

family crest," Mrs. Taggart said once, "but I'm sure that Francisco will change it to 'What for?'" It was the first question he asked about any activity proposed to him—and nothing would make him act, if he found no valid answer. He flew through the days of his summer month like a rocket, but if one stopped him in midflight, he could always name the purpose of his every random moment. Two things were impossible to him: to stand still or to move aimlessly.

"Let's find out" was the motive he gave to Dagny and Eddie for anything he undertook, or "Let's make it." These were his only forms of enjoyment.

"I can do it," he said, when he was building his elevator, clinging to the side of a cliff driving metal wedges into rock, his arms moving with an expert's rhythm, drops of blood slipping, unnoticed, from under a bandage on his wrist. "No, we can't take turns, Eddie, you're not big enough yet to handle a hammer. Just cut the weeds off and keep the way clear for me, I'll do the rest. What blood? Oh, that's nothing, just a cut I got yesterday. Dagny, run to the house and bring me a clean bandage."

Jim watched them. They left him alone, but they often saw him standing in the distance, watching Francisco with a peculiar kind of intensity.

He seldom spoke in Francisco's presence. But he would corner Dagny and he would smile derisively, saying: "All those airs you put on, pretending that you're an iron woman with a mind of her own! You're a spineless dishrag—that's all you are. It's disgusting the way you let that conceited punk order you about. He can twist you around his little finger. You haven't any pride at all. The way you run when he whistles and wait on him! Why don't you shine his shoes?" "Because he hasn't told me to," she answered.

Francisco could win any game in any local contest. He never entered contests. He could have ruled the junior country club. He never came within sight of their clubhouse, ignoring their eager attempts to enroll the most famous heir in the world. Dagny and Eddie were his only friends. They could not tell whether they owned him or were owned by him completely; it made no difference, either concept made them happy.

The three of them set out every morning on adventures of their own kind. Once an elderly professor of literature, Mrs. Taggart's friend, saw them on top of a pile in a junk yard dismantling the carcass of an automobile. He stopped, shook his head and said to Francisco: "A young man of your position ought to spend his time in libraries, absorbing the culture of the world." "What do you think I'm doing?" asked Francisco.

There were no factories in the neighborhood, but Francisco taught Dagny and Eddie to steal rides on Taggart trains to distant towns, where they climbed fences into mull yards or hung on window sills, watching machinery as other children watched movies. "When I run d'Anconia Copper—" said Francisco. They never had to explain the rest to each other; they knew each other's goal and motive.

Railroad conductors caught them, once in a while. Then a station-master a hundred miles away would telephone Mrs. Taggart: "We've

got three young tramps here who say that they are—' Yes ' Mrs Taggart would sigh, ' they are Please send them back

"Francisco, Eddie asked him once as they stood by the tracks of the Taggart station you've been just about everywhere in the world What's the most important thing on earth' This answered Francisco pointing to the emblem M on the front of an engine He added, I wish I could have met Nat Taggart

He noticed Dagny's glance at him He said nothing else But minutes later when they went on through the woods down a narrow path of damp earth ferns and sunlight he said Dagny I'll always bow to a coat of arms I'll always worship the symbols of nobility Am I not supposed to be an aristocrat' Only I don't give a damn for moth eaten turrets and tenth hand unicorns The coats of arms of our day are to be found on billboards and in the ads of popular magazines What do you mean' asked Eddie Industrial trade marks Eddie he answered Francisco was fifteen years old that summer

When I run d Anconia Copper I'm studying mining and mineralogy because I must be ready for the time when I run d Anconia Copper I'm studying electrical engineering because power companies are the best customers of d Anconia Copper

I'm going to study philosophy because I'll need it to protect d Anconia Copper

Don't you ever think of anything but d Anconia Copper' Jim asked him once

No

It seems to me that there are other things in the world

Let others think about them

Isn't that a very selfish attitude'

It is

What are you after'

Money

Don't you have enough'

In his lifetime every one of my ancestors raised the production of d Anconia Copper by about ten per cent I intend to raise it by one hundred

What for' Jim asked in sarcastic imitation of Francisco's voice

When I die I hope to go to heaven whatever the hell that is and I want to be able to afford the price of admission

Virtue is the price of admission Jim said haughtily

That's what I mean James So I want to be prepared to claim the greatest virtue of all that I was a man who made money

Any gaffer can make money

James you ought to discover some day that words have an exact meaning

Francisco smiled it was a smile of radiant mockery Watching them Dagny thought suddenly of the difference between Francisco and her brother Jim Both of them smiled deviously But Francisco seemed to laugh at things because he saw something much greater Jim laughed as if he wanted to let nothing remain great

She noticed the particular quality of Francisco's smile again, one

night, when she sat with him and Eddie at a bonfire they had built in the woods. The glow of the fire enclosed them within a fence of broken, moving strips that held pieces of tree trunks, branches and distant stars. She felt as if there were nothing beyond that fence, nothing but black emptiness, with the hint of some breath-stopping, frightening promise . . . like the future. But the future, she thought, would be like Francisco's smile, *there* was the key to it, the advance warning of its nature—in his face in the firelight under the pine branches—and suddenly she felt an unbearable happiness, unbearable because it was too full and she had no way to express it. She glanced at Eddie. He was looking at Francisco. In some quiet way of his own, Eddie felt as she did.

"Why do you like Francisco?" she asked him weeks later, when Francisco was gone.

Eddie looked astonished; it had never occurred to him that the feeling could be questioned. He said, "He makes me feel safe."

She said, "He makes me expect excitement and danger."

Francisco was sixteen, next summer, the day when she stood alone with him on the summit of a cliff by the river, their shorts and shirts torn in their climb to the top. They stood looking down the Hudson; they had heard that on clear days one could see New York in the distance. But they saw only a haze made of three different kinds of light merging together: the river, the sky and the sun.

She knelt on a rock, leaning forward, trying to catch some hint of the city, the wind blowing her hair across her eyes. She glanced back over her shoulder—and saw that Francisco was not looking at the distance, he stood looking at her. It was an odd glance, intent and unsmiling. She remained still for a moment, her hands spread flat on the rock, her arms tensed to support the weight of her body; inexplicably, his glance made her aware of her pose, of her shoulder showing through the torn shirt, of her long, scratched, sunburned legs slanting from the rock to the ground. She stood up angrily and backed away from him. And while throwing her head up, resentment in her eyes to meet the sternness in his, while feeling certain that his was a glance of condemnation and hostility, she heard herself asking him, a tone of smiling defiance in her voice:

"What do you like about me?"

He laughed; she wondered, aghast, what had made her say it. He answered, "There's what I like about you," pointing to the glittering rails of the Taggart station in the distance.

"It's not mine," she said, disappointed.

"What I like is that it's going to be."

She smiled, conceding his victory by being openly delighted. She did not know why he had looked at her so strangely; but she felt that he had seen some connection, which she could not grasp, between her body and something within her that would give her the strength to rule those rails some day.

He said brusquely, "Let's see if we can see New York," and jerked her by the arm to the edge of the cliff. She thought that he did not notice that he twisted her arm in a peculiar way, holding it down along the length of his side; it made her stand pressed against him,