of a train rushing down upon them; they were the only ones present who knew the connection between the words they were hearing and the theme of the broadcast; it was too late for them to move; they dared not assume the responsibility of a movement or of whatever was to follow. In the control room, a young intellectual of Chuck Morrison’s staff stood ready to cut the broadcast off the air in case of trouble, but he saw no political significance in the speech he was hearing, no element he could construe as dangerous to his masters. He was accustomed to hearing speeches extorted by unknown pressure from unwilling victims, and he concluded that this was the case of a reactionary forced to confess a scandal and that, therefore, the speech had, perhaps, some political value; besides, he was curious to hear it.

“I am proud that he had chosen me to give him pleasure and that it was he who had been my choice. It was not—as it is for most of you—an act of casual indulgence and mutual contempt. It was the ultimate form of our admiration for each other, with full knowledge of the values by which we made our choice. We are those who do not disconnect the values of their minds from the actions of their bodies, those who do not leave their values to empty dreams, but bring them into existence, those who give material form to thoughts, and reality to values—those who make steel, railroads and happiness. And to such among you who hate the thought of human joy, who wish to see men’s life as chronic suffering and failure, who wish men to apologize for happiness—or for success, or ability, or achievement,