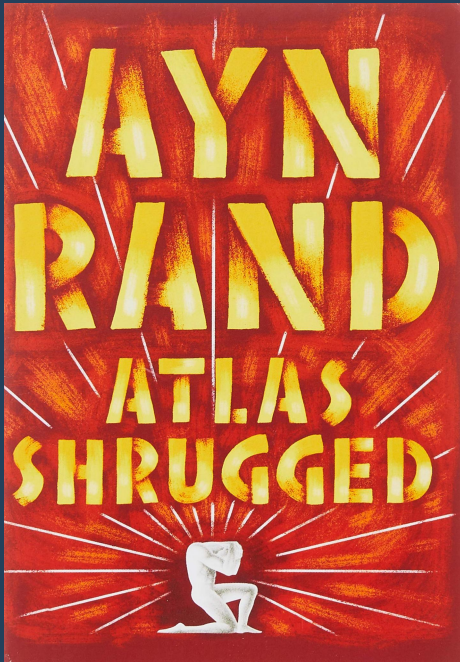


## Atlas Shrugged



Year of publication: 1957  
 Author: Ayn Rand  
 1168 pages

Atlas was a titan punished to bear the weight of the world on his shoulders until the end of time, his punishment is a penalty for trying to usurp the power of the king of the skies, the god Zeus.

But in a more modern and less mythological view, this myth represents the weight of everyday difficulties that weigh on Atlas, the first vertebra of the cervical spine, and on our heads.

In today's world, where everything is changing all the time, we believe that we can and should carry the world on our shoulders, which can cause physical and psychological damage. This is known as the Atlas complex, one of the stress-related illnesses of modern life.

In the book "Atlas Shrugged", author Ayn Rand philosophically portrays the pains of people who are the Atlas of the world. Her goal was to "show how desperately the world needs pioneers and how badly it treats them", as well as to portray "what happens to the world without them".

For her, the pioneers would be those who understood the power and value of a market economy and a less bureaucratic State. Since it is a philosophical novel, the interpretation of her ideas can only be read between the lines.

### Main ideas of the book

You will learn how to...

- The use of force is not responsible for the world moving forward, but reason is;
- The bureaucratization of processes is an impediment to innovation and progress;
- There are no contradictions in life;
- Selfishness is an inherent virtue of the human being;
- Money really does move the world;
- The world was made to be carried by giants;
- Businessmen, entrepreneurs, and pioneers are the giants of the world;
- "There is no such thing as miserable work, only miserable men who are unwilling to work";
- Face your problems instead of running away from them.

### To whom is this book indicated?

In "Atlas Shrugged," Rand discusses the foundations and concepts behind Objectivism, her philosophy that emphasizes philosophical individualism and economic freedom, with minimal state interference.

So, if you want to understand more about this philosophy and enjoy the teachings of a timeless classic, this book is for you!

## Overview of the book

### Getting to know the characters

The story begins with a simple question: **Who is John Galt?**

This is a question, but also an answer within itself. It is very similar to asking "what is the **invisible hand?**" or "who is the **State?**" which inspires an implicit answer, but many other related questions.

*"John Galt is Prometheus who changed his mind. After centuries of being torn by vultures in payment for having brought to men the fire of the gods, he broke his chains and he withdrew his fire —until the day when men withdraw their vultures."*

In the course of the story, Rand shows the ideals of her philosophy through the development of her characters. The protagonists of the plot are based on the values that she considers positive, while the antagonists represent everything that Rand rejects.

As we begin reading, we are introduced to Taggart Transcontinental, a railroad company whose motto was "From Ocean to Ocean" because it was the only railroad company in the United States to have lines from the East Coast to the West Coast.

It is a company that has been around for generations and is a mainstay of the national economy. Its founder, Nathaniel Taggart, was a visionary hated by all for being "cold and unscrupulous, a man who lived only for profit."

However, the Taggart giant is succumbing to failure due to the economic depression and the incompetent management of the current president, James Taggart (better known as Jim Taggart).

Jim is the most important antagonist in the book, being a natural born expert in influencing others, as well as having a large network of contacts within the government. However, he is completely inept at making operational decisions on his own and seems to have a parasitic relationship with his sister, Dagny Taggart.

He needs her to actually run the railroad, yet he opposes her in almost every endeavor because of his collectivist views and anti-capitalist policies. Politically speaking, he would represent the ideas of the old USSR, from which Rand desperately sought to escape.

**Therefore, in a sense, he is the antithesis of Dagny.**

Dagny Taggart é sem sombra de dúvidas a protagonista do romance, esqueça John Galt, ela é a verdadeira personagem que deve ser observada no livro. Desde pequena ela foi inovadora e disruptiva, sonhava em comandar a empresa da família e amava mais do que tudo os números e os trens.

Dagny Taggart is without a doubt the protagonist of the novel, forget John Galt, she is the one character to behold in the book. From a young age she was innovative and disruptive, she dreamed of running the family business and loved numbers and trains more than anything.

She defies the rules and expectations of society by becoming the first female vice president of a railroad and being so brilliant that no one questions her leadership, an extremely difficult feat in the chauvinistic society in which she lives.

Dagny is the protagonist because she represents everything that Rand considers positive: she is selfish, rational, individualistic, courageous, and free. Miss Taggart is ambition itself.

Her own brother describes her not as a human being, but as a combustion engine.

Throughout the book, it is Dagny who carries the world on her shoulders and prevents the collapse of her own company and others that depend on Taggart Transcontinental. Throughout the first part of the book she has the help of two great allies: Eddie Willers and Henry "Hank" Rearden.

Edwin "Eddie" Willers is Dagny's faithful squire and her special assistant, in charge of Taggart Transcontinental's operations. Like his father and grandfather, he works for Taggart. Although not a pioneer, Eddie possesses redeeming qualities such as creativity and rationality.

Henry "Hank" Rearden is the owner of the most important steel company in the United States and a notorious pioneer whose greatest success was the invention of Rearden Metal, an alloy much better than steel.

Besides being, according to his mother, "the most immoral man in the world, only thinking about justice and incapable of feeling love."

Rearden represents the disruptive entrepreneur who has very business-oriented ideals and beliefs. He has a somewhat troubled relationship with his emotions because he is very rational.

For example, he has a latent contempt for the desire he feels for Dagny and the guilt he feels for cheating on Lillian, his wife.

Like Jim Taggart, Lillian Rearden is one of the antagonists in the book, an emotional and not very rational woman who lives to torment her husband.

Another striking antagonist is Orren Boyle, the head of the Steelworkers Union, the antithesis of Hank Rearden, and a close friend of James Taggart. His goal is the "unification" of the steel industry.

Ellis Wyatt is responsible for making Colorado the nation's new industrial hub by developing a new process to extract more petrol from what were thought to be depleted oil wells.

Last but not least, Francisco d'Anconia is a man of exceptional talents, being the owner by inheritance of the largest copper mining operation in the world. As well as being a childhood friend, and first love, of Dagny Taggart.

## PART I: Non-Contradiction

*"Run for your life from any man who tells you that money is evil. That sentence is the leper's bell of an approaching looter" – Francisco d'Anconia*

Now that you know the characters, let's start to understand a little more of the story.

It all begins when Eddie decides to talk to Jim about the critical state of the **Rio Norte Line**, Taggart Transcontinental's most important line, and how drastic changes needed to be implemented urgently to keep the line running.

Jim is dismissive and creates numerous excuses to justify his failure to deal with the situation and his lack of initiative. He talks about how Boyle failed to supply the steel for the rails, but that "it wasn't his fault, unforeseen things happen, and about how it was more important to focus on the San Sebastian Line".

The San Sebastian Line was created to connect the United States to the People's Republic of Mexico after D'Anconia bought the San Sebastian mine. However, the Line was a huge logistical mistake made by Jim, as it caused great losses due to its low demand and could be nationalized by the Mexican government at any time.

Faced with his brother's neglect, Dagny acts quickly by canceling the steel orders placed with Boyle and ordering rails made of Rearden metal. Obviously, her brother is against this and says that it is his sister who will take responsibility should there be any problems.

For a while, Dagny was managing to control the catastrophic situation of the company until the Mexican government decided to nationalize all the companies on Mexican soil, but the big idea was to take control of the mines.

However, the plan falls apart when it is discovered that the copper mines are depleted and that it was all a scam by Francisco.

From then on, a race against the clock began. Both antagonists and protagonists needed to take action and establish strategies to achieve their goals.

Government interventions gradually increased, creating more bureaucratic processes and putting the power of private initiative in check, through threats to property rights and the creation of norms that prevented the free market from existing.

The unions themselves conspired against economic progress by creating agreements that limited the capacity for production and expansion. Instead of stimulating competition to keep the market going, they were measures that stifled action for "fair, communal, and equal growth".

The final blow came after the State Science Institute - an academic institution that was supposedly composed of the great minds of the country, but in reality only populist scientists hiding behind their false pursuit of the "common good" - published a vague opinion on the Rearden Metal.

This opinion was vague in its scientific observations, making use only of an idea that the metal hurt people's well-being by not being a collective good. It also appealed to public opinion.

*"– 'The source of public opinion?' said Claude Slagenhop in a radio speech. 'There is no source of public opinion. It is spontaneously general. It is a reflex of the collective instinct of the collective mind'."*

On the other hand, Dagny had the support of her allies and began to act more quickly to ensure that the Rio Norte Line was rebuilt to be used as a key piece in Colorado's economic advancement. The Rio Norte Line was renamed the John Galt Line.

*"No space was given by the newspapers to the progress of the construction of the John Galt Line. No reporter was sent to look at the scene. The general policy of the press had been stated by a famous editor five years ago. 'There are no objective facts,' he had said. 'Every report on facts is only somebody's opinion. It is, therefore, useless to write about facts'."*

Despite widespread disbelief, the Line was inaugurated. The future looked brighter, for there was now the possibility of economic growth and a free market - even if within the bureaucratic confines of the state.

The government creates a law, then, preventing anyone from owning more than one company, from being able to operate in different sectors, and from having a higher profit than other entrepreneurs in the same sector.

*"Thought—he told himself quietly—is a weapon one uses in order to act. No action was possible. Thought is the tool by which one makes a choice. No choice was left to him. Thought sets one's purpose and the way to reach it. In the matter of his life being torn piece by piece out of him, he was to have no voice, no purpose, no way, no defense."*

What can be concluded from this first volume, then, is that there are no contradictions. In life, the same situation is understood in different ways because the interests and optics of those who experience the situation are different.

*"You say that you're sure you're right? Nobody is right, or ever can be. Do you feel that the world around you is wrong? You have no means to know it. Everything is wrong in human eyes—so why fight it? Don't argue. Accept. Adjust yourself. Obey."*

## **PART II: Either-Or**

Part II begins shortly after Ellis Wyatt sets fire to his oil reserve, considered by "social advocates" an act of antisocial sabotage, and disappears completely from the map.

The Wyatt Reclamation Project was created by the government in partnership with the State Science Institute. The project was intended to take over the operation of the wells, as a measure of public necessity, since Wyatt had no heirs or will.

The takeover of the Wyatt oil fields resulted in a catastrophe for the market and the national supply. The government had to take control and impose nationwide oil rationing in order to protect businesses deemed essential.

In addition, the "little fellow's day in the sun" era began.

This was a disaster for the business sector, the big companies, such as the power companies, that consumed oil in huge quantities began to convert their facilities to coal consumption - and the smaller customers began to go bankrupt.

The government began to provide subsidies and control the population's money by "frozen" or "defrozen" their debentures from "essential needs". The lack of financial freedom led many people to have nervous breakdowns and commit suicide.

An interesting detail was the lack of empathy from those who were supposed to be overly concerned with the social.

*"Mr. Smith had been defrozen, Mr. Jones had not; that was all. And when Mr. Jones committed suicide, people said, 'Well, I don't know, if he'd really needed his money, the government would have given it to him, but some men are just greedy.'"*

Another big problem faced was the disappearance of intelligent people. The phenomenon was like a "brain strike", because not only had no one truly brilliant appeared in the world for years, but the businessmen, artists and scientists who were still alive began to mysteriously disappear.

This fact becomes clear in the course of the work as Dagny's struggle to find a scientist capable of rebuilding the engine he found abandoned in a factory in Wisconsin shortly after the success of the John Galt Line.

The social and economic chaos worsened when D'Anconia bankrupted his own company to avoid getting into the hands of opportunistic Washington rulers. He preferred to put his entire fortune at risk rather than live under threats such as the following:

*"The day of the barons of industry is done! You've got the goods, but we've got the goods on you..."*

Rearden, on the other hand, decided that he would fight the abusive government system through "antisocial" acts. He acted for his own benefit by negotiating a larger sale than the law allowed, and simply used the loopholes in the law itself during the trial.

*"The judges retired to consider their verdict. They did not stay out long. They returned to an ominously silent courtroom—and announced that a fine of \$5,000 was imposed on Henry Rearden, but that the sentence was suspended."*

After the trial, Rearden was approached by workers who were frustrated and desperate that they were the biggest victims of the "hunt for the barons of industry," because they were the people who lost their jobs when factories went bankrupt and the vanguards disappeared.

He then realized the responsibility that the avant-garde - entrepreneurs, artists, and scientists - had in the world: to make it go round through innovation and competition.

However, the government strikes again by promulgating the "Number 10-289", which represents a sharp blow to economic freedom. An interesting curiosity about the decree is that the author took as a basis the Soviet laws that caused so much damage to the socialist countries after the end of the USSR.

In protest to the directive that prohibits employees from leaving their jobs and nationalizes all patents, Dagny violates the law and resigns. While Rearden is blackmailed by the government, with threats to publicize his affair with Dagny, to get his help Hank, the government blackmails him.

And so the second volume addresses the dualistic reality of life: this or that. It is hardly possible to get everything we want; by choosing to go down one path we are permanently abandoning the other. Therefore, we are always facing the **choices of Janus**, the Roman god of beginnings and changes.

### **PART III: A = A**

The beginning of the third part takes place after Dagny's plane crashes, she tries to go after the engineer working on her secret engine project - which was invented and abandoned by an engineer named John Galt.

Dagny falls into Galt's hideout, an isolated valley where the two missing business leaders are hiding. The disappearance is part of Galt's plan.

He is leading an organized strike of the pioneers against a society that demands that they be sacrificed and bear the weight of the world on their shoulders.

Among the pioneers are Francis, Dagny's favorite composer Richard Halley, and the infamous pirate Ragnar Danneskjöld.

The story unfolds with a succession of events that culminate in an overwhelming political coup for democracy: a coup d'état that establishes a dictatorship.

The coup was given by a group that, upon taking over the government, began to implement a collectivist and parasitic ideology, where there was an obligation to work for everyone, that is, the product of one's work would no longer belong to oneself, but to everyone.

This ideology implied a practical reality in which the most talented and productive supported the untalented, lazy and unproductive - diminishing the stimulus for production.

This event is harmful to the country, as it is thrown into a sea of poverty and chaos.

Redemption is achieved with the return of the pioneers to the world and the dismantling of the government.

This return comes after Galt puts his plan to change public opinion into action. He gives a speech on a national radio broadcast - the speech is nothing more than an explanation of the theme of the novel and Rand's objectivism.

This is the conclusion of the third and final volume of the work. In it, we understand that  $A = A$  only when we believe that  $A = A$ , because we are responsible for our beliefs, feelings, and reactions.

## What do other authors say about it?

It would be impossible not to recommend reading the classic "**The Invisible Hand**" by Adam Smith as a reading suggestion. In the work, you will learn how the economy is deeply affected by (neo)liberalism and the division of labor.

Just as Rand believes that pioneers are giants, in "**Unlimited Power**", Tony Robbins explains that self-esteem is usually linked to success. One way to be successful, therefore, would be to awaken the giant in you by having high self-esteem.

Finally, the indication to learn how to deal with life's battles is the book "**The Art of War**", by Sun Tzu, to have knowledge in advance, promoting a competitive advantage for your army to have inside information. In addition, you will understand the enemy's tactics and know how to outline new strategies to overcome them.

## Okay, but how can I apply this in my life?

- Don't be ashamed to be successful, ignore the criticism of the incompetent and the bums;
- Don't live for anyone and don't ask anyone to live for you;
- Sound mind, sound body - use your head to think and your body to act;
- Your life is your own, that is, you must be the master of your own destiny.



If you like this book, visit our complete collection with hundreds of Pocketbooks of the greatest success in the areas of management, marketing and sales, leadership, strategy, personal development and entrepreneurship!

[www.pocketbook4you.com](http://www.pocketbook4you.com)

The content presented above reflects the vision and critical analysis of our writing team, respecting the fundamentals of intellectual property in Brazil (article 8, item I).

No part of the book is being copied. They are unique and exclusive content, always giving credit to the authors and indicating the link to purchase the complete work. PocketBook4You respects the copyright code in accordance with Brazilian law, Law 9.610 / 98.

This content is the exclusive property of PocketBook4You and is protected by Copyright Law in its articles 46, I, (a) and its article 47, because it is not reproduction and do not imply any discredit, on the contrary, The moral right is protected and, as noted earlier, the reader receives a link to acquire the work. Reproduction of this material without permission of the company is prohibited.