

"Here," he said, pointing toward the mountain peaks. "Didn't you know it?"

"No."

"I own a copper mine that the looters won't reach. It's here, in these mountains. I did the prospecting, I discovered it, I broke the first excavation. It was over eight years ago. I was the first man to whom Midas sold land in this valley. I bought that mine. I started it with my own hands, as Sebastián d'Anconia had started. I have a superintendent in charge of it now, who used to be my best metallurgist in Chile. The mine produces all the copper we require. My profits are deposited at the Mulligan Bank. That will be all I'll have, a few months from now. That will be all I'll need."

--to conquer the world, was the way his voice sounded on his last sentence---and she marveled at the difference between that sound and the shameful, mawkish tone, half whine, half-threat, the tone of beggar and thug combined, which the men of their century had given to the word "need."

"Dagny," he was saying, standing at the window, as if looking out at the peaks, not of mountains, but of time, "the rebirth of d'Anconia Copper—and of the world—has to start here, in the United States. This country was the only country in history born, not of chance and blind tribal warfare, but as a rational product of man's mind. This country was built on the supremacy of reason---and, for one magnificent century, it redeemed the world. It will have to do so again. The first step of d'Anconia Copper, as of any other human value, has to come from here—because the rest of the earth has reached the consummation of the beliefs it has held through the ages: mystic faith, the supremacy of the irrational, which has but two monuments at the end of its course: the lunatic asylum and the graveyard. . . . Sebastián d'Anconia committed one error: he accepted a system which declared that the property he had earned by right, was to be his, not by right, but by permission. His descendants paid for that error. I have made the last payment. . . . I think that I will see the day when, growing out from their root in this soil, the mines, the smelters, the ore docks of d'Anconia Copper will spread again through the world and down to my native country, and I will be the first to start my country's rebuilding. I may see it, but I cannot be certain. No man can predict the time when others will choose to return to reason. It may be that at the end of my life, I shall have established nothing but this single mine—d'Anconia Copper No. 1. Galt's Gulch, Colorado, U.S.A. But, Dagny, do you remember that my ambition was to double my father's production of copper? Dagny, if at the end of my life, I produce but one pound of copper a year, I will be richer than my father, richer than all my ancestors with all their thousands of tons—because that one pound will be *mine by right* and will be used to maintain a world that knows it!"

This was the Francisco of their childhood, in bearing, in manner, in the unclouded brilliance of his eyes—and she found herself questioning him about his copper mine, as she had questioned him about his industrial projects on their walks on the shore of the Hudson, recapturing the sense of an unobstructed future.

"I'll take you to see the mine," he said, "as soon as your ankle recovers completely. We have to climb a steep trail to get there, just a mule trail, there's no truck road as yet. Let me show you the new smelter I'm designing. I've been working on it for some time, it's too complex for our present volume of production, but when the mine's output grows to justify it—just take a look at the time, labor and money that it will save!"

They were sitting together on the floor, bending over the sheets of paper he spread before her, studying the intricate sections of the smelter—with the same joyous earnestness they had once brought to the study of scraps in a junk yard.

She leaned forward just as he moved to reach for another sheet, and she found herself leaning against his shoulder. Involuntarily, she held still for one instant, no longer than for a small break in the flow of a single motion, while her eyes rose to his. He was looking down at her, neither hiding what he felt nor implying any further demand. She drew back, knowing that she had felt the same desire as his.

Then, still holding the recaptured sensation of what she had felt for him in the past, she grasped a quality that had always been part of it, now suddenly clear to her for the first time: if that desire was a celebration of one's life, then what she had felt for Francisco had always been a celebration of her future, like a moment of splendor gained in part payment of an unknown total, affirming some promise to come. In the instant when she grasped it, she knew also the only desire she had ever experienced not in token of the future but of the full and final present. She knew it by means of an image—the image of a man's figure standing at the door of a small granite structure. The final form of the promise that had kept her moving, she thought, was the man who would, perhaps, remain a promise never to be reached.

But this—she thought in consternation—was that view of human destiny which she had most passionately hated and rejected: the view that man was ever to be drawn by some vision of the unattainable shining ahead, doomed ever to aspire, but not to achieve. *Her* life and *her* values could not bring *her* to that, she thought; she had never found beauty in longing for the impossible and had never found the possible to be beyond her reach. But she had come to it and she could find no answer.

She could not give him up or give up the world--she thought, looking at Galt, that evening. The answer seemed harder to find in his presence. She felt that no problem existed, that nothing could stand beside the fact of seeing him and nothing would ever have the power to make her leave--and, simultaneously, that she would have no right to look at him if she were to renounce her railroad. She felt that she owned him, that the unnamed had been understood between them from the start—and, simultaneously, that he was able to vanish from her life and, on some future street of the outside world, to pass her by in unweighted indifference.

She noted that he did not question her about Francisco. When she spoke of her visit, she could find no reaction in his face, neither of