for an instant, like a signal of affirmation. Then Galt's eyes moved to hers. She saw him looking at her as if she bore the unspoken title that hung in the silence between them, the title Dr. Akston had granted her, but had not pronounced and none of the others had caught—she saw, in Galt's eyes, a glance of amusement at her shock, of support and, incredibly, of tenderness.

* *

D'Anconia Copper No. 1 was a small cut on the face of the mountain, that looked as if a knife had made a few angular slashes, leaving shelves of rock, red as a wound, on the reddish-brown flank. The sun beat down upon it. Dagny stood at the edge of a path, holding on to Galt's arm on one side and to Francisco's on the other, the wind blowing against their faces and out over the valley, two thousand feet below.

This—she thought, looking at the mine—was the story of human wealth written across the mountains: a few pine trees hung over the cut, contorted by the storms that had raged through the wilderness for centuries, six men worked on the shelves, and an inordinate amount of complex machinery traced delicate lines against the sky; the machinery did most of the work.

She noticed that Francisco was displaying his domain to Galt as much as to her, as much or more. "You haven't seen it since last year, John. . . . John, wait till you see it a year from now. I'll be through, outside, in just a few months—and then this will be my full-time job."

"Hell, no, John!" he said, laughing, in answer to a question—but she caught suddenly the particular quality of his glance whenever it rested on Galt: it was the quality she had seen in his eyes when he had stood in her room, clutching the edge of a table to outlive an unlivable moment; he had looked as it he were seeing someone before him; it was Galt, she thought; it was Galt's image that had carried him through.

Some part of her felt a dim dread: the effort which Francisco had made in that moment to accept her loss and his rival, as the payment demanded of him for his battle, had cost him so much that he was now unable to suspect the truth Dr. Akston had guessed. What will it do to him when he learns?—she wondered, and felt a bitter voice reminding her that there would, perhaps, never be any truth of this kind to learn.

Some part of her felt a dim tension as she watched the way Galt looked at Francisco: it was an open, simple, unreserved glance of surrender to an unreserved feeling. She felt the anxious wonder she had never fully named or dismissed; wonder whether this feeling would bring him down to the ugliness of renunciation.

But most of her mind seemed swept by some enormous sense of release, as if she were laughing at all doubts. Her glance kept going back over the path they had traveled to get here, over the two exhausting miles of a twisted trail that ran, like a precarious corkscrew, from the tip of her feet down to the floor of the valley. Her eyes kept studying it, her mind racing with some purpose of its own.

Brush, pines and a clinging carpet of moss went climbing from the

green slopes far below, up the granite ledges. The moss and the brush vanished gradually, but the pines went on, struggling upward in thinning strands, till only a few dots of single trees were left, rising up the naked rock toward the white sunbursts of snow in the crevices at the peaks. She looked at the spectacle of the most ingenious mining machinery she had ever seen, then at the trail where the plodding hoofs and swaying shapes of mules provided the most ancient form of transportation.

"Francisco," she asked, pointing, "who designed the machines?"

"They're just adaptations of standard equipment."

"Who designed them?"

"I did. We don't have many men to spare. We had to make up for it."

"You're wasting an unconscionable amount of manpower and time, carting your ore on muleback. You ought to build a railroad down to the valley."

She was looking down and did not notice the sudden, eager shot of his glance to her face or the sound of caution in his voice: "I know it, but it's such a difficult job that the mine's output won't justify it at present."

"Nonsense! It's much simpler than it looks. There's a pass to the east where there's an easier grade and softer stone. I watched it on the way up, it wouldn't take so many curves, three miles of rail or less would do it."

She was pointing east, she did not notice the intensity with which the two men were watching her face.

"Just a narrow-gauge track is all you'll need . . like the first railroads . . . that's where the first railroads started—at mines, only they were coal mines. . Look, do you see that ridge? There's plenty of clearance for a three-foot gauge, you wouldn't need to do any blasting or widening. Do you see where there's a slow rise for a stretch of almost half a mile? That would be no worse than a four per cent grade, any engine could manage it." She was speaking with a swift, bright certainty, conscious of nothing but the joy of performing her natural function in her natural world where nothing could take precedence over the act of offering a solution to a problem. "The road will pay for itself within three years. I think, at a rough glance, that the costliest part of the job will be a couple of steel trestles—and there's one spot where I might have to blast a tunnel, but it's only for a hundred feet or less. I'll need a steel trestle to throw the track across that gorge and bring it here, but it's not as hard as it looks—let me show you, have you got a piece of paper?"

She did not notice with what speed Galt produced a notebook and a pencil and thrust them into her hands—she seized them, as if she expected them to be there, as if she were giving orders on a construction site where details of this kind were not to delay her.

"Let me give you a rough idea of what I mean. If we drive diagonal piles into the rock"—she was sketching rapidly—"the actual steel span would be only six hundred feet long—it would cut off this last half-mile of your corkscrew turns—I could have the rail laid in three months and—"