

THE ATLAS SOCIETY

Pocket Guide
to Atlas Shrugged

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Our Mission

The Atlas Society's mission is to inspire people to embrace reason, achievement, benevolence and ethical self-interest as the moral foundation for political liberty, personal happiness and a flourishing society.

We build on Ayn Rand's works and ideas, and use artistic and other creative means to reach and inspire new audiences. We promote an open and empowering brand of Objectivism; we welcome engagement with all who honestly seek to understand the philosophy, and we use reason, facts and open debate in the search for truth above all else; we do not appeal to authority or conflate personalities with ideas. We resist moral judgment without adequate facts, and believe disagreement does not necessarily imply evasion.

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About Ayn Rand

Novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand was born Alissa Rosenbaum on February 2, 1905, in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Her family lived in a large, comfortable apartment above the drug store her father owned.

From her earliest years, the girl felt alienated from the dark, brooding atmosphere of Russia, but loved the bright world projected in stories appearing in foreign magazines. At age nine she made the conscious decision to become a writer.

In her teens, she discovered the works of great romantic writers such as Victor Hugo. But as her private vision of human potential expanded, the social horizons of human possibility were shrinking around her. In February 1917 she witnessed the first shots of the Russian Revolution from her balcony. Soon, communists seized her father's shop. Almost overnight, her family was reduced to crushing poverty.

Against the growing squalor of Soviet life, the young woman nurtured a burning desire to abandon Russia for the West. She obtained a passport to visit relatives in Chicago and left Russia and her family in January 1926, never to return. She arrived in New York City weeks later, with only \$50 in her purse.

After a brief stay with her Chicago relatives—where she selected the pen name of Ayn Rand—she moved to Hollywood. The day after she arrived, she was given a car ride—and a job as a movie extra—by film director Cecil B. DeMille. Soon after, on the set of DeMille's film *King of*

Kings, she literally stumbled into the actor who would eventually become her husband, Frank O'Connor.

Over the next decade, Rand worked at odd jobs. In her spare time she mastered English and churned out screenplays, short stories, and a novel. Her extraordinary perseverance and talent eventually paid off with two Broadway plays and the publication of her first novel, *We the Living*.

But the book that made her famous was *The Fountainhead*. Published in 1943, this great novel of American individualism presented Rand's mature portrait of "Man as hero" in the character of architect Howard Roark. Roark upholds the moral responsibility to design and build loyal only to his own ideals and principles. In his long struggle to succeed—a struggle not unlike Rand's own—he eventually triumphs over every form of spiritual collectivism. This novel first presented Rand's provocative morality of rational egoism. It has remained a bestseller for over half a century, selling millions of copies, and it was made into a film starring Gary Cooper and Patricia Neal.

If *The Fountainhead* created controversy, *Atlas Shrugged* fomented a furor. In this gigantic Romantic epic, Rand dramatized the major elements of her challenging new philosophy of "reason, individualism, and capitalism," which she called "Objectivism." This novel was to be the masterpiece of her literary and philosophic career.

After the publication of *Atlas Shrugged* in 1957, Rand turned to nonfiction, elaborating her philosophy in many essays, columns, and public appearances. Her colorful and tumultuous life ended on March 6, 1982, in her New York apartment.

Her legacy, in literature and philosophy, lives on, immortalized in the novels and characters she created. Rand

considered *Atlas Shrugged* the most complete of her fictional works, and for many readers it remains a deeply influential favorite. While the novel continues to attract a following of fans, it also remains a perennial target for critics opposed to Rand's unreservedly pro-individualist, pro-capitalist views. Most of the criticism is second-hand, circulated by those who have in fact not read Ayn Rand for themselves. A staple of the standard criticism of *Atlas Shrugged* is the novel's length, which is on par with the epic classics by Leo Tolstoy and Victor Hugo. While devotees of *Atlas Shrugged* found the novel hard to put down, detractors are intent on making the book hard to pick up, and exaggerating the book's length is a favorite tactic.

As counter to this ploy, we've produced this *Pocket Guide to Atlas Shrugged*, which distils plot, characters and themes into a concise reader. In addition to providing a bridge for new readers of the novel, the *Pocket Guide* also serves as a handy reference for those who want to review their perennial favorite, and encourage other future readers to embark on its journey.

Plot Synopsis

Atlas Shrugged is structured in three major parts, each of which consists of ten chapters.

The three parts of the book are each named in tribute to Aristotle's laws of logic.

Part One is titled "Non-Contradiction," confronting two prominent business executives, Dagny Taggart and Hank Rearden—with seeming contradictions: highly productive people are disappearing at the height of their success, a revolutionary new motor is found in an abandoned factory.

Part Two, titled "Either-Or," focuses on Dagny Taggart's struggle to resolve a dilemma: either to continue her battle to save her business—or to give it up.

Part Three is titled "A Is A," symbolizing what Rand referred to as "the law of identity"—and here, the answers to all the apparent contradictions finally are identified and resolved.

The tale is told largely from the point of view of Dagny, the beautiful, superlatively competent chief of operations for the nation's largest railroad, Taggart Transcontinental. The main story line is Dagny's quest to understand the cause underlying the seemingly inexplicable collapse of her railroad and of industrial civilization—and simultaneously, her tenacious, desperate search for two unknown men: one, the inventor of an abandoned motor so revolutionary that it could have changed the world; the other, a mysterious figure who, like some perverse Pied Piper, seems purposefully bent on luring away from society its most able and talented people—an unseen destroyer.

A major subplot follows steel titan Hank Rearden in his spiritual quest to understand the unknown forces that are undermining his career and happiness and turning his talents and energies toward his own destruction.

In the shoes of Dagny and Rearden, we gradually learn the full explanation behind the startling events wreaking havoc in their world. With them, we come to discover that all the mysteries and strange events of the story proceed from a single philosophical cause —and that Ayn Rand poses a provocative philosophical remedy for many of the moral and cultural crises of our own world.

Part One: Non-Contradiction

The time is the late afternoon of September 2. The place: New York City. But it's not quite New York City as we know it.

It's a city in the final stages of decay. The walls of skyscrapers, which once towered sharp-edged and clean into space, are cracked, soot-streaked, and crumbling. Hundreds of storefronts, even on once-prosperous Fifth Avenue, are boarded up and empty. Along the littered sidewalks, streetlights are out, windows are broken, and homeless people and panhandlers haunt the shadows.

Eddie Willers walks these desolate streets, feeling a sense of dread he can't explain. Perhaps it's the newspapers, which are filled with ominous stories. Factories are closing, and the nation's industrial infrastructure is falling apart. The federal government is assuming dictatorial emergency powers. Meanwhile, rumors circulate about a mysterious modern pirate ship on the high seas, which sinks government relief vessels. . . .

As Eddie approaches the Taggart Transcontinental Building—headquarters of the great railway system where he works as Dagny Taggart’s assistant—he ponders the system’s latest train wreck . . . the steady decline of its shipping business . . . and the puzzling loss of its last workers of competence and ability. In fact, these days it seems that everywhere, the great scientists, engineers, and business-men are either retiring or simply vanishing. . .

Abruptly, a panhandler steps from a darkened doorway and asks for spare change. As Eddie digs through his pockets, the beggar shrugs in resignation and mutters a popular slang expression summarizing the society’s general feeling of malaise:

“Who is John Galt?”

We meet Eddie’s boss, Dagny Taggart en route to New York by train. Dozing, she awakes to the sound of a train worker whistling a compelling tune, and she wonders what it is. He tells her it’s Richard Halley’s Fifth Concerto. *Fifth* Concerto? Halley had quit composing and mysteriously disappeared after writing only *four* concertos. She confronts the workman on this, and he abruptly reverses himself, saying he misspoke. Dagny senses that he’s trying to hide something.

She returns to her office, where she is fighting to save the family business that her brother, system president James Taggart, seems hell-bent on destroying. Like the rest of industrial society, her railroad is falling apart as its most talented and able men inexplicably quit and disappear. Over her brother’s objections, Dagny decides to replace the crumbling Colorado track with new rail made from Rearden Metal, Hank Rearden’s untested but revolu-

tionary new alloy. At day's end, she receives a visit from one of the system's most promising young men, Owen Kellogg. He shocks her by quitting, without explanation, despite her offer to promote him to head the Ohio division.

Asked why, he answers only, "Who is John Galt?"

On a deserted road, Hank Rearden walks home from work, excited about having just poured the first heat of Rearden Metal. In his pocket is a chain bracelet—the first thing ever made from the metal: a gift for his wife, Lillian. At home he finds his mother, his wife, his brother Phillip and Paul Larkin, a family friend.

The assembled chide him for coming home late, for working too hard. Lillian mocks his gift sarcastically saying she'll be the talk of the town for wearing the same thing used to build bridges and sewer pipes and such. Phillip is working with a left-wing charity called "Friends for Global Awareness" to help the "underprivileged"—and wants a donation from Rearden, but prefers it be anonymous, because the group would be embarrassed to be associated with the steel titan.

As he ponders the ingratitude of his family, Rearden is warned by Paul Larkin about the loyalty of the Rearden Steel Washington lobbyist, Wesley Mouch. Unbeknownst to Rearden, James Taggart has been conspiring with Mouch, Larkin, and rival steel company president Orren Boyle to pass laws that will crush a competing regional railroad in Colorado and eventually cripple Rearden's steel operations as well.

The destruction of the regional competitor forces Colorado oilman Ellis Wyatt, whose oil fields fuel the nation, to ship with Taggart Transcontinental instead. But the

Colorado line of the Taggart system is in total disrepair. Wyatt issues Dagny an angry ultimatum: Either be ready to handle all his freight within nine months, or face economic ruin. "If I go," he vows, "I'll make sure that I take all the rest of you along with me."

Enter Francisco d'Anconia, the owner of the d'Anconia Copper company, and Dagny's former lover. Years before, he had abruptly ended their relationship without explanation. Then newspapers began to report that this man whom she had once loved had become a dissolute international playboy.

When Mexico suddenly nationalizes Francisco's San Sebastián copper mines, everyone is stunned to learn that they were empty of copper and utterly worthless. Knowing that Francisco would never make a poor investment, Dagny suspects that he had concocted the whole debacle. When she challenges him about it, Francisco gaily confirms that he had expected the nationalization—and had consciously let himself lose millions, simply in order to ruin his major investors, including Jim Taggart and Orren Boyle. He adds, without elaboration, that his ultimate target for ruin is Dagny herself.

At a wedding anniversary party for Rearden and his wife, Lillian, a pack of prominent intellectuals invited by Lillian loudly damns all the values and virtues that Hank Rearden embodies: reason, independence, self-interest, and pride in productive achievement. Only Francisco d'Anconia, the supposedly contemptible playboy, speaks up to the contrary.

Hank Rearden finds that not only are his values under attack—his business is as well. When Rearden refuses to sell all rights to Rearden Metal to the federal State Science

Institute, the government retaliates with a public safety warning against the metal. This causes work on the Colorado rail line to grind to a halt. Dagny implores renowned physicist Dr. Robert Stadler, who heads the Institute, to retract the indefensible statement. But Stadler refuses, offering cynical political excuses.

To justify his cynicism, he tells her about his three most promising students years ago, when he taught physics at Patrick Henry University. One, Ragnar Danneskjöld, became a pirate who robs government “relief” ships. The second, Francisco d’Anconia, became a worthless playboy. And the third dropped out of sight, not even making a name for himself, but before leaving, damned Stadler for launching the State Science Institute.

To continue work, Dagny forces Jim to temporarily “sell” her their Colorado branch line as a separate company. She names it “the John Galt Line,” in defiance against the widespread despair that the popular catch phrase symbolizes. Rearden, meanwhile, is forced by government extortion to surrender ownership of many of his subsidiaries, including his ore mines.

Still, despite enormous opposition and obstacles, Dagny and Rearden complete the John Galt Line before the deadline Ellis Wyatt had given them. To prove the safety of Rearden Metal, they ride in the locomotive on the first run to Colorado. As the train speeds triumphantly across America, the two silently share their victory over years of adversity and irrationality. And with each passing mile, the undercurrent of attraction grows between them.

That night, at Ellis Wyatt’s home, Rearden and Dagny are no longer able to resist their feelings for each other and the two begin a secret, passionate affair. But Rearden

is consumed by guilt over breaking his marriage vows, while Dagny is disturbed by Rearden's derisive comments about their immorality. His words suggest an inner conflict yet to be resolved.

They decide to take a vacation together. Driving through Wisconsin towns that have reverted to preindustrial primitiveness, they visit the empty ruins of the Twentieth Century Motor Company—a once successful factory that had been destroyed by worthless heirs. There Dagny makes a startling discovery: a few remnants of a revolutionary motor that had once converted static atmospheric electricity for human use. But there's no clue as to its inventor, how his machine worked—or why he would have abandoned so monumental an invention.

Upon their return to New York, they find that political pressure groups are pushing even more anti-business regulations. While Rearden works feverishly to produce Rearden Metal—despite the loss of his ore mines, a cratering economy, and increasingly politically hostile environment—Dagny begins a private search around the country for the inventor of the motor. She learns that an inventor had been the brilliant young engineer at Twentieth Century Motor Company—but the inventor's actual name remains elusive.

Dagny goes to a diner where she's been told a friend of the young engineer's works as a cook. There, she eats the best hamburger she's ever had—and is amazed to find the man who made it is Dr. Hugh Akston, formerly a great philosopher at Patrick Henry University—who, like Stadler, had taught Francisco and Ragnar Danneskjöld. He refuses to explain why he left his profession, or his current presence as a short-order cook. He also admits that he

knows who invented the motor but refuses to reveal his name. Instead, he tells Dagny that while she won't find him, someday he will find her.

When Dagny bristles at the mystery and the seeming contradictions and paradox of the situation she's investigating, Akston tells her to check her premises.

Returning to New York, Dagny learns of yet another slew of new, anti-business regulations—limiting railroad speeds, train lengths, and production of certain metal alloys. While all advanced in the name of fairness and safety, all these new laws seem to target Taggart Transcontinental's new high-speed Galt Line and Rearden Metal. If that weren't bad enough, she realizes the regulations will also destroy Ellis Wyatt—the man she's given her word to supply with operating rail lines for his oil.

Dagny remembers Wyatt's grim ultimatum and races by train to try to reach him. But she arrives to find the fields of Wyatt Oil ablaze—and Wyatt's handwritten message:

"I am leaving it as I found it. Take over. It's yours."

Part Two: Either-Or

In the wake of the new punitive and confiscatory government policies, the nation's oil industry has collapsed. Like Wyatt, many other Colorado business leaders vanish.

Dagny meets again with Stadler, asking him to read the fragmentary notes left behind by the inventor of the motor in order to try to learn his identity. Stadler is amazed—but angry because the unknown genius had decided to work for industrial applications rather than pure theory, and insulted because the man had never approached Stadler personally to share his path-breaking theories. Stadler

remarks that he knew a John Galt once: a mind of such brilliance that, had he lived, the whole world would be talking about him.

“But the whole world is talking of him,” Dagny points out. Disturbed, Stadler dismisses it all as a meaningless coincidence. “He has to be dead,” he says with a curious emphasis.

Meanwhile, the government embeds a young compliance officer at Rearden Steel to make sure the company obeys new regulations. Rearden’s workers nickname the young man the “Wet Nurse” and brushes off his chidings about his uncooperative attitude.

Shortly thereafter, Rearden is approached again by the State Science Institute with orders to supply Rearden Metal for a mysterious “Project X.” He refuses, goading the Institute to take the metal by force, if they wish. The Institute messenger reacts to this prospect with undisguised horror.

This prompts Rearden’s epiphany: to succeed in their schemes against him, his enemies need his own voluntary cooperation. At the same time, he begins to sense that what he feels for Dagny reflects not the worst within him, but the best.

By now, Dagny has concluded there is a “destroyer” deliberately removing achievers from the world for some inconceivable reason. As for the motor, she hires a brilliant young scientist in Utah, Quentin Daniels, to rebuild it if he can.

Rearden secretly sells Rearden Metal to coal magnate Ken Danagger—a transaction made illegal by the directives. The disturbing thought occurs to him that his only pleasures, at work and in his romantic life, must be kept

hidden, like guilty secrets. Meanwhile, Lillian, whom he has ignored for months, begins to suspect that he is having an affair. She demands that he accompany her to the wedding of Dagny's brother, Jim Taggart, now engaged to a naïve young clerk named Cherryl, who admires him for what she believes is his genius in running the railroad. Jim basks in her blind adulation and maliciously enjoys the awkwardness of her attempts to move in his social circle.

Their wedding is attended by a corrupt cross-section of the culturally prominent and politically connected. Across the room, Lillian approaches Jim, hinting that her control over her husband is available for trade. Then Francisco crashes the party and approaches Dagny, telling her it appears that John Galt has come to claim the railroad line she named for him. Hearing a dowager's remark that "money is the root of all evil," he gives an impromptu speech defending money-making on moral grounds, as a symbol of achievement, free trade, and justice.

Francisco approaches Rearden and admits that his words were intended for him, to arm him morally for self-defense. Rearden is grateful—until Francisco reveals that he's deliberately destroying d'Anconia Copper, precisely to harm the looters who are profiteering on his abilities. Rearden recoils in horror. Then Francisco lets it be known, loudly, that his company is in trouble. As the news sweeps the crowd, many of whom are d'Anconia investors, the wedding party breaks up in panic.

After the party, Lillian confronts Rearden with her suspicion that he's having an affair, presumably with some tramp. Rearden admits to an affair, but refuses to identify his mistress or to stop seeing her. For reasons he can't fathom, though, Lillian refuses to divorce him.

Soon afterwards, Rearden is visited by Dr. Floyd Ferris of the State Science Institute. Ferris threatens him with jail for selling Rearden Metal to Ken Danagger—unless he agrees to sell it to the State Science Institute as well. Glimpsing a flaw in this blackmail scheme, Rearden once again refuses.

In the Taggart cafeteria, Eddie opens his heart to a long-time confidant, a worker of his acquaintance whose name he has long forgotten. He reveals Dagny's suspicions about the "destroyer," her fear that Ken Danagger will be the next to go, and her intention to visit him at once to prevent that from happening.

When Dagny arrives at Danagger's office, he is in a meeting with someone else. After a long delay, the other man leaves, unseen, by the rear entrance—and Dagny enters to find she's too late. Danagger informs her that he's quitting. Like Kellogg and Akston, he won't explain why. She realizes that she's just missed "the destroyer," but Danagger reassures her that nothing she can say would have mattered anyway. Then Dagny spots a cigarette butt in his ashtray: it bears the imprint of the gold dollar sign.

The day after Danagger's disappearance, Francisco visits Rearden at his mills. He begins to explain to him that by continuing to work under the government's dictatorial control, Rearden is granting a moral sanction to the looters, a sanction they need from him in order to destroy him. In the exchange that gave the novel its title, Francisco asks Rearden what he would tell the Titan Atlas of Greek mythology, crushed by the weight of the world that he bears on his shoulders.

Rearden has no answer. Francisco says he'd tell Atlas to shrug.

Rearden begins to understand—when they are interrupted by a furnace emergency in the mills. Rearden and Francisco work side by side to resolve the crisis, but the moment is lost; Francisco decides it's not yet time to discuss things further.

At their Thanksgiving dinner, Lillian tries to dissuade her husband from taking the witness stand at his trial the following day, informing him that he has no moral right to protest. But Rearden startles them all by rebuking his brother for insulting him. They notice that he seems to have a new confidence—and he notices that this seems to disturb them. Meeting later with Dagny, he informs her that she'll have all the Rearden Metal she needs, laws be damned.

At his trial, Rearden acknowledges his actions with Danagger—but refuses to accept that they were in any way immoral. Instead, borrowing from Francisco's words, he gives a rousing moral defense of his right to produce for his own sake, bringing the audience to cheers and leaving the judges speechless. Instead of jailing him, they seem panicked—and give him a suspended sentence. Rearden smiles, beginning to grasp the concept of “the sanction of the victim.”

Drawn by curiosity about Francisco's incongruous reputation as a playboy, Rearden visits him, finding him working on blueprints. Francisco admits that his reputation has been mere camouflage for a secret purpose of his own. Denying that he has been promiscuous, he explains the moral meaning of sex. But unknowingly, he is also addressing Rearden's own private sexual conflicts. Feeling

a growing comradeship, Rearden reveals he's just placed a huge, urgently needed order with d'Anconia Copper.

Horried, Francisco leaps to the phone—then stops. In obvious anguish, he solemnly swears to Rearden “by the woman I love” that, despite what is about to happen, he remains Rearden's true friend.

Soon after, the d'Anconia ships carrying copper to Rearden are sunk by Ragnar Danneskjöld. Rearden is overwhelmed by a sense of personal betrayal. He realizes that Francisco somehow knew of the sinking in advance and could have stopped it—but didn't.

It is Rearden Steel's first failure to deliver an order on time. The delay in the Rearden Metal shipment to Taggart Transcontinental starts a devastating economic chain reaction, holding up trains, spoiling shipments of food, forcing farmers to go bankrupt and factories to shut down, causing deteriorating bridges across the Mississippi to close—and leaving the famous Taggart Bridge as the river's last crossing point.

Meanwhile, coal that Taggart Transcontinental desperately needs is diverted to foreign aid, the government censors newspaper stories of the disasters and their causes, and the top floors of buildings are shut down to conserve fuel. Rearden is forced to make deals with hired gangs to mine coal at night in abandoned mines.

With Colorado industry now in shambles, the Taggart Transcontinental board of directors meets to formally close the John Galt Line. In exchange for permission to shut down the line, a government bureaucrat prods them to raise all Taggart worker wages. They try to nudge Dagny into stating openly the final decision to close the line; but—following Rearden's example from the trial—she re-

fuses to help them and grant a moral sanction for their actions by taking the responsibility to venture an opinion. They finally put the matter to the inevitable vote.

Francisco is waiting for her afterwards. "Have they finally murdered John Galt?" he asks softly. He comforts her at a nearby café. Then he asks her why it is that heroic builders, like the railroad's founder, Nat Taggart, have always lost battles with cowards such as those on Taggart's board. As she ponders this, he reflects aloud, almost abstractly, about how his ancestor, Sebastián d'Anconia, had to wait fifteen years for the woman he loved. Dagny is astonished at this tacit confession but replies coldly by asking him why he has hurt Hank Rearden. Francisco answers solemnly that he'd have given his life to Rearden—except for the man to whom he had given it.

Later, noticing the familiar question carved in the tabletop, he offers his answer: "John Galt is Prometheus who changed his mind." After being torn by vultures for bringing men fire, Francisco says, Galt "withdrew his fire—until the day when men withdraw their vultures."

In Colorado with Rearden, Dagny supervises the aftermath of the Line's closure: scavenging machines from closed factories, watching towns emptying, seeing refugees crowd the last departing trains.

Meanwhile, eager for more Washington influence, Jim conspires with Lillian to deliver Rearden to the bureaucrats. Lillian finds that her husband is traveling home by train under a phony name, presumably with his mistress. When she meets the train to confront them, she sees him not with some cheap slut, but with Dagny Taggart.

Lillian is devastated—and terrified. She grasps now why her grip on her husband is failing, and simultaneous-

ly, his unapologetic demeanor at his trial: Dagny has empowered her husband to reject guilt.

“Anybody but her!” she cries to him in terror. But Rearden is indifferent to her efforts to make him feel guilty or give up Dagny. In Lillian’s vile insults against Dagny, Rearden realizes that hers had been his own view of sex. Though Lillian tells him she won’t divorce him, he feels at last liberated and guiltless. Still, Lillian senses that he wants the affair to be kept secret—and that, she realizes, may be used as a weapon.

Without warning, the government issues Directive 10-289, a regulatory measure that seizes total control of the entire economy and orders all existing economic arrangements to be frozen in place. All patents on inventions are to be turned over to the government in the form of Gift Certificates. In addition, to stop people of talent from disappearing, the law forbids anyone from quitting his job.

It’s the last straw for Dagny, who throws the newspaper into James Taggart’s face and resigns. She leaves for the Taggart lodge in the country, letting only Eddie know her whereabouts. But Rearden stays behind, confident that he can dynamite the new directive simply by refusing to comply with the order to surrender his patents to Rearden Metal.

In response to the directive, a mood of quiet rebellion sweeps the nation. Each day, more people fail to show up for work. Even Rearden’s “Wet Nurse” is indignant, and vows to look the other way if Rearden chooses to break laws. Meanwhile Lillian mysteriously disappears on a vacation trip.

On a spring morning, Dr. Floyd Ferris arrives at Rearden's mills. He reveals that the government has been tipped off by Lillian to Rearden's affair with Dagny. If Rearden won't sign the Gift Certificate transferring Rearden Metal to the government, Ferris will expose the affair in the media, sullyng Dagny's reputation in scandal. Rearden suddenly realizes much more about the motives of his enemies—and about the moral premises that have caused such conflict in his life. But refusing to let Dagny bear the consequences of his own mistakes, he signs the Gift Certificate.

In the wake of these events, Eddie Willers bares his soul to his friend in the cafeteria. He also lets slip that Dagny has gone off to stay at the Taggart lodge.

Furious at Lillian's betrayal, Rearden orders his attorney to get him a divorce and to leave her with no alimony or property. He moves to an apartment in Philadelphia. Walking home from his mills one evening, he is confronted by a man who presents him with a bar of gold. The man reveals that he's Ragnar Danneskjöld. He says the gold represents wealth looted from Rearden and forcibly reclaimed by Ragnar from the looters. Rearden finds that he can't condemn Ragnar for his actions, and he even helps the outlaw elude pursuing police.

At the Taggart railroad tunnel through the Rockies, a waiting diesel engine is commandeered by the government to allow a bureaucrat to tour the country. This leaves only coal-burning engines on the track. Despite a strict system rule against entering the tunnel with a smoky coal-burner, plus the fact that the tunnel's signal and ventilation systems are malfunctioning, a politician demands that his own train be allowed to proceed through. All the re-

sponsible supervisors have quit the Colorado division, leaving decision-making authority to incompetents. Bullied by the politician, each in turn—from James Taggart on down—passes the buck, leaving the final decision to proceed to a green young dispatcher. Abandoned by his superiors, the boy signs the order for the train to enter the tunnel. Miles inside, the crew and passengers are overcome by fumes—and a military train loaded with explosives rushes into the tunnel from the other end. They collide in a cataclysmic explosion that destroys the tunnel.

At the Taggart lodge, Dagny receives a surprise visit from Francisco. He tells her why she was right to quit—and reveals that, for the same reason, he has deliberately been destroying d’Anconia Copper since the night he left her, twelve years before. Dagny begins to see Francisco in a new light—when the radio abruptly brings news of the tunnel explosion. Horrified, she abandons Francisco and rushes back to New York.

After a grueling day dealing with the emergency, Dagny returns to her apartment, where she is visited once again by Francisco. By now she is immune to his arguments but aware that he’s part of the “destroyer’s” conspiracy. Suddenly the door opens—and Hank Rearden is standing there, the key to Dagny’s apartment in his hand.

Rearden demands to know why Francisco is present. Francisco realizes—and accepts—that Rearden is Dagny’s lover. Enraged by what he believes has been Francisco’s betrayal of their friendship, Rearden says, “I know what they mean . . . your friendship and your oath by the only woman you ever—”

They all suddenly know what this means. Rearden steps forward and demands, “Is this the woman you love?”

Looking at Dagny, Francisco answers, "Yes." Rearden slaps him across the face. Retaining iron control, Francisco bows and takes his leave.

Rearden suddenly wishes desperately that he hadn't reacted as he had. Dagny then reveals to Rearden that Francisco had been her first lover. In this private turmoil, they are interrupted by a message from Quentin Daniels: a letter of resignation. He refuses to continue working on the motor under Directive 10-289. Dagny phones him in Utah and begs him to meet with her first. Daniels gives his word that he'll wait for her visit.

When Rearden leaves, she summons Eddie to take instructions as she packs for the trip. Eddie notices a man's dressing gown in her closet bearing Hank Rearden's initials. Crushed with jealousy, Eddie realizes for the first time just how much Dagny has meant to him. That evening in the cafeteria he pours out his heart to his workman friend. He mentions that Dagny is on her way to try to talk Daniels out of quitting his work on the motor—and then blurts out his discovery that she is sleeping with Rearden. At this news, the worker seems unaccountably stricken and rushes out.

Dagny is racing by train across the country to her meeting with Daniels when she has a chance encounter with a hungry tramp. He explains that he once had been a machinist at the Twentieth Century Motor Company. One day the firm's heirs instituted a socialistic pay plan, based on the principle that everyone "would work according to his ability, but would be paid according to his need." In practice, this meant that workers of ability were punished with longer hours and forced to support the "needier" workers—the lazy and incompetent—with compensation

sufficient to fulfill all their alleged needs. Within month, everyone was hiding his abilities, but claiming a profusion of “needs”—and production plummeted until the factory went bankrupt.

The plan, the tramp continues, had been approved at a mass meeting of the workers. After the vote, a young engineer stood up. Speaking with moral confidence, he said he would “put an end to this” by stopping “the motor of the world.” As the years passed, factories closed, and the economy ground to a halt, the tramp and his fellow workers wondered about the young engineer—and began to ask the despairing question now on everyone’s lips. “You see,” he tells Dagny, “his name was John Galt.”

Dagny’s journey is interrupted when the train’s crew deserts at night in the middle of nowhere. She is surprised to see Owen Kellogg—the young man who had refused her job offer—riding the train, en route to a month-long vacation. Kellogg accompanies her up the track on foot to phone for help—and along the way, Dagny discovers that he too is part of the conspiracy. After arranging for help to come to the stalled train, she commandeers a small plane at a nearby airfield and flies alone to Utah to her meeting with Daniels. But upon arriving at the airport, she is told that Daniels has just left with another man, in a plane that has just taken off.

Determined not to lose Daniels to the “destroyer” spiriting him away, Dagny takes off again and races after the distant lights of the other plane. The long chase takes them over the wildest stretches of the Colorado Rockies. Unexpectedly, the stranger’s plane begins to circle and descend over impossibly rugged mountain terrain, vanishing behind a ridge. When she reaches the spot, she sees

nothing below but a rocky, inaccessible valley between granite walls: no conceivable place for a landing, yet no sign of the other plane. She descends but still sees nothing. Her altimeter shows her dropping—yet strangely, the valley floor seems to be getting no closer.

Suddenly there is a blinding flash of light, and her motor dies. Her plane spirals downward—not into jagged rocks, but toward a grassy field that hadn't existed a second before. Fighting to control the plane, she hears in her mind the hated phrase, not in despair, but this time in defiance: "Oh hell! Who is John Galt?"

Part Three: A is A

When she opens her eyes, Dagny is staring up at the proud, handsome face of a man with sun-streaked brown hair, and green eyes that bear no trace of pain, fear, or guilt. He reveals that he is John Galt.

Galt carries the injured woman away from the wreck. He explains that her plane had penetrated a screen of rays projecting a refracted image, like a mirage, intended to camouflage the valley's existence. The ray screen had killed her plane's engine.

He carries her past a small house, where the sound of a piano is lifting the chords of Halley's Fifth Concerto. It's Halley's home, Galt explains. They reach a ledge above the valley; a small town spreads below. Nearby, commanding the valley like a coat of arms, stands a solid gold dollar sign three feet high—"Francisco's private joke," he says.

A car pulls up, and its two occupants approach. She recognizes Hugh Akston. The other man is introduced as Midas Mulligan—the world's richest financier, who had also vanished years ago.

Smiling, Akston tells her that he never expected that when they next met, she would be in the arms of the inventor of the motor. Astounded, Dagny asks if the story of his walking out of the Twentieth Century Motor Company is true, and Galt confirms it. He has, he says, kept his promise to “stop the motor of the world.”

Then he drives her around the valley, where she encounters others who have abandoned her world: Quentin Daniels . . . Dick McNamara, her former contractor . . . Ellis Wyatt . . . Ken Danagger . . .

Galt stops the car outside a lonely log cabin; above the door is the d’Anconia coat of arms. She gets out, staring at the silver crest, remembering the words of the man she had once loved. “That was the first man I took away from you,” Galt says.

He ends the tour at the town’s powerhouse, where his motor brings the valley its electricity. On it is an inscription: **I SWEAR BY MY LIFE AND MY LOVE OF IT THAT I WILL NEVER LIVE FOR THE SAKE OF ANOTHER MAN, NOR ASK ANOTHER MAN TO LIVE FOR MINE.** Galt explains that it’s the oath taken by every person in the valley except Dagny. Recited aloud, the words are also the key to unlocking the door.

That night they attend dinner at Mulligan’s home with several of the prominent men who had vanished from her world. Each recounts his reasons for quitting. Galt explains that they are on strike against the morality of self-sacrifice and the disdain of mind, production, and wealth.

Dagny asks about his motor. For the sake of what it meant to him, he says, he had to be willing to abandon it—“just as you will have to be willing to let the rail of Taggart Transcontinental crumble and vanish.”

Galt drives her back to his home, carries her to the guest room, and places her upon the bed. Each is intensely aware of the other's physical presence.

The next day Ragnar Danneskjöld visits. Galt and Ragnar worry about Francisco, unaccountably late for their customary month's vacation in the valley. Galt tells Dagny she must remain the entire month. She insists on earning her keep as Galt's cook and maid.

When Owen Kellogg arrives days later, he tells her that everyone, including Hank Rearden, now believes she crashed in the mountains, and search parties are looking for her wreckage. But the rules of the valley permit no communication with the outside world.

In her room one day, Dagny hears a familiar voice: Francisco's. He tells Galt sadly that he must leave again right away. She hears Galt answer that before he does, he should see the "scab" living in his guest room. Francisco laughs and opens her door.

In the next moment he is on his knees, holding her. But when he raises his head, his eyes are laughing. He tells her that he loves her, that it doesn't matter that she loves Rearden—only that she's alive and in a place where all things are possible. Recalling the night twelve years earlier when he had left her, he explains that Galt had spoken to Ragnar and himself that very day to recruit them to his strike. It was seeing Dagny, and foreseeing her hopeless struggle, that had convinced him to be the first to join the strike. He concludes by saying that he doesn't blame her for being in love with Rearden.

But now Dagny realizes that this is no longer true. In the days that follow, she and Galt endure the tension of an overwhelming but impossible attraction: between the

woman consecrated to saving Taggart Transcontinental, and the man determined to destroy it.

At last comes the night when, in Midas Mulligan's home, the strikers ask her to decide either to join the strike or to return to the world. While she ponders, Mulligan asks Galt if he's decided whether to return to New York. Galt answers cryptically that he's not certain. Surprised, Mulligan warns in graphic detail what the coming social chaos will be like. When he says the Taggart Bridge will fall, Dagny cries out, "No, it won't!" She has decided to return.

Walking home that night, Francisco—who has been looking at Galt and Dagny thoughtfully—invites them for a drink at his cabin. He asks Galt casually if he's finally made up his mind whether to return to New York. Galt answers yes. Francisco looks at them both, understanding. From silver goblets of his Spanish ancestors, they share a toast that seals their mutual acceptance.

Galt and Dagny spend their last sleepless night in separate rooms of Galt's house. The next morning, after securing her promise of secrecy about the valley, Galt flies her, blindfolded, to a dying town and leaves her in a dying world . . . a world where Dr. Robert Stadler is summoned by Dr. Floyd Ferris to the first public demonstration of the State Science Institute's "Project X"—a secret invention of which Stadler knows nothing. The media and national figures are present, including Mr. Thompson, head of state. Ferris announces that Project X is a sonic ray device—"an invaluable instrument of public security" with a radius of a hundred miles. It is, he announces, a practical application of Stadler's own scientific theories: in fact, Stadler's ideas and reputation allowed the project to be

planned and funded. The physicist and onlookers are horrified when, in the demonstration, the ray annihilates a distant farm. But when Ferris hands him a prepared speech to reassure the crowd, Stadler meekly obeys.

Dagny returns to a New York City close to collapse. She phones Hank, who is shocked with relief to hear her voice—but puzzled by her failure to answer questions as to where she has been, and why she hasn't communicated with him.

Eddie tells her that in her absence a Railroad Unification Plan—run by a thug named Cuffy Meigs—has socialized the nation's railroads. All must allow their competitors' trains to use their track without charge. Their revenues are pooled, and income comes in the form of government subsidies, based on miles of track, not traffic. Because Taggart has the most track, it is making money—and destroying its competitors.

Jim insists she go on the radio on the government's behalf, to reassure the nation that she hasn't quit. Dagny refuses. That evening she receives a surprise visit from Lillian. Rearden's wife reveals why he had signed the "Gift Certificates," and now tries to use the same blackmail over the affair to force Dagny to appear on the radio show. Dagny coolly agrees—then, on the air, proudly tells the world that she'd been Rearden's mistress for two years and publicly exposes the blackmail scheme.

She finds Rearden waiting back at her apartment. He confesses his love for her, and his liberation from guilt. He also tells her, serenely, what he has guessed: that during the month of her disappearance, she met the man she now loves—and that was the reason she had not contacted him. Dagny confirms that the "John Galt" of legend exists,

that he is the inventor of the motor, and “the destroyer”—and also the man she loves.

James has been plotting with Latin American politicians to fleece the carcass of d’Anconia Copper, secretly scheduled for global nationalization on September 2. He feels the need to celebrate and returns home to his young wife, Cherryl. In the year of their marriage, she has learned that her husband isn’t the man she had once imagined. She’s visited Eddie, who has revealed the truth about who really runs Taggart Transcontinental. Now the need to justify himself compels James to boast to her of the forthcoming nationalization of d’Anconia Copper. Disgusted, Cherryl walks out. She visits Dagny and apologizes for her past insults. She explains that she now realizes her husband is motivated by a form of viciousness that she can’t understand. Dagny is concerned: Cherryl seems terribly fragile.

At the same moment, James is visited by Lillian, who begs for help in stopping her pending divorce. “I don’t want to let him go free!” she cries. “I won’t let the whole of my life be a total failure!” They get drunk. Then, motivated by a mutual, perverse desire to defile Rearden, they have sex.

Cherryl returns home and is shocked to hear a woman’s voice in her husband’s bedroom. After the woman leaves and she confronts James, he screams at her, boasting that it was “Mrs. Hank Rearden.” When Cherryl asks why he’d married her, he yells that it was precisely because he’d seen her as worthless. She backs away, horrified. “You’re a killer . . . for the sake of killing,” she says.

Spirit shattered, she rushes from the apartment, wandering blankly through the neighborhood. When a social

worker confronts and berates her, it is too much: Cherryl runs from the woman and plunges into a river to her death.

On the morning of September 2, the radio announces that just as the Chilean legislature met to nationalize d'Anconia Copper, explosions rocked the company's ore docks—and simultaneously, all d'Anconia Copper holdings around the world. The d'Anconia fortune is gone, as is its owner. James and his cronies, who had invested secretly in the cartel that was to take over the nationalized assets, have lost their investments.

That night, Dagny and Rearden meet at a restaurant. Suddenly there's a muffled scream. Beyond the window, an enormous calendar page on a building is changing. The date disappears—replaced by a huge, handwritten message:

BROTHER, YOU ASKED FOR IT!

Francisco Domingo Carlos Andres Sebastián d'Anconia

Amid the cries of alarm, Hank Rearden rises to his feet, laughing.

In the ensuing days, Dagny works to cope with daily emergencies stemming from the loss of copper. More businesses everywhere are closing their doors; supplies of all sorts of materials are drying up; and the nation faces the coming winter desperately short of fuel. But with every new crisis, the government finds new ways to make matters worse.

The government orders freight cars intended for the Minnesota wheat crop to be diverted to Louisiana for a soybean project run by the politically connected. The wheat harvest lies in heaps and is destroyed by rain. Bank-

rupted farmers begin to riot, and Minnesota plunges into primitive savagery.

When a copper wire breaks, all signals go down in the tunnels beneath the Taggart Terminal, and traffic is at a standstill. Dagny rushes to the terminal to take charge, still in a formal black dress from a dinner. From the stairway of the underground traffic tower, she organizes a large gang of laborers to man the tracks with lanterns and explains that they will guide trains in and out of the tunnels.

She stops. Among the upturned faces of the men, in greasy overalls and shirtsleeves, stands a man with sun-streaked copper hair and ruthlessly perceptive eyes. She finishes her instructions . . . then descends the stairs, making her way toward abandoned tunnels. He follows—and at last Dagny Taggart and John Galt consummate their mutual desire.

Afterwards he tells her that for the past dozen years he'd been working beneath her feet, as a common laborer in the tunnels. He warns her that their meeting would have bad consequences, because her goals would one day force her to lead his enemies to him.

Abruptly, the government provokes a series of outrageous actions against Rearden: fomenting violence at his plant, demanding raises for his workers, seizing his property on trumped-up tax charges. Rearden does not rise to the bait: he remains silent, refusing to respond or protest. Within days, he receives profuse apologies about “misunderstandings” and is invited to a meeting of high-level officials at the Wayne-Falkland Hotel on November 4.

That morning he receives a call from his mother, begging to see him that afternoon. When he arrives at his

former home, he finds his mother, Philip—and Lillian: they'd been letting her live there secretly, at his expense. Rearden refuses their demands to do anything about the government's attachment of their allowance checks. His mother accuses him of not caring about them. "I don't," he answers. Eventually, she blurts out, "If you give up and vanish, like all those men who—"

Now he understands: even though his position is hopeless, and in reason his only course is to quit—they still want him to sacrifice the last of himself for their sakes. His mother screams that they want to live, but Rearden suddenly realizes they don't: if they had valued their lives, they would have valued him. As he turns to go, Lillian, her voice filled with malice, tells him that while still his wife, she had slept with Jim Taggart. It's meant to hurt him; but he looks at her with utter indifference. Before his eyes, Lillian's features slacken; her quest for power over him has met its final, irrevocable defeat.

Rearden drives to the New York hotel where Wesley Mouch, Jim Taggart, Floyd Ferris, and others await him. They beg for his agreement to a Steel Unification Plan, modeled after the Railroad Unification Plan. Each steel company will produce as much as it can, "according to its ability"; their gross earnings will be confiscated and placed in a common pool; then each company will be paid "according to its need." Since the preservation of blast furnaces is determined to be the "basic need," companies will be rewarded according to their number of furnaces.

By this scheme, Rearden would be paid for less than half his actual output, while Orren Boyle—having many idle furnaces—would be paid for nearly double his output.

Rearden challenges them to explain how “to make the irrational work.”

“Oh, you’ll do something!” James Taggart cries.

Rearden suddenly grasps the nature of his enemies—and who has been empowering them. They were counting on him to buy them just a little more time, before he too would be destroyed. . . . He leaves them and drives back to Philadelphia, to his mills. A mile away he hears gunfire: a mob is trying to storm the main gate. Turning down a side road, he screeches to a stop and jumps out, half-sliding down the ravine to where he has spotted a human form.

It is Tony, the “Wet Nurse,” mortally wounded. The boy tells him that the looters in Washington had planned to stage a phony riot of allegedly starving workers at his mills, to justify imposing the Steel Unification Plan. But Tony had refused to sign the passes to admit hired goons onto the property. When he ran for help, they shot him.

Rearden struggles to carry him out of the ravine, but Tony dies in his arms. He walks on, his rage growing, and leaves the boy’s body in the infirmary. Then he heads for the front gate. To his surprise, there is organized resistance to the goons. On a roof he spots a man firing down at the rioters; the man sees him and abandons his post. Then Rearden is confronted by two thugs. In the instant when they strike him with clubs, he hears a gun blast, and a strong arm breaks his fall as he collapses into darkness. . . .

He awakens in his office, the mill’s doctor hovering over him. He asks who had saved his life. The doctor replies that it was Frankie, the new furnace foreman, who had learned of the plot and organized the defenses. Rearden asks to see him.

The door opens. Standing proudly, streaked with soot, is Francisco d'Anconia. Rearden acknowledges Francisco's friendship, and says he is ready to hear what his friend has to say.

The next morning, Dagny laughs triumphantly as James shrieks hysterically that Rearden has quit and vanished. The newspapers try to cover up the story as the nation slips into near-anarchy. They announce an upcoming radio address by Mr. Thompson on the world crisis, scheduled the night of November 22.

James tells Dagny that the head of state personally has invited her to confer with him at the studio before the broadcast. She arrives with Eddie Willers to find the whole Washington gang present; so is Robert Stadler. Just before eight o'clock, a technician rushes in with the news that all radio stations in the country have gone off the air simultaneously, their signals overwhelmed by waves of some unknown frequency and source. Mr. Thompson yells impotently for somebody to do something.

"Ladies and gentlemen," says a voice from a nearby radio, "... this is John Galt speaking."

In the three hours that follow, Galt tells the world about the strike and his reasons for it. He reveals the philosophical meaning and cause of the world's crisis—and the cure: "We are on strike against self-immolation. We are on strike against the creed of unearned rewards and unrewarded duties. We are on strike against the dogma that the pursuit of one's happiness is evil." Damning the ideas of mysticism, altruism, and collectivism, he outlines the basis for a new morality: a morality of rational self-interest. When the speech ends, Mr. Thompson demands that somebody tell him what to do. Dagny tells him to give up

power. Robert Stadler tells him not to listen. When she and Eddie leave in disgust, Stadler coldly says his former student must be killed. He suggests finding Galt by tracking Dagny. Thompson agrees to track Dagny, but not to kill Galt. He says they'll make a deal and get him to save them.

As violence begins to overwhelm the country, as more and more men of talent vanish each day, as fewer and fewer products appear in stores, as Rearden Steel is nationalized, then closed—news broadcasts implore John Galt to negotiate with Mr. Thompson. There is no response.

Mr. Thompson warns Dagny that the national leadership is divided into two factions: his own, which abhors violence, and the Ferris-Meigs faction, which is urging him to control the nation through a reign of terror. Casually, he wonders aloud if their goons may already have found and killed Galt. His ploy works.

Desperately anxious, Dagny looks up Galt's address on the Taggart payroll. Then she makes her way through a slum neighborhood to an ancient tenement and rings the doorbell. The door opens and John Galt stands before her. She collapses in his arms.

He warns her that she undoubtedly has been followed. If the government learns what they mean to each other, they'll torture her to force him to comply with their orders. So when police arrive, he tells her, she is to turn him in and claim the reward. Reluctantly, Dagny agrees. Then he shows her a locked room: inside is his scientific laboratory, its equipment powered by his motor.

When a group of soldiers arrives, Galt and Dagny begin their charade. She identifies him, and he feigns anger. He refuses to open his laboratory door, and the goons

force the lock—only to find nothing inside but piles of dust.

They take Galt to the Wayne-Falkland Hotel, to create the illusion that he's not a prisoner, but armed guards are at his door. A series of visitors, beginning with Mr. Thompson, argue, beg, and threaten Galt, trying to get him to tell them what to do to save their skins. Thompson even offers him Mouch's role as economic dictator of the nation. Galt replies that he'll follow any order at gunpoint; but he won't think for them. "When you force a man to act against his own choice and judgment, it's his thinking that you want him to suspend. You want him to become a robot. I shall comply."

The other officials fare no better; most dread the prospect of facing again the eyes that see too much, the voice that names what they wish to evade. And as factories continue to close, and rioting expands into regional insurrections, pollsters find that nobody believes government propaganda that Galt is cooperating with them.

Dagny receives a message from Francisco telling her to watch the officials closely and to call him when she thinks Galt needs help. The looters are at the end of their rope. Ferris suggests torture, which horrifies Mr. Thompson: he desperately doesn't want to believe that he's the thug Galt said he was.

Mr. Thompson asks Galt if there is anyone he wants to see, and he asks for Dr. Robert Stadler. His former teacher is ordered into Galt's hotel room. "I couldn't help it, John!" he cries. Galt remains silent, which drives Stadler into a soliloquy of apologies—then excuses—then self-righteous insults—and finally the declaration that Galt must be "destroyed." He stifles a scream as he realizes what he's said.

He moans. Stadler's monologue, Galt replies, has covered every point he had wanted to make to his former teacher. Stadler runs from the room.

A few days later, Galt is ordered to put on formal dinner clothes. He's taken to the hotel ballroom by a man who presses a hidden gun into his ribs. They enter to the standing ovation of five hundred guests, and Galt is seated as the guest of honor, between Mr. Thompson and the goon. After dinner, television equipment rolls forward, and an announcer welcomes everyone to the inauguration of "the John Galt Plan." Speakers commend him for his genius as a planner, his practical know-how, his selfless leadership. Mr. Thompson declares that Galt is present of his own free will, motivated by love for mankind and a sense of duty. Then he introduces Galt.

Galt rises swiftly and leans to one side, exposing the goon's gun to the viewing world. Then, staring into the camera, he says: "Get the hell out of my way!"

Robert Stadler hears this on his car radio, en route to the Iowa site of Project X. After Galt summoned him, government officials had become suspicious of his loyalties; he had felt cornered . . . but then remembered Project X. It was his property, after all, the product of his ideas. He drives frantically, vaguely planning to take control of the weapon and use it to defend himself from the Washington savages.

By intimidation he blusters his way past the guards at the site, which has been taken over by Cuffy Meigs. He finds Meigs in the control room, drunk. They begin a shouting match dangerously near the instrument panel, and Stadler orders Meigs not to touch it. But Meigs won't obey, and when one of his supporters tries to stop him, it

only angers him more. “I’ll show you who’s boss,” Meigs roars, and yanks a lever.

A crash of sound lifts and shatters the building—and within a diameter of two hundred miles, cities and farmhouses collapse into rubble. On the periphery of the circle, at the Mississippi River, a train and half of the Taggart Bridge tumble into the water.

Back at the ballroom, Dagny—who was one of the guests—leaves the panicked crowd and finds Mr. Thompson and his associates huddled together. Ferris is saying that only “direct action” will work now—that his “Ferris Persuader” at the State Science Institute in New Hampshire can force Galt to comply. James is eager to try the device, and finally even Mouch and Thompson go along.

Dagny phones Francisco, then hurries to her apartment and to her office to pack. Suddenly her chief engineer rushes in with the news of the destruction of the Taggart Bridge. Gasping, she leaps to the phone . . . then lowers it slowly.

She leaves Taggart Transcontinental for the last time. Outside, she sees that news of the Project X disaster has pushed the city into chaos. Francisco approaches her, and facing him, she solemnly repeats the Striker’s Oath. . . .

In the basement of a small concrete structure at the State Science Institute, John Galt lies naked, strapped to a mattress. Electrodes attached to his body lead to a machine whose control panel is manned by a young mechanic. Taggart, Mouch, and Ferris sit nearby. Ferris tells Galt, “We want ideas—or else.” Galt remains silent. Ferris orders a series of electrical shocks sent through Galt’s body. But he refuses to speak.

Suddenly the machine stops. The young mechanic stares at it with a look of incomprehension. Then they hear Galt's voice . . . instructing him on how to fix it.

Horried, the mechanic runs from the room. "No!" James Taggart cries. Mouch tries to calm Taggart, but he won't have it. "I want to break him! I want to hear him scream. I want—" And then Taggart himself screams, realizing that he wants Galt to die even though it would cost his own life.

Taggart collapses. Shaken, Ferris and Mouch lead him from the room.

Dagny, Francisco, Ragnar, and Rearden invade the grounds of the State Science Institute. After overcoming the guards in brief gun skirmishes, they race downstairs to the cellar. They free Galt and lead him back to their plane.

Before long the glowing skyline of New York rises before them. In moments, they are looking down at the city. Suddenly the buildings seem to vanish; it takes a moment to realize that the lights of New York have gone out. . . .

On the Arizona desert, the train bearing Eddie Willers breaks down. The crew tries vainly to repair the engine. Then a line of covered wagons approaches. The leader tells Eddie that going on is useless: the Taggart Bridge to the East is now gone. The terrified passengers accept his offer to join his horse-drawn caravan. But Eddie refuses. "Don't let it go!" he cries, as they leave him in the darkness. Eddie steps to the front of the engine, looks up helplessly at the letters TT—then collapses across the rails, sobbing. . . .

It is an evening in the valley. The strikers are putting finishing touches on their future plans. On a high ridge above them, Galt and Dagny walk in the starlight. Then

Galt stops, looking off into the distance beyond the mountains.

“The road is cleared,” he says. “We are going back to the world.”

Cast of Characters

There are more than eighty characters, heroic and otherwise, in *Atlas Shrugged*. In this list, we present all (we think!) of the characters to whom Rand gave at least partial names:

AKSTON, DR. HUGH. World-renowned philosopher, formerly head of the department of philosophy at Patrick Henry University in Cleveland. John Galt, Francisco d'Anconia, and Ragnar Danneskjöld are among his former students. He is persuaded to join their strike; as a striker, he flips hamburgers in a roadside diner in Wyoming and works for Mulligan Tobacco in Galt's Gulch.

ATWOOD, CALVIN. Owner of Atwood Light and Power Company. He joins the strike, becoming a shoemaker and owner of Atwood Leather Goods in Galt's Gulch.

BASCOM, MAYOR. Sleazy mayor of Rome, Wisconsin, who briefly owns the Twentieth Century Motor Company after the failure of Eugene Lawson's Community National Bank.

BEAL, LUKE. A Taggart fireman who is good at his job but not capable of anything more intellectually demanding. He is the only known survivor of the Taggart Tunnel disaster.

BLODGETT, DR. Keyboard operator of Project X.

BOYLE, ORREN. Head of Associated Steel and of the National Council of Metal Industries. Boyle conspires with James Taggart and the government to destroy his competitor, Hank Rearden, and seize the rights to produce Rearden Metal.

BRADFORD, LAURA. An actress trying to build her career by dating officials. Her final boyfriend, Kip Chalmers, likes her because she's Wesley Mouch's ex. She dies in the Taggart Tunnel disaster.

BRENT, BILL. Chief dispatcher of Taggart Transcontinental's Colorado division. He quits rather than carry out Dave Mitchum's order to send a coal-burning locomotive through the Taggart Tunnel.

CHALMERS, KIP. A bureaucrat turned politician. He pressures James Taggart to let his train run through a Colorado tunnel even though only a dangerous coal-burning locomotive is available. This leads to a major disaster.

CHALMERS, MA. A sociologist and converted Buddhist who gains prestige when her son Kip dies in the Taggart Tunnel. In an effort to make Americans more like "the peoples of the Orient," she backs a subsidized soybean project that fails.

COLBY, TOM. Leader of the Rearden Steel Workers Union; rolling mill foreman; the moral antithesis of Fred Kinnan. He and Rearden respect each other as allies, not adversaries.

CONWAY, DAN. President of the Phoenix-Durango Railroad. Conway is forced out of business in an industry conspiracy engineered by James Taggart and Orren Boyle.

DANAGGER, KEN. Founder of Danagger Coal. Danagger secretly buys Rearden Metal in violation of government regulations. While under indictment, he quits and joins Galt's strike.

D'ANCONIA, FRANCISCO. The spectacularly able president of d'Anconia Copper and Dagny Taggart's first lover, Francisco is the first man to join Galt's strike—and he gives up Dagny to do so. He adopts the guise of an international playboy as camouflage while he deliberately destroys his industrial empire over a period of years. Francisco is also one of the strike's recruiters, and his speeches on the moral meaning of money and on sex help to liberate Hank Rearden from guilt.

D'ANCONIA, SEBASTIÁN. Founder of d'Anconia Copper; the revered ancestor of Francisco d'Anconia.

DANIELS, QUENTIN. A talented young scientist who chooses to be a night watchman rather than serve the government. Dagny hires him to try to rebuild the motor she and Rearden discover at the abandoned Twentieth Century Motor Company. When he's recruited by Galt, Dagny follows their plane to Galt's Gulch.

DANNESKJÖLD, RAGNAR. College friend of Francisco and Galt; budding young philosopher. Ragnar is the third to go on strike. A man of implacable justice, he becomes a feared pirate who sinks government relief ships. He marries the beautiful actress Kay Ludlow.

EUBANK, BALPH. The proclaimed literary leader of the age—whose plotless novels don't sell. He decries commercialism and materialism.

FERRIS, DR. FLOYD. Top coordinator of State Science Institute, who works to harness science to serve the authorities. He blackmails Rearden into surrendering the patent rights to Rearden Metal. Later, Ferris urges the torture of John Galt with his machine, the "Ferris Persuader."

GALT, JOHN. The main hero of *Atlas Shrugged*, immortalized in the slang expression, “Who is John Galt?” John Galt is the man behind the two mysteries Dagny investigates: it is he who created the motor she discovers in the ruins of the Twentieth Century Motor Company’s factory; and it is he who is persuading great achievers and ambitious producers to disappear from the world. Yet for much of the novel we see him only as Eddie Willers’ nameless friend and confidant in the railroad’s cafeteria. At the novel’s climax Galt explains the philosophy behind the strike in a radio address.

GONZALES, RODRIGO. A Chilean diplomat who is said to have joined his country’s government after it expropriated his property. He is involved in the attempt to seize d’Anconia Copper.

GONZALES, SEÑORA. Rodrigo Gonzales’s wife. He trades her sexual favors.

HALLEY, RICHARD. A brilliant composer who achieves belated recognition after a long, grueling struggle. On his night of triumph, Halley retires and vanishes.

HAMMOND, LAWRENCE. Owner of Hammond Cars, maker of the nation’s finest automobiles; another recruit to Galt’s Gulch.

HARPER, POP. Taggart Transcontinental’s aging, loyal chief clerk.

HASTINGS, WILLIAM. As chief engineer of the Twentieth Century Motor Company, John Galt’s boss. He joins Galt’s strike, but by the time the novel opens, he has been dead several years.

HASTINGS, MRS. The gracious, dignified widow of William Hastings. Dagny interviews her on the trail of the inventor of the motor.

HENDRICKS, DR. THOMAS. A renowned physician and medical researcher. He goes on strike when medicine is socialized.

HOLLOWAY, TINKY. An influential Washington bureaucrat allied to Orren Boyle and Wesley Mouch.

HUNSACKER, LEE. Ex-president of Amalgamated Service Corporation, which Dagny learns took over the bankrupt Twentieth Century Motor Company. His successful lawsuit against banker Midas Mulligan for not giving him a loan prompts Mulligan and Judge Narragansett to join the strike. Hunsacker is descended from members of the New York Four Hundred, and by the time Dagny meets him he's staying with friends for lack of a home of his own.

IVES, GWEN. Hank Rearden's loyal, supremely competent secretary.

KEITH-WORTHING, GILBERT. Elderly, has-been British author; friend of Kip Chalmers; advocate of collectivism. He dies in the Taggart Tunnel disaster.

KELLOGG, OWEN. Skilled young assistant to the manager of the Taggart Terminal. He resigns despite Dagny's efforts to persuade him to stay—and he won't say why or where he's going. While hunting for "the destroyer," Dagny meets him on a train and realizes that he's now one of "the destroyer's" men.

KINNAN, FRED. Leader of Amalgamated Labor of America. Kinnan is a corrupt power-seeker—but more bluntly hon-

est than the rest of the Washington gang with whom he conspires. He respects Galt.

LARKIN, PAUL. Inept businessman; old friend of the Reardens. Larkin betrays Rearden in order to obtain political influence. When Rearden is forced to sell his ore mines, Larkin buys them with loans from Rearden and the government. He assures Rearden he'll supply him with ore, but he does not do so.

LAWSON, EUGENE. A bureaucrat; formerly the "banker with a heart," but thanks to his humanitarian lending—and especially a loan to Hunsacker's organization that left Lawson with the Twentieth Century Motor factory—his Community National Bank in Wisconsin no longer exists. Dagny interviews him on the trail of the inventor of the motor, but he thinks she's after political favors. He is seen smiling at the thought of mass starvation and at the decision to torture John Galt.

LIDDY, MORT. A composer of film scores—including one incorporating and degrading a theme by Richard Halley—and modern symphonies; an associate of Balph Eubank.

LOCEY, CLIFTON. A crony of Jim Taggart's who informally replaces Dagny as operating vice president when she quits over Directive 10-289. Evading responsibility at every turn, he causes chaos—including the Taggart Tunnel disaster.

LOGAN, PAT. The engineer who wins the drawing to run the first train on the John Galt Line. He eventually quits, abandoning a train.

LUDLOW, KAY. A famous and beautiful actress who, rejecting the values being celebrated in movies, goes on strike

and retires to Galt's Gulch. She becomes Ragnar Danneskjöld's wife.

MARSH, ROGER. Producer of electrical appliances in Colorado and cabbages in Galt's Gulch. Before joining the strike, he says he'd be chained to his desk to avoid quitting, but he quits anyway.

MARTINEZ, MARIO. Treasurer of the Interneighborly Amity and Development Corporation, which has a contract to manage industrial enterprises for Southern Hemisphere "People's States."

MCKIM, RAY. Fireman who wins the drawing to work on the first train on the John Galt Line.

MCNAMARA, DICK. A competent Cleveland contractor to Taggart Transcontinental. Dagny relies on him to build the John Galt Line—but he goes on strike.

MEIGS, CUFFY. Director of unification under the Railroad Unification Plan; a superstitious, anti-intellectual thug. When the economy nears collapse, he seizes control of the government's "Project X" weapon to establish himself as a local dictator. Drunk, Meigs accidentally causes an enormous explosion that devastates much of the Midwest, destroys the vital Taggart Bridge over the Mississippi River, and kills both himself and Robert Stadler.

MITCHUM, DAVE. Superintendent of Taggart Transcontinental's Colorado Division. Mitchum got his job only because he was Claude Slagenhop's brother-in-law. His decision to let a coal-burning locomotive pull Kip Chalmers' train into the Taggart Tunnel leads to disaster.

MORRISON, CLARENCE (“CHICK”). The government’s “morale conditioner” and chief propagandist. He helps engineer a TV broadcast to show Galt to the nation; when it backfires, he resigns and flees.

MOUCH, WESLEY. A failure in the private sector; a success in Washington. Hired as Rearden’s lobbyist, he betrays him in exchange for a high government job with the Bureau of Economic Planning and National Resources. A faceless nobody who constantly pleads for “wider powers,” he is regarded as “safe”—and is promoted until he becomes the nation’s economic dictator.

MOWEN, HORACE BUSSBY. Head of Amalgamated Switch and Signal Company. He initially resists agreeing to produce Rearden Metal switches for Taggart Transcontinental; then he agrees; then he decides to stop making them because it’s unpopular. But once the John Galt Line demonstrates what Rearden Metal can do, Mowen demands a law to give him a “fair share” of it. Mowen cannot understand why businesses are leaving more regulated states for less regulated ones.

MULLIGAN, MIDAS (NÉ MICHAEL). Brash, colorful owner of the Mulligan Bank of Chicago; early investor in Rearden Steel; the world’s richest man. A humanitarian columnist dubbed him “Midas” as an insult; he changed his name. Mulligan goes on strike and vanishes when a court orders him to make a risky loan to Lee Hunsacker and his company to buy the Twentieth Century Motor Company factory. Mulligan then buys a remote valley in the Colorado Rockies, which he secretly develops as “Galt’s Gulch.”

NARRAGANSETT, JUDGE. Eminent legal scholar; judge on the Illinois Superior Court. Judge Narragansett goes on strike after his decision against Hunsacker is overturned by a higher court. He is designated the arbiter of disputes in Galt's Gulch, where he also owns a chicken and dairy farm.

NEALY, BEN. Contractor who takes over construction of the John Galt Line when McNamara quits. He is hostile and resentful of Dagny's demands for competent work.

NIELSEN, TED. Motor manufacturer in Colorado and an investor in the John Galt Line. Nielsen goes on strike when the line is shut down; he moves to Galt's Gulch, where he becomes a lumberjack.

POPE, BETTY. A slovenly society girl and James Taggart's mistress.

POTTER, DR. Lackey of Floyd Ferris at the State Science Institute who tries to coerce Rearden into selling Rearden Metal to the government.

PRITCHETT, DR. SIMON. Head of the philosophy department at Patrick Henry University after Hugh Akston's departure. A sophist who derides the power of reason, he's a valued intellectual excuse-maker for the Washington gang.

REARDEN, HENRY ("HANK"). Iron-willed inventor of Rearden Metal; founder of the Rearden Steel empire; one of the novel's three major heroes. Rearden's quest to understand and resolve his moral and emotional conflicts is central to the plot. His success makes him a target of predators in government, industry, and his own family.

He becomes Dagny's secret lover and, to protect her reputation, surrenders the rights to Rearden Metal to the government in a blackmail scheme hatched by his wife. Rearden ultimately is rescued, physically and spiritually, by Francisco d'Anconia.

REARDEN, LILLIAN. Hank Rearden's wife. He marries her thinking she admires him, but she attempts to destroy his self-esteem. She is unwilling to divorce him even once she knows he is having an affair with Dagny. A friend of James Taggart's and a supporter of the Washington gang, she is the source of the secret information that is used as blackmail against Rearden in order to deprive him of Rearden Metal.

REARDEN, MRS. Rearden's petulant and parasitical mother, who berates him for the very achievements and virtues that maintain her comfortable lifestyle.

REARDEN, PHILIP. Hank's purposeless younger brother. Philip criticizes Hank's "materialism" and professes motivations "higher" than money-making, but that doesn't stop him from living off Hank's wealth—or betraying him.

SANDERS, DWIGHT. Owner of Sanders Aircraft, maker of the finest planes available. He sells that company to his brother so he can buy United Locomotive without breaking the law. Then he vanishes to Galt's Gulch and raises hogs.

SCOTT, JOE. A drunk who keeps his union job as a railroad engineer only because of his friendship with Fred Kinnan. He is at the throttle of the Comet, intoxicated, during its fateful trip into the Taggart Tunnel.

SCUDDER, BERTRAM. Editor of a left-wing rag, *The Future*; author of a scathing article about Hank Rearden titled “The Octopus”; foe of freedom, wealth, and industrialists. Dagny is blackmailed into appearing on his radio program, and after she reveals on the air that Rearden was blackmailed into signing over Rearden Metal and she was blackmailed into appearing on Scudder’s program, Scudder is blamed and taken off the air—even though he says he was ordered to have her on his broadcast.

SLAGENHOP, CLAUDE. Pal of Philip Rearden; brother-in-law of Dave Mitchum; head of Friends of Global Progress, a militant and influential socialist group.

STADLER, DR. ROBERT. The world’s greatest physicist; formerly head of the physics department at Patrick Henry University. But he believes reason and a commitment to truth are for “pure science”; in technology and politics, he thinks other standards apply. When Stadler endorses the foundation of the State Science Institute, Galt, until then his student, condemns him and quits his graduate program. Stadler becomes the Institute’s titular head, lending his prestige to the organization and focusing on “pure theory,” while Floyd Ferris runs the “practical” side, which uses Stadler’s science to create the deadly weapon “Project X.” By the end, Stadler discovers he wants Galt, the student he once loved, murdered. Stadler dies in the “Project X” explosion.

STARNES, ERIC. Youngest of the three worthless heirs of Twentieth Century Motor Company founder Jed Starnes; director of public relations under the heirs’ collectivist

scheme. He avenges himself on a girl who had rejected him, killing himself in her bedroom on her wedding day.

STARNES, GERALD. Heir, with his siblings, to the Twentieth Century Motor Company; director of production there under the heirs' collectivist scheme. While it lasts, he enjoys great wealth he claims is for everyone at the company; after it fails, he winds up a bum in a flophouse.

STARNES, IVY. Director of distribution at the Twentieth Century Motor Company. Of the three Starnes heirs, Ivy is the only one so committed to their collectivist ideals that she live on the income of a typical worker. She relishes giving as little as she can to those who don't adequately kowtow. Blaming human nature for the failure of her and her siblings' scheme to run the company on the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need," she turns for solace to Eastern mystical cults that disdain the physical world.

TAGGART, CHERYL (NÉE BROOKS). An unsophisticated shop clerk who, believing him to be a great man on the basis of publicity that credits him with creating the John Galt Line, marries James Taggart and tries to live up to the role of his wife. But then she discovers the horrifying truth about his character and chooses to die rather than live on his terms.

TAGGART, DAGNY. Vice president in charge of operations and large stockholder, Taggart Transcontinental; descendant of railroad founder Nat Taggart; the novel's indomitable heroine and main view-point character. She struggles to save her business from government coercion and from the irrationality of her brother James, the com-

pany president. Despite such interference, she builds the John Galt Line from track made of Rearden Metal. Dagny struggles to discover the motives and identities of what seem to be two mysterious men: one, a “destroyer” who is deliberately draining the world of its most capable producers; the other, the inventor of the revolutionary motor whose remnants she has discovered in the ruins of the Twentieth Century Motor Company. She hires Quentin Daniels to try to reconstruct the motor. Then, when the hated “destroyer” recruits him, too, she pursues them by plane and crash-lands in Galt’s Gulch. There she discovers that the “destroyer” and the inventor are the same man—John Galt—and she finds herself falling in love with her enemy. She is the last to join the strike.

TAGGART, JAMES. Dagny’s older brother; president of Taggart Transcontinental; a major villain of the novel. James thwarts Dagny’s every effort to salvage the railroad, and he uses his government connections to destroy his competitors. His power, reputation, wealth, and even survival are maintained only by Dagny’s heroic efforts to save their company. He marries an innocent shop girl, Cherryl, to whom he is attracted by her misled admiration, but becomes enraged when she begins to see through him. At the story’s end, he grasps that he wants Galt killed even though he knows it would mean his own death -- and has a nervous breakdown.

TAGGART, MRS. Mother of Dagny and James; host for a month each summer to the young Francisco. She is disappointed in her daughter’s apparent lack of interest in beauty and romance.

TAGGART, NATHANIEL (“NAT”). The nineteenth-century founder of Taggart Transcontinental, revered by Dagny. His statue in the heart of the Taggart Terminal is a kind of spiritual shrine for her, and his courage and vision help to inspire her desperate desire to save the railroad.

THOMPSON, MR. “Head of the State”—not “president”—and a crafty pragmatist who believes everyone is open to compromise. His appearance is so unremarkable he’s hard to identify. He tries to hire Galt as economic dictator, but he fails as Galt points out Thompson has no value to offer him. Eventually he reluctantly authorizes Galt’s torture.

TUCK, LESTER. Campaign manager for Kip Chalmers. He dies in the Taggart Tunnel.

WARD, MR. Hard-working president of Ward Harvester Company who tries to keep his family business going by dealing with Rearden Steel.

WEATHERBY, CLEM. A bureaucrat lieutenant of Wesley Mouch with a candid, easy manner. He becomes Dagny’s conduit in dealing with Washington.

WET NURSE, THE. Deputy Director of Distribution assigned to Rearden Metal. He goes from finding Rearden “impractical” to asking him for a productive job. When the government launches a violent attack on Rearden’s mills, he is mortally wounded trying to stop the thugs. Only as he is dying do we learn his name is Tony.

WILLERS, EDDIE. Dagny’s indispensable special assistant—a man of great integrity but modest ability, loyal to Dagny since childhood. Eddie frequently talks with a low-ranking Taggart employee whom he meets in the cafeteria and

who becomes his private sounding board about Dagny and the railroad's problems. Eddie doesn't discover until too late that he loves Dagny—and that his attentive companion is John Galt.

WYATT, ELLIS. Head of Wyatt Oil, which he has grown from the barely profitable company his father ran into a pillar of the economy; inventor of a new method of extracting oil from rock. Wyatt becomes a friend of Dagny and Rearden. But when the government imposes a tax on Colorado that will bleed his business dry, he torches his oilfields in rebellion and joins the strike. One well fire can't be quenched. It becomes a symbol of the strike, known as "Wyatt's Torch."

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