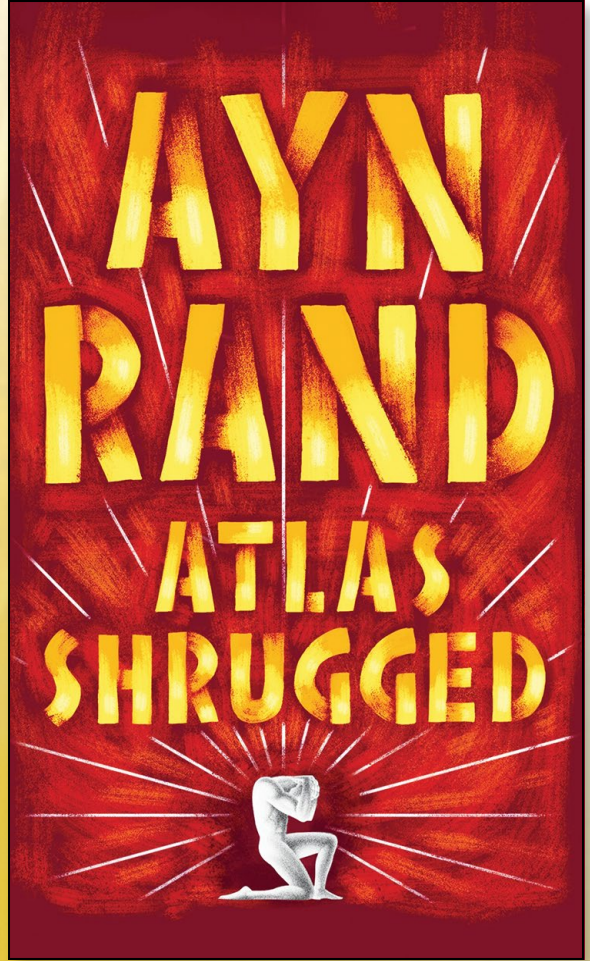


# Teacher's Guide

INCLUDES: SUMMARIES, STUDY QUESTIONS,  
AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING



## Atlas Shrugged

By Ayn Rand

Teacher's Guide by Onkar Ghatе, Ph.D.

For 11th graders and above

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## ABOUT AYN RAND

**Ayn Rand** (1905–1982) was born in Russia and educated under the Communists, experiencing first-hand the horrors of totalitarianism. She escaped from Russia in 1926 and came to America because it represented her individualist philosophy.

*Atlas Shrugged*, Ayn Rand's last novel, is a dramatization of her unique vision of existence and of man's highest potential. Twelve years in the writing, it is her masterwork. More than 10 million copies have been sold since it was first published by Random House in 1957.

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## INTRODUCTION

PUBLISHED MORE THAN 50 YEARS AGO, *Atlas Shrugged*, Ayn Rand's last novel, is as relevant and stimulating to an active-minded person today as on the day it was written. The reason is not hard to identify. In *Atlas Shrugged* Rand is concerned with timeless, fundamental issues of human existence. What is good? What is evil? Who deserves the title of hero and who the title of villain? What is the relation between the spiritual and the material sides of life, between soul and body? Should an individual prize the purity of his soul and shun the material world of money, business and sex, should he do the opposite, or should he do neither? What virtues should a person practice? What sins should he avoid? What is the meaning of life? Are justice and happiness possible in this world, or are man's highest ideals forever beyond his (earthly) grasp? In what kind of society can an individual live and prosper, and in what kind of society is he doomed to a different fate?

"My attitude toward my writing," Rand once said, "is best expressed by a statement of Victor Hugo: 'If a writer wrote merely for his time, I would have to break my pen and throw it away.'"<sup>1</sup>

Dealing as it does with important issues, and often presenting startling new takes on those issues, *Atlas Shrugged* is necessarily a long book. But although it is overflowing with new philosophical and moral ideas, it is anything but a dry, difficult, abstract treatise. It is an exciting mystery story. The profound issues raised in the story emerge from its specific events and the concrete actions taken by the characters. The back cover of the paperback edition has it right: *Atlas Shrugged* is a novel both tremendous in its scope and breathtaking in its suspense. When teaching the novel, it's helpful to never lose sight of its mystery and suspense.

No doubt many students will be intimidated by *Atlas Shrugged's* length. "You want me to read a 1,000-page-plus book!?" will often be their initial reaction. To assuage these stu-

dents' fears, it helps to emphasize that *Atlas Shrugged* is a gripping suspense story, containing mysterious events and unusual but purposeful characters who are faced with real and difficult problems. Tell such students that once they get a few hundred pages into the novel, they likely will be caught up in the story's mystery and find the book hard to put down. (In fact, many teachers who teach the novel report that one of their biggest problems is students who read ahead of the assigned chapters and give away the mysteries to other students.) As a teaching strategy, it is useful to ask students to write down the mysterious events as they make their way through each chapter and then to speculate on the meaning and solution to each mystery before they read on to the next chapter. (I'll say more on this below.)

But of course *Atlas Shrugged* is not a typical mystery story. To understand fully its suspense requires thinking carefully about profound issues. The theme of *Atlas Shrugged*, Rand said, is "the role of the mind in man's existence—and, as corollary, the demonstration of a new moral philosophy: the morality of rational self-interest."<sup>2</sup> The widest meaning of the story, in other words, is that human life is sustained (to the extent that it is sustained) by the thought, ideas, values and actions of thinkers and producers who attain an independent, rational, purposeful, this-worldly, reality-oriented frame of mind. A *proper* moral code should acknowledge and be based on this fundamental fact about human existence. (The Morality of Life, which the hero of the story, John Galt, formulates and teaches to his fellow strikers, is meant to be this code.) The conventional approach to morality that now dominates in society, Rand contends in *Atlas Shrugged*, rejects and wars against this fundamental fact about human life. It is this clash of worldviews—this clash of moral and philosophical viewpoints—that forms the context for *Atlas Shrugged's* story and plot. Students will need their teacher's help to draw out these wider ideas.

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to the twenty-fifth anniversary of *The Fountainhead*

<sup>2</sup> *For the New Intellectual*

However, this is best done not by lengthy philosophical discussions disconnected from the actual story, but by emphasizing the characters and events: the things the characters say, the problems they struggle with, the actions they take, the values they hold, the stated and unstated motives that animate them, the thinking they do or do not do in the face of their predicaments. All of this is richly delineated in *Atlas Shrugged*. Although it is a mystery story, it is not a murky story. It is a novel about which one can ask “Why?” of its events and characters and discover the answer. Why does the plot progress in the way it does? Why does this particular character take the action that he does? A careful reading of the story will usually supply the answer.

Because *Atlas Shrugged* is a long novel with a complex and abstract theme, there is an ever-present danger of either focusing on the speeches and abstract theme of the novel at the expense of the story, or of focusing on the story's events while losing sight of their abstract meaning. Both are errors. The first error basically treats the novel as a propaganda vehicle. On this approach, the events of the novel are viewed as meaningless melodrama, designed to snare the unsuspecting reader so that he sits through some abstract speeches. The teacher's focus becomes almost exclusively on the speeches, as if those speeches were nonfiction essays. This approach is counterproductive. It at once robs the story of its actual suspense and makes the speeches difficult to understand. The story does not exist for the sake of the speeches: the speeches exist for the sake of the story. To appreciate the speeches, one must see them as *advancing*

*the action of the plot*. And really to understand the content of the speeches, one must see them as encapsulating and explaining events, characters and motivations contained in the preceding events of the story. Rip the speeches from this context, and they become very difficult for students to grasp. In other words, one must see the abstract meaning of the novel, including of its speeches, as emerging from its specific events.

The second error treats the novel as a mystery story whose specific events have no deeper meaning or significance. At its worst, this kind of approach views *Atlas Shrugged* as a novel about trains (I've literally heard this said). Better, but still flawed, is to view it as a story about the conflict between some good businessmen and some evil bureaucrats who have taken government controls too far, sprinkled throughout with some speeches about money. There is no doubt, of course, that an aspect of *Atlas Shrugged* is about the nature and desirability of capitalism and economic freedom, but this is not its theme. Its theme is moral and metaphysical. The novel is concerned with the question “In human life, what fundamentally is *good* and what is *evil*?” (its moral dimension) and with the question “What *fact* or *facts* of reality ground the distinction between good and evil and therefore form the base of a proper moral code?” (its metaphysical dimension). All the particular actions and conflicts of the story revolve around these basic issues.

The best way to retain focus on *both* the story and its timeless, abstract meaning is to never forget the fact that *Atlas Shrugged* is a novel about a strike. Let me now turn to this topic.

## THE MEN OF THE MIND ARE ON STRIKE

A good novel often has a basic line of action that integrates its story into a whole. For *Atlas Shrugged*, this action is a strike. The theme of *Atlas Shrugged*, we noted, is the role of the mind in man's existence. Connecting a novel's theme to its plot is what Rand called a plot-theme, which she describes as “the central

conflict or ‘situation’ of a story—a conflict in terms of action, corresponding to the theme and complex enough to create a purposeful progression of events [i.e., to create a plot].” What is the plot-theme of *Atlas Shrugged*? “The men of the mind going on strike against an altruistic-collectivist society.”<sup>3</sup>

The plot-theme of a strike by men of great intelligence, ability and achievement serves to convey Rand's distinct theme. She highlights her view of the role of the mind in man's existence by showcasing what happens when the mind is deliberately *withdrawn*: life and civilization collapse. The meaning of *Atlas Shrugged* is that the logical, reasoning mind is the creator of all the values of body and of spirit that advance an individual human life and civilization itself.

The fact that *Atlas Shrugged* is a novel about a strike dictates the types of characters the story contains. First and foremost, there are the strikers, the earliest of whom are Francisco d'Anconia and Ragnar Danneskjöld, led by the novel's hero, John Galt. Second, there are individuals that the strikers are trying to persuade to join their cause, such as Ellis Wyatt, Hank Rearden and Dagny Taggart. Either these individuals eventually join the cause, with Dagny being the last to do so, or, as in the case of Dr. Robert Stadler, they make terms with the strikers' antagonists. Third, there are the intellectual, cultural and political leaders of society, people such as Dr. Simon Pritchett, Dr. Floyd Ferris, Ralph Eubank, James Taggart, Wesley Mouch and Mr. Thompson, who are the strikers' antagonists. Last, there are the rest of the members of society, who are not drivers of the action or the conflicts but who have an enormous stake in the outcome of the strike and who must (eventually) choose sides. Their most individualized representatives in the story are such people as Eddie Willers, Cherryl Brooks, and the members of Hank's family.

If *Atlas Shrugged* is a novel about a strike, the basic question is who is on strike and why? On strike are the men of the mind, the individuals who discover and teach the rest of the members of society *what to value and how to create it*. They are the pioneers in every field, the individuals who discover new philosophical ideas and scientific theories (e.g., Galt), invent new lines of business and forms of production (e.g., Francisco, Wyatt and Hank), launch new ventures (e.g., Midas Mulligan and Dagny), produce new works of

art (e.g., Richard Halley), and so on. They are the fictional counterparts of individuals such as Socrates and Aristotle, Galileo and Darwin, Carnegie and Rockefeller, Beethoven and Hugo. But despite their life-giving role—both as exemplars of what it means to pursue the goals one's own life and happiness require and as teachers of what goals one *should* pursue and of how to achieve them—the men of the mind are granted *no moral or metaphysical recognition*.

What does this mean? It means that mankind's leading doctrines declare that the men of the mind are evil or useless. Morally, the men of the mind are denounced as selfish, uncompromising, materialistic, exploitive, immoral men, who place the head above the heart and flout their unquestionable duty to serve others. Metaphysically, it is said that certainty is impossible to man, rational thought is a myth (“*Why Do You Think You Think?*”), new ideas flow out of the “forces of production” and amorphous social interaction, and physical labor is the source of wealth.

As John Galt tells the people of the world near the beginning of his radio broadcast:

All the men who have vanished, the men you hated, yet dreaded to lose, it is I who have taken them away from you. Do not attempt to find us. We do not choose to be found. Do not cry that it is our duty to serve you. We do not recognize such duty. Do not cry that you need us. We do not consider need a claim. Do not cry that you own us. You don't. Do not beg us to return. We are on strike, we, the men of the mind.

We are on strike against self-immolation. We are on strike against the creed of unearned rewards and unrewarded duties. . . .

There is a difference between our strike and all those you've practiced for centuries: our strike consists, not of making demands, but of granting them. We are evil, according to your morality. We have chosen not to harm you any

<sup>3</sup> “Basic Principles of Literature” in *The Romantic Manifesto*



longer. We are useless, according to your economics. We have chosen not to exploit you any longer. We are dangerous and to be shackled, according to your politics. We have chosen not to endanger you, nor to wear the shackles any longer. We are only an illusion, according to your philosophy. We have chosen not to blind you any longer and have left you free to face reality—the reality you wanted, the world as you see it now, a world without mind. (Pt. III, Ch. VII)

The legend of John Galt as Prometheus is accurate: as leader of the strike John is Prometheus who withdraws his fire (his motor) and withdraws all the minds able to discover how to produce fire (his fellow strikers)—until men withdraw their vultures and replace them with gratitude and reverence. What John seeks is the *freedom to live*, the freedom he enjoys in the valley but not in the outside world.

In contrast to the strikers, what do the leaders of society want? They want to somehow exist without thought, without effort, without the responsibility of consciousness, without *mind*. As John puts it in his radio broadcast, it is “a conspiracy of all those who seek, not to live, but to *get away with living*, those who seek to cut just one small corner of reality and are drawn, by feeling, to all the others who are busy cutting other corners.” (Pt. III, Ch. VII)

Such men want to possess the life-bringing products of the mind and receive the esteem that is a thinker's due, while defying the need to engage in the rational thought and action that achievement demands. They want the contradictory, somehow, made real. Orren Boyle wants the recognition and rewards due to Hank Rearden for inventing Rearden Metal, while defying the need to invent anything. Jim Taggart wants the prestige and monetary benefits due to the person who actually runs Taggart Transcontinental, while defying the need to engage in the actions that Dagny does in running the railroad. Dr. Floyd Ferris wants to harness and wield the

power of science, while defying man's need of thought. Mort Liddy wants the fame and admiration due to a great artist, while defying the need to produce anything beautiful. All such people want to be *free from* reality's demands, to somehow live in *defiance* of life's requirements. Like the political dictators who ravaged the 20th century, to whom John compares them, they want to live in a universe where reality is subordinate to their whims, where *their wish is reality's command*. Jim whines to his sister late in the novel, “Dagny, I *want* to be president of a railroad. I *want* it. Why can't I have my wish as you always have yours? Why shouldn't I be given the fulfillment of my desires as you always fulfill any desire of your own?” (Pt. III, Ch. V)

But reality remains forever unyielding: it bends to no one's wishes or whims. This is the root of their deep-seated hostility and hatred. They hate *reality* because it does not bow to their whims. And so they hate reality's most shining *representatives*, those who function not by whim but by the mental effort necessary to understand and master reality, individuals like Dagny and Hank and John.

The only way to achieve even the pretense of being able to exist in defiance of the requirements reality sets for man is to harness and control the individuals who eagerly meet those requirements, i.e., to harness and control the men of the mind. But it is a precarious pretense. To get away with living, a Jim Taggart must exploit the Dagny Taggarts, Francisco d'Anconias and Hank Reardens of the world. But he dare not admit his physical and spiritual parasitism to himself, because it would reveal the evil and abject worthlessness of his own soul. How can he, the spiritually superior person, be dependent on that which is inferior? So he advocates and flocks to any doctrine that declares that he is not a parasite but an enlightened promoter of the “public good” and protector of the “public safety”—whose safety consists in being protected from the evil men of the mind. But branding the men of the mind as evil does not erase his dependence on them. So he advocates and flocks to any doctrine that dismisses the men

of the mind as useless and their accomplishments as illusions—and that preaches the final absurdity that they don't even exist. But even this abstract veneer eventually wears thin. And so he must seek to wipe the men of the mind out of existence. He becomes a killer: of man's spirit, of his mind, of life.

John identifies the nature of the strikers' antagonists in his radio broadcast; it is the mentality of a mystic who pits his wishes *against* reality and who therefore comes to relish “the spectacle of suffering, of poverty, subservience and terror; these give him a feeling of triumph, a proof of the defeat of rational reality. But no other reality exists. No matter whose welfare he professes to serve, be it the welfare of God or of that disembodied gargoyle he describes as ‘The People,’ no matter what ideal he proclaims in terms of some supernatural dimension—in *fact, in reality, on earth*, his ideal is *death*, his craving is to kill, his only satisfaction is to torture.” These mentalities “do not want to own your fortune, they want you to lose it; they do not want to succeed, they want you to fail; they do not want to live, they want you to die; they desire nothing, they hate existence, and they keep running, each trying not to learn that the object of his hatred is himself.” (Pt. III, Ch. VII)

It is this fact about the nature of his own soul that Jim comes face to face with when he is watching Galt be tortured, the sight of which causes his psychological collapse. Jim realizes that he never had any purpose but to kill, that his fraudulent wish to see the contradictory and irrational somehow made real is not a goal, that he desires John's death even if it means that his own will follow. His is a soul that hates the good for being the good and kills for the sake of killing. When Jim glimpses his true nature, moans, and collapses, John's words to him are: “I told you that on the radio, didn't I?” (Pt. III, Ch. IX)

It is this gruesome fact about the state of soul of her antagonists that Dagny cannot fathom. And until she does, she cannot be free of them. John is free of them—and launches the strike—precisely because he has identified

the nature of the leaders of his society and their method of functioning. In witnessing the Starnes heirs implement the moral slogan “from each according to his ability to each according to his need” at the Twentieth Century Motor Company, John grasps that such mentalities are the essence of evil: haters of reality, of life, and of all rational, productive men. He grasps that such creatures cannot be reasoned with; negotiation is futile. In fact, it is worse than futile because what the leaders of John's corrupt society count on is that their victims, the men of the mind, will negotiate and *compromise*.

To exist, evil people like the Starnes heirs require a blood transfusion from the good. For the good willingly to submit to this abuse, the good must fail to recognize evil as evil and itself as good. This is Dagny and Hank's plight through most of the novel.

Dagny and Hank fail to recognize that they are surrounded by evil. Instead, they believe that people like Jim and Lillian and Philip are mistaken and misguided, incompetents who mean well. If Dagny and Hank could just show with sufficient clarity the errors of Jim and his ilk's ways, the stupidity and impracticality of their ideas and policies, the leaders of society would change course. Hank, for instance, thinks the demonstration they've given with the first run of the John Galt Line will sweep away the rot in Washington. Until that happens, Dagny and Hank will save the country from the ruin that Jim and his ilk's policies are bringing. And not only do Dagny and Hank fail to grasp the evil that confronts them, they fail fully to grasp their own virtue. Although they know they are the competent ones, the individuals capable of understanding and mastering reality, they do not grasp that they are paragons of morality.

The consequences of these errors of knowledge are that Dagny and Hank give to the hatred-filled souls of Jim and Lillian the benefit of every doubt, while simultaneously depriving themselves of the title of the morally good and of the righteousness of soul necessary to fight a battle between good and evil (this is especially true of Hank). This is

the meaning of the principle of the sanction of the victim. The men of the mind have sanctioned their own victimhood by granting undeserved respect, the status of human beings, to the souls of Jim and Lillian and Philip and the like—and by refusing to demand the moral respect that they have so abundantly earned. The intellectual, political and cultural leaders of society—the Floyd Ferrises, Simon Pritchetts and Wesley Mouches of the world—count on this moral sanction. Deprived of the cloak of moral respectability granted to them by the men of the mind, and instead faced with a morally righteous and indignant opposition from the men of the mind, they would collapse in their own incompetence. By depriving them of the moral sanction of the men of the mind, John causes their collapse.

John launches the strike because he, for the first time, identifies the depth of evil of his antagonists and what they are counting on: blood transfusions from those like him who strive to live to those who seek to get away with living. John tells the world during his radio broadcast:

I am the man whom you did not want either to live or to die. You did not want me to live, because you were afraid of knowing that I carried the responsibility you dropped and that your lives depended upon me; you did not want me to die, because you knew it. . . .

Like the man who discovered the use of steam or the man who discovered the use of oil, I discovered a source of energy which was available since the birth of the globe, but which men had not known how to use except as an object of worship, of terror and of legends about a thundering god. I completed the experimental model of a motor that would have made a fortune for me and for those who had hired me, a motor that would have raised the efficiency of every human installation using power and would have added the gift of higher productivity to every hour you spend at earning your living.

Then, one night at a factory meeting, I heard myself sentenced to death by reason of my achievement. I heard three parasites assert that my brain and my life were their property, that my right to exist was conditional and depended on the satisfaction of their desires. The purpose of my ability, they said, was to serve the needs of those who were less able. I had no right to live, they said, by reason of my competence for living; their right to live was unconditional, by reason of their incompetence.

Then I saw what was wrong with the world, I saw what destroyed men and nations, and where the battle for life had to be fought. I saw that the enemy was an inverted morality—and that my sanction was its only power. I saw that evil was impotent—that evil was the irrational, the blind, the anti-real—and that the only weapon of its triumph was the willingness of the good to serve it. Just as the parasites around me were proclaiming their helpless dependence on my mind and were expecting me voluntarily to accept a slavery they had no power to enforce, just as they were counting on my self-immolation to provide them with the means of their plan—so throughout the world and throughout men's history, in every version and form, from the extortions of loafing relatives to the atrocities of collective countries, it is the good, the able, the men of reason, who act as their own destroyers, who transfuse to evil the blood of their virtue and let evil transmit to them the poison of destruction, thus gaining for evil the power of survival, and for their own values—the impotence of death. I saw that there comes a point, in the defeat of any man of virtue, when his own consent is needed for evil to win—and that no manner of injury done to him by others can succeed if he chooses to withhold his consent. I saw that I could put an end to your outrages by pronouncing a single word in my mind. I pronounced it. The word was “No.”

I quit that factory. I quit your world. I made it my job to warn your victims and to give them the method and the weapon to fight you. The method was to refuse to deflect retribution. The weapon was justice. (Pt. III, Ch. 7)

John is able to take this profound stand—to challenge the moral and philosophical views entrenched in the minds of the people of the world (as, for example, the opponents of slavery once challenged the moral and philosophical views entrenched in America)—because he is convinced of the moral righteousness and justice of his stand. “In order to deprive us of honor,” he tells the people of the world,

that you may then deprive us of our wealth, you have always regarded us as slaves who deserve no moral recognition. You praise any venture that claims to be non-profit, and damn the men who made the profits that make the venture possible. You regard as “in the public interest” any project serving those who do not pay; it is not in the public interest to provide any services for those who do the paying. “Public benefit” is anything given as alms; to engage in trade is to injure the public. “Public welfare” is the welfare of those who do not earn it; those who do, are entitled to no welfare. “*The public*,” to you, is whoever has failed to achieve any virtue or value; whoever achieves it, whoever provides the goods you require for survival, ceases to be regarded as part of the public or as part of the human race.

What blank-out permitted you to hope that you could get away with this muck of contradictions and to plan it as an ideal society, when the “No” of your victims was sufficient to demolish the whole of your structure? What permits any insolent beggar to wave his sores in the face of his betters and to plead for help in the tone of a threat? You cry, as he does, that you are counting on our pity, but your secret hope is the moral

code that has taught you to count on our *guilt*. You expect us to feel guilty of our virtues in the presence of your vices, wounds and failures—guilty of succeeding at existence, guilty of enjoying the life that you damn, yet beg us to help you to live.

Did you want to know who is John Galt? I am the first man of ability who refused to regard it as guilt. I am the first man who would not do penance for my virtues or let them be used as the tools of my destruction. I am the first man who would not suffer martyrdom at the hands of those who wished me to perish for the privilege of keeping them alive. I am the first man who told them that I did not need them, and until they learned to deal with me as traders, giving value for value, they would have to exist without me, as I would exist without them; then I would let them learn whose is the need and whose the ability—and if human survival is the standard, whose terms would set the way to survive. (Pt. III, Ch. VII)

For the first time, a man of the mind grasps the destructiveness of compromising with his antagonists, who have *nothing to offer him* and whose only weapon is philosophical doctrines that attempt to induce unearned guilt. Thus John refuses to negotiate with the leaders of society, even after they capture him. He understands that there is nothing to negotiate with men who want you dead. He also understands that the leaders will be eager to negotiate and compromise (their calls for negotiation and compromise go out right after they learn of the strike from John's radio broadcast) because the only way they can continue to get away with living is if the men of the mind transfuse some of their life blood. Thus, as John says, his is a strike of a peculiar nature: he is not making demands but granting them. He has rid the world of that which it considers evil and exploitative: the men of the mind. The men of the mind will exist without the world—and the world can discover if it can exist without the men of the mind.

Essentially, the strike is between the men of the mind and society's leadership, but obviously the remainder of the people have an enormous stake in the outcome of the strike. As a result of the strike, they face a stark choice: either to cast their lot with their leaders, and perish as their society disintegrates, or to cast their lot with the strikers, and themselves go on strike (which is what John urges them to do toward the end of his radio broadcast). No middle ground exists any longer.

On John's view, for far too long most of these people have sought to exist in the middle, neither willing to side *completely* with the leaders of their society, although often supporting their ideas and schemes, nor willing to *break* with the dominant ideas of their society and side completely with the strikers. The strikers do not regard this position tenable. As John tells them in the radio broadcast:

The fence you have been straddling for two hours—while hearing my words and seeking to escape them—is the coward's formula contained in the sentence: "But we don't have to go to extremes!" The extreme you have always struggled to avoid is the recognition that reality is final, that A is A and that the truth is true. A moral code impossible to practice, a code that demands imperfection or death, has taught you to dissolve all ideas in fog, to permit no firm definitions, to regard any concept as approximate and any rule of conduct as elastic, to hedge on any principle, to compromise on any value, to take the middle of any road. . . .

The man who refuses to judge, who neither agrees nor disagrees, who declares that there are no absolutes and believes that he escapes responsibility, is the man responsible for all the blood that is now spilled in the world. . . .

There are two sides to every issue: one side is right and the other is wrong, but the middle is always evil. The man who is wrong still retains some respect for truth, if only by accepting the responsi-

bility of choice. But the man in the middle is the knave who blanks out the truth in order to pretend that no choice or values exist, who is willing to sit out the course of any battle, willing to cash in on the blood of the innocent or to crawl on his belly to the guilty, who dispenses justice by condemning both the robber and the robbed to jail, who solves conflicts by ordering the thinker and the fool to meet each other halfway. In any compromise between food and poison, it is only death that can win. In any compromise between good and evil, it is only evil that can profit. In that transfusion of blood which drains the good to feed the evil, the compromiser is the transmitting rubber tube. (Pt. III, Ch. VII)

In the immediate aftermath of the broadcast, many people choose in whatever way open to them to join the strike, while of course other people do not.

As a teaching strategy, this is a useful perspective from which to teach the novel: students are in effect in the position of those listening to John's radio broadcast. Would they join the strike? Do they think that John's analysis and arguments are correct? As readers, they have witnessed the events that the people of the country have witnessed. They have seen what effort it took from Dagny and Hank and others to build the rail line to save Colorado. They have seen the policies and responses advocated by the leaders of society, from the looting of the Phoenix-Durango that precipitated the crisis to the Anti-dog-eat-dog legislation to the directives strangling Colorado to Directive 10-289 (the moratorium on brains). They have seen what the leaders of society have said about the men of the mind: how Rearden Metal was denounced by the State Science Institute, how Francisco d'Anconia, Ellis Wyatt, Hank Rearden and Dagny Taggart are continually attacked and morally and philosophically denounced. They have seen what ideas Jim Taggart, Lillian Rearden, Ralph Eubank, Eugene Lawson, Dr. Simon Pritchett, Dr. Robert

Stadler, Dr. Floyd Ferris and others espouse and act on. They have heard (read) John's explanation for why the world is in crisis: the view of morality that the world accepts has come to full fruition. They must now decide whether John is right or wrong. Is he right about the nature of the leaders of society and the ideas they profess? Is he right that negotiation is futile? Is he right that the strikers are due moral recognition, which they have earned but never received? Is he right that his morality is proper and the moral ideas advocated for centuries are wrong and corrupt? Is he right that no stable middle ground exists, that you are either on the side of the strikers or you are a road-paver for evil? These are the questions that John has made the members of his society face—and which any reader of *Atlas Shrugged* faces.

More broadly, what I am stressing is that *Atlas Shrugged* is a novel about a strike and should be taught accordingly. In the name of what are the strikers on strike? A moral-philosophical worldview that proclaims the reality and absolutism of this world and the individual's moral right and moral responsibility to pursue his own life and happiness within it. Against what are they on strike? A mystical worldview that subordinates reality to whims and preaches the moral duty to

sacrifice one's life and happiness. Each of these worldviews is premised on a certain view of the role of the mind in man's existence. The striker's worldview is based on the idea that the individual, thinking, rational mind is the source of all mankind's knowledge and life-promoting values and must be cherished as such. The mystical worldview is based on the idea that the mind is unnecessary because reality bows (or should bow) to one's own or to society's wishes. To teach the novel is to teach the ideas and values that the two sides hold, and how these cause their actions. Why do the strikers go on strike? What must individuals like Ellis and Hank and Dagny see and understand for them to decide to join the strike? What view do society's leaders have of the strikers? What, for instance, is Jim's view of his sister, Lillian's of her husband, and Dr. Stadler's of his former student John? Why do they take the actions they do take against the strikers? What view do the people in society have of their leaders and of the strikers? What kinds of actions does this produce. What, for instance, is their response to Rearden Metal or to the Starnes heirs implementing their new scheme at the Twentieth Century Motor Company? To teach the novel is to teach the central conflict that runs through the novel.

### ATLAS SHRUGGED IS A MYSTERY STORY

*Atlas Shrugged* is not just about a strike, it is a novel about a hidden, underground strike. This fact generates much of the mystery and suspense of the story. To focus on the strike when teaching the novel therefore requires that one also focus on the story's mystery; doing so will of course also help intrigue and capture the attention of your students.

Why is the strike hidden from public view? Because John knows that the leaders of society will seek to chain the men of the mind to their jobs, so that they keep producing the values that sustain a corrupt society. The only way for the leaders of society to try to get away with living is to exploit those who choose to live. We see the looters doing this from early

on in the story: James Taggart counting on Dagny as he rises to president of Taggart Transcontinental, and more broadly counting on individuals like Dagny and Hank to give meaning to the title of president of a large industrial company; Orren Boyle and Wesley Mouch looting Rearden's mills; Robert Stadler expecting that others will provide him with a free laboratory and scientific research facility; Directive 10-289 freezing productive men to their jobs; Mr. Thompson and his gang trying to force John to become Economic Dictator, who somehow will reignite the nation's productivity. Moreover, John knows that any potential striker who is not yet ready to strike (or who



refuses to strike) poses a danger. Such an individual will naturally view the strike as a threat to civilization itself and will try to stop it; this of course is Dagny's attitude toward the man who is draining the brains of the world, whom she vows to shoot on sight.

John therefore must be careful to reveal the strike and its reasons only when he thinks he will be able to convince the person of the justice and morality of the strikers' actions. To reveal the strike too early, even to potential strikers, threatens the strikers and their success. Notice that John *publicly* reveals the strike only after Hank goes on strike. At this point, all the strikers are safely out of reach of the leaders of society. Only John remains in the outer world, in danger, but he chooses to do so to win Dagny from the world.

The fact that the strike must be hidden generates both mystery and suspense. It generates mystery because the story contains characters who deliberately conceal their actions and motives. Like Dagny and Rearden, the reader is trying to figure out what these characters are doing and why. What, for instance, has become of Francisco and what is he doing? Is he an aimless playboy or does he have a purpose? It generates suspense because a basic question runs through the novel, whose answer determines the resolution of the conflict. Who is right about the nature of society and about the leaders of society and their basic ideas—Dagny and Rearden or Francisco, John and the other strikers? Who is making the right fundamental choice? Whose actions will succeed and whose will fail? Why?

For instance, are Dagny and Hank right to remain in the world and to try to fight the looters by producing the values that keep the world afloat? Are they correct that the leaders of society are basically inconsequential opponents, at root either irrational people, who will defeat themselves, or misguided individuals, who will learn and accept the truth when they see it demonstrated convincingly (e.g., as Hank thinks will happen after the success of the John Galt Line or Dagny thinks will happen after John's radio broad-

cast). Or are the strikers correct that to remain in the world, even while trying to battle the leaders of society, is to make terms with evil? Are the strikers correct that what the leaders of society are driven by is, ultimately, a metaphysical lust for destruction, the defeat of rational reality? Are the strikers correct that a man's motive power is the quest to achieve what is good, and to cede the realm of philosophy and morality to the mystics, and allow them to write the world's moral code, is to have lost the battle before one has started? (As Francisco passionately tells Dagny: "this is not a battle over material goods. It's a moral crisis, the greatest the world has ever faced and the last. Our age is the climax of centuries of evil. We must put an end to it, once and for all, or perish—we, the men of the mind. It was our own guilt. We produced the wealth of the world—but we let our enemies write its moral code." (Pt. II, Ch. VIII))

Who is right—the strikers or Dagny and Hank? This is the basic conflict of the story, which generates its suspense, a conflict finally resolved only after John's radio broadcast and subsequent torture at the hands of the leaders of society.

Notice further that most of the mysterious events of the story revolve around the strike. Who is the brakeman that Dagny hears whistling on the train? A man on strike. What is he whistling? A score of a composer who is on strike. Why won't Owen Kellogg take the better position Dagny offers him? He's on strike. Who manufactures the cigarettes not made on earth? A striker. What has happened to Francisco d'Anconia? He's on strike. Why must he remain in the world, under the guise of a playboy? Because it is the only way he can openly destroy the fortune made by his mind and the minds of his illustrious ancestors and thereby deprive a corrupt world of it. And so on.

Notice too that many episodes of suspense—episodes where the reader wonders "What will a character choose to do?"—revolve around the moral-philosophical issues that generate the strike. For instance, near the

beginning of the story, will Dan Conway choose to fight the National Alliance of Railroads, which is trying to destroy the Phoenix-Durango because Conway's railroad has proved too competent, or won't he? He chooses not to fight, because he thinks the Alliance has right on its side. Is his choice correct? Does the Alliance have morality on its side? And why then does doing what's morally right leave Conway demoralized? Why does he give up and retire?

Or: What choice will Hank make with his family? It is clear they don't share his attitude towards his mills. Is this because they resent how often his work takes Hank away from his family? Hank assumes that his family members' causes and projects must mean to them what his mills mean to him, so he supports them in pursuit of their goals, for instance by giving Philip money for Friends of Global Progress. Is Hank making the right choice? Do his family's goals have the same status in their lives as his mills do in his? What is it that they actually think and believe? But even if they don't share Hank's view of life, doesn't morality demand that Hank be non-judgmental? Isn't the essence of family relationships unconditional love? Would it be right for Hank to choose to act against these moral ideas?

Or: When Hank refuses to deal with the State Science Institute, he senses some kind of panic on the part of the government officials. What is the cause of this panic? Is Hank right to refuse a sale to the government? Would it really be a sale? Why does Hank think it is the same issue as Dagny choosing to deal with Robert Stadler? Why does he think that she shouldn't have chosen to deal with Dr. Stadler? What is Hank starting to learn, with Francisco's help, about the importance of sanction?

Or: Both Dagny and Hank have an ambivalent attitude toward Francisco, thinking they should condemn him but finding themselves unable to do so. How should they choose to act toward Francisco? From Francisco's perspective, he seems to have more of an interest in Hank and Dagny than in the leaders of

society, the women and the parties he's supposed to be obsessed with. Are Hank and Dagny right to feel uncertain about him? What does Francisco actually believe and what is he after? What will happen to Hank if he gets too close to Francisco? Does Francisco hurt those closest to him, as Dagny warns Hank? The suspense of the scenes involving Francisco, Dagny and Hank stem from the choices these characters face combined with the differences in their knowledge and convictions.

Or: Hank is passionately in love with Dagny, yet when he reflects on his desire for her and his actions, he cannot justify them. He's trapped in what he regards as the formula of depravity: he has no desire to do what he believes to be morally right and has a passionate desire to do what he believes to be morally wrong. Why does Hank feel this way? And what should he choose to do? What is the source of his view of himself, of sex, of material pleasure? Are the flesh and the spirit inevitably in conflict, as the mystics and leaders of society teach? Dagny laughs at Hank's insults. Who's wrong and who's right—and where will their relationship lead?

Or: Dagny is in a passionate quest to find the inventor of the motor and to find who is draining the brains of the world. When she discovers that it is the same person, she has a terrible conflict. How will she choose to resolve it? How should she resolve it? Why is John so sure that he is right and she is wrong when she chooses to return to the world and not go on strike? Should she have gone on strike? What will happen when she returns to the world? Should John follow her?

*Atlas Shrugged* is wrought with suspenseful choices and provides much evidence for why the characters choose what they do choose, with the reasons revolving around the profound reasons that generate the strike. Teaching *Atlas Shrugged* as a novel about a strike requires that one simultaneously focus on the mystery of the story and the suspense of its action and plot.

## PLOT SUMMARY

“Who is John Galt?” So opens Rand’s *Atlas Shrugged*. To be in a position to answer this question fully is to understand the essence of the novel’s action, for although John himself exists in the shadows until Part III, he drives all the story’s events. Set in a fictionalized, mid-20th-century America, *Atlas Shrugged* is the story of the strike led by John Galt.

John, a former student of physics and philosophy, is a brilliant young engineer working at one of America’s leading firms, the Twentieth Century Motor Company of Starnesville, Wisconsin. When the Starnes heirs take over and propose to transform the company by imbuing it with a *moral* purpose, namely, to create an environment where everybody works according to his ability and is paid according to his need, only one man dissents. “This is a crucial moment in the history of mankind!” Gerald Starnes yells to a crowd of six thousand employees. “Remember that none of us may now leave this place, for each of us belongs to all the others by the moral law which we all accept!” “I don’t,” John declares. Walking out of the meeting, he promises to “put an end to this, once and for all” by stopping the motor of the world. (Pt. II, Ch. X) So begins the strike by the men of the mind.

At the opening of the novel in Part I, Chapter I, the strike has already begun. America (and the rest of the world) is decaying economically and culturally. The cause parallels the cause of the collapse of the Twentieth Century Motor Company. As Jeff Allen relates (Pt. II, Ch. X), the company is destroyed precisely *because* of what it regarded as a moral purpose. The company strove to implement fully what John calls in his radio broadcast the Morality of Death, a view of morality that declares that the passkey to the moral elite is *lack of value*. The result of implementing this view of morality at the Twentieth Century Motor Company is that men who are in fact vicious devour men who are in fact virtuous, the unwilling and unable to work devour the willing and able, and everyone seeks to demonstrate his need while

none dares exhibit his ability.

“A morality that holds *need* as a claim,” John will go on to tell a dying world, “holds emptiness—non-existence—as its standard of value; it rewards an *absence*, a defeat: weakness, inability, incompetence, suffering, disease, disaster, the lack, the fault, the flaw—the *zero*. Who provides the account to pay these claims? Those who are cursed for being non-zeros, each to the extent of his distance from that ideal.” (Pt. III, Ch. VII) The Twentieth Century Motor Company’s cannibalistic world could have endured for much longer than it did had men of ability not deserted it. Had John remained and allowed his motor to reap the financial rewards it no doubt would have reaped, there would have been much, much more to devour. But John refuses to play his part. As he will later tell the world, “I quit that factory. . . . I made it my job to warn your victims and to give them the method and the weapon to fight you. The method was to refuse to deflect retribution. The weapon was justice.” (Pt. III, Ch. VII) By withdrawing the products of his mind, he leaves the Company to experience the undiluted consequences of its chosen ideal. Thus, the beginning of John’s strike spells the end for Twentieth Century Motor Company.

Both these causes are operative in the nationwide decay we witness at the opening of Part I, Chapter I. America (and the world) is suffering from the enactment of policies based on the moral idea that need is a claim, that the passkey to the moral elite is lack of value, that the non-producers should rule over the producers, that the zeroes should dictate and the non-zeroes should obey. (The political manifestation of this moral ideal, Rand holds in *Atlas Shrugged*, is political dictatorship: incompetent, unthinking men like Wesley Mouch, Mr. Thompson and Cuffy Meigs hold a gun to the heads of competent, thinking men like Hank Rearden and John Galt.) Moreover, there are fewer men of ability to deflect retribution—Galt is convincing them, in the name of justice, to go on strike (as

Owen Kellogg does in the first chapter). This leaves the citizens of the nation to experience the undiluted consequences of the world’s chosen moral ideal. Between this starting point in Part I, Chapter I, and when John goes on the radio in Part III, Chapter 7, more and more legislation is passed to implement the moral ideal of need and, simultaneously, more and more individuals choose to strike. The result is accelerating rot. John asks the audience near the beginning of his radio broadcast, “Why do you shrink in horror from the sight of the world around you? That world is not the product of your sins, it is the product and the image of your virtues. It is your moral ideal brought into reality in its full and final perfection.” (Pt. III, Ch. VII) In this sense, the Twentieth Century Motor Company’s collapse is a microcosm of the world’s collapse. (And this is a good point to emphasize when teaching the novel.)

To reach the point of John addressing a dying world over the radio, starting from the state of the country in Part I, Chapter I, three types of action take place. The strikers, led by John, actively but surreptitiously convince the creators and sustainers of civilization, the men of the mind who create the values that make life possible, to go on strike. Second, the leaders of society, the mystics of spirit and of muscle, pass more regulations and directives in the name of realizing the world’s moral ideal; all the while, their lust for destruction bubbles closer and closer to the surface. Third, the men of the mind who cannot yet be convinced to strike work arduously to keep the world afloat, sensing that the task is growing hopeless. As they struggle, unrecognized, unrewarded, and actually punished for their efforts, unable to realize their vision, unable to win a place for their kind of men and their kind of world, and incapable of finding the kind of joy they expected to reach, they wonder whether the struggle is worth it. Eventually, and with the help of John and his fellow strikers, they will grasp that they are enabling their own destroyers.

Putting this another way, the basic conflict of the story is this. The leaders of society erect scheme after scheme against the men of the mind in the attempt to get away with living, fundamentally driven by the attempt to prove their metaphysical superiority over reality, i.e., to defeat rational reality. The men of the mind who are not yet on strike are ready to pay any price and bear almost any ignominy in the name of their love for life and for man’s existence. Unable to understand fully either their own virtue or the depravity of the mystics, they think that the irrational ideas of the mystics will defeat themselves and that in time everyone will grasp the senseless destructiveness of their policies. These individuals are therefore ready to remain working in the world to save it. The men of the mind who are on strike are no longer ready to pay any price: they demand full *moral* recognition for their efforts (and moral condemnation of their enemies). Thanks to John’s philosophical discoveries, they now grasp the nature and virtue of their way of life and the nature and depravity of the cultural and political leaders of society, of the mystics of spirit and muscle. And they grasp that the only reason the notion that it is possible to get away with living has endured for centuries is that men of the mind have sanctioned the mystics’ view of life and have been willing to pay the price for their own lives *and* the lives of the mystics. To stop the mystics, they must stop sanctioning the mystics’ irrational ideas and schemes—and they must convince other men of the mind to do the same.

Consider how this plays out throughout the novel’s story, after John quits the Twentieth Century Motor Company and goes on strike, by considering the main events of the novel, progressing chapter by chapter (obviously, there are many events and some characters, important to the full story, that I don’t have space to describe).



## PART ONE

### I.1 – THE THEME

At the beginning of the story, Eddie Willers confronts Jim Taggart about the decrepit state of the Rio Norte Line. Taggart Transcontinental, the nation's leading railroad, cannot afford to lose the line, as Colorado is the last booming area of the country. But Jim is more concerned with who they will get the rail from—his buddy Orren Boyle, not Hank Rearden—and expects his sister, Dagny Taggart, to somehow still successfully handle operations. Besides, to compete effectively with the Phoenix-Durango requires demanding effort. Jim wants to succeed without effort. The San Sebastián project in the People's State of Mexico is just such a scheme: Jim and his buddies want to ride on the coattails of Francisco d'Anconia's productive genius, without the need even to judge the project's commercial viability. Morally, the project is justified by helping an “underprivileged” nation that does not respect property rights, to develop. But despite its non-commercial justification, Jim and his gang expect that Francisco will somehow still be able to extract a profit from the venture.

Dagny, by contrast, works unrelentingly to keep Taggart Transcontinental profitable. Unwilling to take the commercial viability of the San Sebastián Mines on faith, and knowing it is probable that the People's State of Mexico (as so many other People's States have done) will nationalize the mines, she has pulled most of Taggart Transcontinental's assets out of Mexico to minimize the loss. She knows that the Rio Norte Line must be rebuilt, and to Jim's horror Dagny is going to do it with a never-before-tried alloy, Rearden Metal.

In trying to save Taggart Transcontinental and the continued industrial production of Colorado—and so the whole country—Dagny cannot understand why she faces such opposition. She senses that there is something personal and evil in the constant obstacles Jim creates and his seeming hatred for Hank

Rearden, but she cannot identify it or its source. Nor can she understand why it is so hard to find competent people; she wants to promote Owen Kellogg before he is completely ready, yet he refuses the promotion. But this is simply one more obstacle she will have to overcome to rebuild the Rio Norte Line.

### I.2 – THE CHAIN

Hank Rearden too cannot fathom the opposition he faces. When we first meet him, it is at the personal climax of ten years of unrelenting effort: the first pouring of an alloy superior to steel that he's invented, Rearden Metal. He wants to celebrate, but finds no one with whom to celebrate. He's grown accustomed to being berated by his family for his passion for his mills, but feels no guilt for that passion. They belittle the meaning of his mills to him, but he views it as their form of expressing their concern and love for him. He offers his wife the priceless gift of the bracelet of Rearden Metal, but she cheapens its meaning. Yet at this point in the story, Hank believes that the causes espoused by his family members have the place and meaning in their lives that his mills do in his, and so out of feelings of benevolence and generosity he agrees to his wife's anniversary party and to contributing to his brother's organization, Friends of Global Progress.

Both Hank and Dagny support those who attack them. Hank in effect gives a platform and security—his household—to family members who speak with moral contempt about his work. And in an action representative of the actual role accorded to men of the mind in the world, Hank even contributes to an organization that actively opposes his work, Friends of Global Progress, while not even being granted the recognition that he is the one making Philip Rearden's action possible (Hank can't put his name on the donation he gives his brother because it is “a very

progressive group” that would be embarrassed to have Hank on its list of contributors). Dagny, we learn from the account of her rise in Taggart Transcontinental to Vice-President in Charge of Operation, has made it possible for Jim to remain president of the railroad. Jim's first major project, the San Sebastián line, is proving a failure. After the Board unanimously votes Dagny to vice-president, she is the one able to complete the San Sebastián line for Jim.

Both Hank and Dagny are experiencing a split between spirit and matter. For Hank, the split is internal: although it does not cause him to experience guilt, he shares to some extent the world's moral judgment of his mills and his career in business (the material realm) as at best morally insignificant and at worst morally evil (the spiritual realm). When he and Dagny later watch the first rails of Rearden Metal being loaded on the freight cars, he tells Dagny, without guilt, that they're a couple of blackguards, but it is nevertheless they who keep the world going. Hank has also come to regard his sexual desire as a lowly, unclean, material urge, unfit for the exalted realm of the spirit, and struggles against it.

Dagny does not have such inner splits. She has a profound spiritual dedication to the act of material production, i.e., to the business of running trains (Hank has the same spiritual dedication to his mills, but he doesn't know it yet and would deny the classification). She has a vision for the kind of life and world she can create, but is increasingly puzzled, sometimes despairingly, of her inability to bring that spiritual vision into material existence. As the obstacles mounted by people like her brother only increase, and as her kind of man inexplicably vanishes (e.g., John Galt convinces the contractor she's counting on to repair the Rio Norte Line, Robert McNamara, to strike, we learn in Part I, Chapter IV), she wonders what is making her spiritual vision unachievable in material reality.

### I.3 – THE TOP AND THE BOTTOM

Meanwhile, Jim and his temporary allies are hatching another scheme like the San Sebastián project as they continue to seek to get away with living.

Atop a skyscraper with a cellar-like barroom, Jim reaches an agreement with Orren Boyle, Paul Larkin and Wesley Mouch. Jim will use his influence in Washington to help pass legislation that will force Hank to divest some of his business enterprises. Paul will “buy” Hank's ore mines and ship ore to Orren using Taggart Transcontinental, even though shipping by boat is cheaper. In return, Orren will use his influence with members of the National Alliance of Railroads to pass a rule that will kill the Phoenix-Durango, Taggart Transcontinental's competition in Colorado. Wesley, the man in Hank's employ who is charged with looking out for Hank's business freedom in Washington, will get Jim and Orren's help in landing a government appointment (Assistant Coordinator of the Bureau of Economic Planning and National Resources) in return for not informing Hank of the harmful schemes in the works.

But Jim and Orren's prior scheme fails to bear its unearned fruit. The People's State of Mexico nationalizes the San Sebastián mines. Francisco and his investors lose an enormous amount of money. Jim and Orren are incredulous that Francisco would allow himself to be robbed so easily, and are convinced that Francisco has figured out some kind of way to still make a profit, but cannot find out how because Francisco refuses to see Jim. Jim does manage to save face at Taggart Transcontinental, however, by taking credit for Dagny's action of downgrading operations on the San Sebastián line to minimize losses from the foreseeable nationalization. Dagny does not protest because she thinks that she has so clearly demonstrated that Taggart Transcontinental's and so Jim's continued success rests on her being free to operate, that Jim from now on will leave her free to operate.

## I.4 – THE IMMOVABLE MOVERS

Jim and his allies' new scheme is beginning to unfold. The National Alliance of Railroads passes the Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule, which will kill the Phoenix-Durango in Colorado in nine months. The passage startles Dagny, who knows the rule will actually make success more difficult for Taggart Transcontinental—and Jim's gloating also surprises her, as though the passage is his victory over her.

Dagny urges Dan Conway, the founder of the Phoenix-Durango, to fight the ruling, but he refuses. Although sensing the injustice of the rule, Dan does not have the will to fight because he would be in the wrong; he agrees that the Alliance had the moral right to do what it did. Dagny wonders what has had the power to defeat a productive man like Dan Conway, knowing the answer cannot be her brother, Jim Taggart.

But she has more pressing concerns: if she is not able to rebuild the Rio Norte Line in nine months, Colorado will be left without transportation and Ellis Wyatt and many other leading industrialists will collapse, and along with them the nation's industrial production. Ellis warns her that if Taggart Transcontinental's rotten stunt of destroying the Phoenix-Durango ends up destroying his business too, he (unlike Dan Conway) will take the rest of them down with him. And Dagny faces an even harder task, because the best contractor in the country, the contractor she is counting on, McNamara, has suddenly quit and vanished, walking out on contracts that were worth a fortune.

Dagny asks Hank if he can supply the rail he was to supply over a period of a year in nine months. Hank agrees, and as they watch the first rails of Rearden Metal being delivered to Taggart Transcontinental, they discuss the near limitless possibilities for industrial progress that Rearden Metal makes possible.

## I.5 – THE CLIMAX OF THE D'ANCONIAS

The aftermath of the San Sebastián nationalization contains a disturbing fact. The mines are worthless. Dagny decides to confront Francisco. As she walks to his hotel, we learn that she and Francisco were childhood friends and then lovers. We learn of Francisco's supreme ability and dedication to knowledge and business and of the incredible promise he represented. We learn of Jim's budding resentment of Francisco and his ability, of Francisco shrugging Jim off, of Jim's newfound moral superiority after he comes back from college, and of the first cracks of despair in Francisco's seeming invulnerability after he's been in the business world for a few years. And we learn of Dagny and Francisco's last night together, and of his warning to her.

When Dagny asks Francisco whether he is in town to witness the farce that is the aftermath of the San Sebastián nationalization, he admits that he is. The Mexican government is screaming that *Francisco* defrauded *them*, because his mines that they seized have proved worthless. Jim and his gang are whining that Francisco has betrayed their trust in him, since he's failed to make money effortlessly for them. The injustice of seizing Francisco's property registers with no one, nor does anyone feel sympathy for Francisco, should it turn out that Francisco simply messed up his business. But it does not seem that Francisco has simply messed up, as a playboy devoid of purpose may well have. Doubt is even cast on the stories that Francisco is a woman-chaser, and it seems that the San Sebastián project was intentional on Francisco's part. Mysteriously, he tells Dagny that it is she he must fight, not looters like Jim. Francisco seems to relish the fact that the San Sebastián project has helped deplete Taggart Transcontinental, destroy the Phoenix-Durango, and endanger Ellis's oil business.

## I.6 – THE NON-COMMERCIAL

The second phase of Jim and his allies' new scheme is now imminent, as passage of the Equalization of Opportunity Bill threatens to damage Hank's business operations.

Alone in his dressing room, motivated by his (spiritual) devotion to his work and the important tasks and problems that must be addressed now, Hank thinks he should return to his mills. But he also thinks it is his moral duty to attend his anniversary party, because Lillian wants an existence unrelated to business. He attends the party.

Lillian has invited the intellectual and cultural leaders of the nation to his home, such people as Ralph Eubank, Mort Liddy and Dr. Simon Pritchett. For philosophical and moral reasons, they all support passage of the Equalization of Opportunity Bill. Francisco, however, does not: he is the only one at the party to offer his gratitude to Hank. (His recruitment of Hank to join the strike of the men of the mind has begun.) He cautions Hank that his opponents have a terrible weapon against him, which Hank has never grasped (Hank has allowed them to write the world's moral code and then sanctioned that code in numerous ways).

Unlike Hank, who dismisses the importance of the current intellectual and cultural leadership, content to leave the whole spiritual realm to Lillian and her cocktail-party crowd, Dagny does not dismiss it. Although she does not understand the nature and motivations of these people, she's outraged that there are so many "intellectuals of the looter persuasion" at Hank's party. She came to the party to celebrate her and Hank's achievement. When she hears Lillian belittle Hank's greatest creation by offering to exchange the hideous bracelet of Rearden Metal for a common diamond necklace anytime, Dagny can no longer stand it. She must defend the spiritual meaning of her kind of world, and exchanges her diamond bracelet for Lillian's bracelet. Hank, although he does not and cannot understand what his wife lives for—the question of why Lillian married him now haunts him—takes Lillian's side and not Dagny's.

## I.7 – THE EXPLOITERS AND THE EXPLOITED

The rebuilding of the Rio Norte Line is not faring well. The contractor replacing McNamara, Ben Nealy, is a mindless incompetent, and public opposition to building rails with an untried metal, Rearden Metal, is mounting.

Jim, fearful of the public's reaction, wants Dagny to debate Bertram Scudder on the radio over the question "Is Rearden Metal a lethal product of greed?" She indignantly refuses. A supplier to Taggart Transcontinental, Mr. Mowen, of Amalgamated Switch and Signal Company, decides he will not complete Dagny's order for switches made of Rearden Metal.

The State Science Institute fears the use of Rearden Metal for a different reason, and Dr. Potter asks Hank to keep it off the market for a few years, even offering to buy the rights to Rearden Metal with government money, intimating that there will be harmful legislation passed if Hank does not cooperate. Hank refuses. The State Science Institute issues from the office of Dr. Floyd Ferris a non-committal, unscientific statement smearing Rearden Metal as possibly unsafe. In the ensuing uproar, Ben Nealy quits. The National Brotherhood of Road and Track Workers forbids its members to work on the Rio Norte Line. Jim leaves town.

Dagny goes to see Dr. Robert Stadler, head of the State Science Institute and by far its greatest scientific mind. Dr. Stadler is pleased to interact with another person of intelligence (Dagny), but is unconcerned that the State Science Institute's statement has stopped construction of the Rio Norte Line, despite how crucial its completion is to the country's continued industrial production. Dr. Stadler knows Rearden Metal is a brilliant technological achievement, and even plans to make use of the metal in his scientific research, but he won't publicly speak the facts in Rearden Metal's defense. When dealing with people someone must always be sacrificed, he tells Dagny, and he won't sacrifice

the State Science Institute and the world of theoretical science to defend a mere material, technological product like Rearden Metal. The government officials who vote for the Institute's funding demand results, and Dr. Stadler dare not let the public know that a private company and not the Institute's metallurgical department has revolutionized the science of metallurgy. He tells Dagny that she must stop expecting the rational when she has to deal with people.

Dagny gives Jim an ultimatum. She will take a leave of absence from Taggart Transcontinental to complete the Rio Norte Line, forming her own company, serving as her own contractor, and obtaining her own financing. When she completes the line, she will turn it over to Taggart Transcontinental and return to her job. Meanwhile, she will unofficially continue to run Taggart Transcontinental through Eddie Willers, who will be appointed Acting Vice-President. Jim in return must keep his Washington boys off her long enough for her to finish the line, neutralizing all the legislative obstacles to the line's production. Jim agrees, but tells her that if she fails to complete the Rio Norte Line, she won't be able to return to her old job.

Dagny feels an odd excitement at the prospect of facing an enormously difficult task but with, for once, an unobstructed path, and decides to rename the line the John Galt Line in open defiance of the fear, despair and futility that the slang phrase "Who is John Galt?" connotes and which seems to be engulfing the country.

Dagny needs to raise fifteen million dollars to complete the John Galt Line, but her stock in Taggart Transcontinental is only worth seven million. She begs Francisco to buy the eight million in bonds. He asks her not to beg him and tells her he cannot tell her what has happened to him—it's an answer she must discover on her own. He, at once both seemingly despairingly and tenderly, refuses her request. But Dagny is able to raise the money from industrialists in Colorado and in a few other states, and Hank himself invests a million dollars.

Hank too is facing growing difficulties. His supplies of copper are proving erratic. After much patchwork to get the copper he needs immediately, he proceeds with a plan to buy a copper mine in Colorado. Unconcerned with Hank's pressing problems, his mother takes this time to ask him to give his brother Philip a job he doesn't deserve at the mills. Hank refuses, knowing it would be a betrayal of his mills. His mother morally denounces his decision, and Hank grasps that his mills represent a holy temple of some kind.

Hank's difficulties mount further when the legislature passes the Equalization of Opportunity Bill, which means that he must cancel his plans to buy the copper mine and must divest himself of other businesses he already owns. He can see no way to fight the Bill or the forces that produced it: they did not even have to consult him in taking his property away from him. But he knows that he cannot let his pain and despair stop him, the John Galt Line must be built, although he wonders what the use of all his effort is.

But he revives himself when he contemplates his life's work and its meaning to him—and the possibility of a new kind of bridge for the John Galt Line made of Rearden Metal. His love for and dedication to production return, sweeping from his mind as insignificant the looters and their machinations.

## 1.8 – THE JOHN GALT LINE

Dagny, now hidden in exile from Taggart Transcontinental, works to complete the John Galt Line. In a moment of longing, she thinks she'll never reach the world she has wanted and her vision of the man at the end of the rails. As she sits alone in her office, a man (John Galt) paces in the shadows, as if debating whether to enter, but then leaves.

Her work to build the John Galt Line grows still more difficult. Dwight Sanders, a brilliant young engineer from whose firm she had planned to order ten new diesel engines, retires and vanishes.

Rearden, meanwhile, in compliance with the

Equalization of Opportunity Bill sells his ore mines to Paul Larkin and his coal mines to Ken Danagger. And in the final phase of Jim and his gang's scheme, Wesley Mouch resigns as Hank's man in Washington, appointed two weeks later to the position of Assistant Coordinator of the Bureau of Economic Planning and National Resources.

But despite all the obstacles placed in their path, Dagny and Hank near completing the John Galt Line. Denunciations of both of them mount, as do predictions of catastrophe on the first run of the line, with some people like Jim seemingly half hoping for disaster. The Union of Locomotive Engineers tries to stop its members from participating in the first run but Dagny asks for volunteers, and every engineer at Taggart Transcontinental volunteers.

Dagny and Hank give a press conference before the first run of the John Galt Line, in which they both announce that they'll be riding on the first run. The run is a triumph. During it, Dagny and Hank experience the exhilaration of realizing their vision of existence, the spiritual quest of conquering nature, conceived and produced by their minds and then brought into full material form by their actions and their unwavering commitment. They celebrate with Ellis—who despairs that this great achievement won't be permitted to last—and then, as physical expression of the same exhilaration they felt on the first ride of the John Galt Line, Dagny and Hank make love.

## 1.9 – THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE

But after they make love, Hank and Dagny's evaluations of their act differ markedly. Hank condemns as depraved his desire for Dagny and hers for him, but tells her he'd give up everything he owns in order to continue to have her. Dagny laughs at him and tells him what he regards as depravity she regards as her proudest achievement.

Despite the prospect of enormous profits for Taggart Transcontinental because of the suc-

cessful completion of the John Galt Line, and despite the Board's praise of Jim, Jim is dejected. Frightened to be alone and to face his self, he needs a different kind of experience from the celebratory one Dagny and Hank enjoyed together. Jim finds it in his encounter with Cherryl Brooks.

Cherryl is a young woman of spirit, ambition, and personal integrity. Thinking Dagny's achievements are Jim's, she worships him. She's indignant when she learns Jim is unhappy on the night of his greatest triumph and tells Jim he's too good for people. Cherryl's idolizing of him allows him to pretend he's not the non-entity he is feeling himself to be at the moment—while simultaneously giving him a sense of superiority and triumph over her (his enemy in spirit), precisely because he knows he's defrauding her. His encounter with Cherryl leaves him feeling "as if he had taken his revenge upon every person who had stood cheering along the three-hundred-mile track of the John Galt Line."

The success of the John Galt Line and the relative economic freedom that Colorado enjoys is leading many companies to move to the state. People like Mr. Mowen don't approve of this and think there should be laws preventing this kind of economic dislocation; Mr. Mowen is encouraged by a bill giving wider powers to the Bureau of Economic Planning and National Resources, where Wesley Mouch has just been appointed assistant coordinator.

Hank, however, thinks it's clear track ahead: with the concrete demonstration that he and Dagny gave the world in successfully completing the John Galt Line, he expects that in reason the Equalization of Opportunity Bill will be scrapped and the looters will be swept aside. He and Dagny talk of a transcontinental track built of Rearden Metal. But their immediate plan is to take a well-earned vacation together, where no one knows them and they can go out together in public. Hank asks her to wear the bracelet of Rearden Metal.

On vacation in Wisconsin, they are startled by the economic disintegration and de-industri-



alization they encounter. At the gutted factory of the Twentieth Century Motor Company, they make an even more startling and difficult to fathom discovery: the remnants of a motor that would have revolutionized industrial production. Dagny vows to find its inventor and discover why it has been left as scrap: the factory's most valuable possession is the only thing that has not been looted.

### I.10 – WYATT'S TORCH

In search of the inventor of the motor, Dagny and Hank meet various individuals, many unsavory, associated with the Twentieth Century Motor Company. When she telephones back to her office during her vacation, Eddie desperately asks her to return at once because they're trying to kill Colorado.

What she discovers on her return is a plethora of pressure groups proclaiming the right to feed off Colorado. A group led by Boyle, for example, is demanding passage of a Preservation of Livelihood Law, which would "limit the production of Rearden Metal to an amount equal to the output of any other steel mill of equal plant capacity." A group led by Mr. Mowen is demanding passage of a Fair Share Law "to give every customer who wanted it an equal supply of Rearden Metal." Dagny sees no way to fight such irrationality and tells Jim this is his battle: he has to keep Washington out of her way so that she can rebuild Taggart Transcontinental and fully save it and Colorado. He tells her she's always predicting disaster at the passage of every progressive social measure that impedes production, but the disaster never comes. She replies that it has not because she's bailed them out each time—but she won't be able to do so this time. She thinks to herself that she has to count on Jim acting on his self-interest, but dimly wonders if self-interest is Jim's actual motive.

Rearden too sees no way to fight the irrational laws that are being proposed. Besides, he faces the even more pressing problem of Paul Larkin's betrayal. Paul has sold iron ore to Orren Boyle rather than to Rearden Steel, as

he had promised Hank. Hank scrambles to find a new, underground supplier.

More fundamentally, even if Hank saw a way to fight the looters, he could not do so while claiming the innocence of righteousness: he too is guilty of fraud, deceit and injustice through his affair with Dagny. This guilt is driven home to him when he now experiences revulsion when Lillian touches him, and Hank despairs that although he doesn't understand her purpose in marrying him, she'll never want to leave him and he'll have no right to leave her.

Dagny too feels defeat. Her two goals, to find the inventor of the motor and to somehow prevent Colorado's destruction, both go unachieved. Her chain of leads about the identity of the motor's inventor lead Dagny to the viciously evil Starnes heirs and their schemes for the Twentieth Century Motor Company, then to a cook in a roadside dinner, the distinguished professor of philosophy Dr. Hugh Akston, one of Francisco's teachers. Mysteriously, Dr. Akston cautions Dagny to give up her search: the secret she's trying to solve involves something much greater than the motor.

Meanwhile, Wesley Mouch issues new directives, among which are a moratorium on payments of interest and of principal on all railroad bonds (including those of the John Galt Line) and a special tax on the state of Colorado "as the state best able to assist the needier states to bear the brunt of the national emergency." Dagny, sensing this will be the final straw for Ellis—the courageous and productive bondholders of the John Galt Line betrayed so that Jim and Taggart Transcontinental could receive the unearned—rushes to Ellis. But Dagny's too late. He's set fire to his oil fields and vanished. Unbeknownst to her, the strikers have got another man.

## PART TWO

### II.1 – THE MAN WHO BELONGED ON EARTH

Because of Wesley Mouch's directives and Ellis's response of setting fire to his oil derricks and vanishing, Colorado is dying. As a result the American economy takes a step backwards, toward the past, as people try to shift from using oil back to using coal; no one can match Ellis's production of oil.

Andrew Stockton, who runs the best foundry in the country, and stands to make a fortune from the switch back to coal, retires and vanishes. Soon after, Lawrence Hammond, the best manufacturer of automobiles, also retires and vanishes. The only reliable source of fuel left is Ken Danagger of Danagger Coal in Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, in Washington Dr. Ferris says that bastards like Stockton and Hammond are vanishing somewhere and warns that something will have to be done about it. Leaders in Washington make a deal with d'Anconia Copper to pass directives that will kill the U.S. copper producers, leaving d'Anconia Copper and its stockholders (which includes said leaders) with a near monopoly in copper.

In the face of all this economic destruction, Jim boasts that the past six months have been Taggart Transcontinental's most profitable. He's obtained subsidies from Washington for every (empty and unprofitable) train run as a service of "public equality," and Taggart Transcontinental doesn't have to pay any interest or principal to its (mostly Coloradoan) bondholders. This is Jim's proof of the superiority of his money-making skills to Dagny's.

A new profession arises in Washington, a profession which produces no new wealth. They are the "defreezers," individuals who possess the political connections to get Washington to lift the moratorium on interest and principal payments on selected bonds, in the name of the bondholder's need. Dagny is beginning to feel ashamed of Taggart Transcontinental.

But Dagny's quest to find the inventor of the

motor helps sustain her. She tries to find a scientist with a mind powerful enough to attempt to rebuild the motor, but can't. She decides, as a last resort, to see if Dr. Stadler can help her. He eagerly accepts her meeting request. Because Dagny, who esteems the mind, still regards Dr. Stadler as the leading scientific mind of the country, she helps him pretend to himself that he remains on the side of the mind. Dr. Stadler desperately needs this pretense now, because the State Science Institute has just released a book that resembles the incoherent and illogical public statement slandering Rearden Metal, only writ larger: Dr. Ferris's *Why Do You Think You Think?* This book attacks the mind as such. But in return for receiving "public" funds, Dr. Stadler will not speak out against the book, as he did not speak out against the Institute's statement on Rearden Metal. He does, however, complain about the puzzling lack of heating at the Institute, evading the fact that the statement attacking Rearden Metal and the taxes levied on Colorado to pay for the likes of his "free" research laboratories have helped destroy Ellis and Colorado, the nation's leading energy producers.

On seeing the motor, however, Dr. Stadler reacts with admiration: a spark of good still resides in his soul, and he points Dagny to a scientist who would not take a government job but who might be able to help her, Quentin Daniels. Yet Dr. Stadler must simultaneously wish that a man with a brilliant mind that he used to know, named John Galt, has to be dead.

Hank's work too has become more difficult after the completion of the John Galt Line. The Fair Share Law cripples his ability to make business decisions. Washington appoints a Deputy Director of Distribution (Tony, the Wet Nurse) to "interpret" the legislation that is impossible to objectively interpret. The Wet Nurse arbitrarily decides which customers Hank must sell Rearden Metal to and in what quantities. Men who had earned the right to purchase Rearden Metal by standing with

Hank when others would not, like Ken Danagger, must go without the metal.

The only emotional release Hank feels from his problems is when he learns of Ellis setting fire to his oil fields—and now Hank thinks to himself that he must constantly be on guard against himself and this feeling. He senses that the feeling has some connection to what he feels when he refuses to sell Rearden Metal to the State Science Institute for Project X, because he will not help manufacture weapons for his own enemies. The “traffic cop” asking Hank to sell the Institute Rearden Metal is afraid when Hank won't help pretend that it is a voluntary sale rather than the government simply seizing Hank's property. Hank grasps that this is an important issue—that his enemies need some sort of sanction from him—and that it is the same issue as Dr. Stadler needing some sort of sanction from Dagny, his victim.

But though Hank's work is growing more difficult, he is finding a new joy in his personal life as his relationship with Dagny deepens. For the first time, he's enjoying material pleasures, since with Dagny they seem to carry a deep spiritual meaning, as a celebration of what they both have made of their souls and lives. And he's beginning to grasp that his sexual desire for Dagny and hers for him come from the best within each of them.

## II.2 – THE ARISTOCRACY OF PULL

Jim and Cherryl's developing relationship contrasts sharply with Hank and Dagny's. Cherryl's unable to understand Jim or what he seeks in their relationship, but she soldiers on out of loyalty to what she thinks he is. Jim periodically and abruptly breaks down in front of her, confessing his pain, his resentment of Dagny and Hank, his supposed superiority to them in the spiritual realm (the realm of the heart) and his desire for unearned respect, all the while seeing the pain of tenderness and expression of worship in her glance at him. Jim asks Cherryl to marry him.

Their wedding is a who's who of culturally and politically powerful figures and the list of attendees represents Jim's current standing in Washington. Notable for his absence is Wesley Mouch, who apparently has more important matters to attend to. Hank's presence at the wedding (Lillian's wedding gift to Jim), however, is a coup because it implies that Hank either respects or fears Jim, either of which is an indication of Jim's power. Francisco identifies the nature of the men who've taken over the world, the aristocrats of pull, and in a speech actually directed at Hank, Francisco explains that the world's choice is between the power of the whip or the power of the dollar and why the phrase to “make money” captures the essence of morality.

Hank is attending the wedding despite his desperate desire not to see Dagny in public with his wife. But he attends because his is the guilt and Lillian is in the right in demanding he attend. Lillian for her part seems disappointed that she has not caught Hank in an affair.

At work Hank has just made a secret deal to sell Rearden Metal to Ken, who's in turn trying to prevent Taggart Transcontinental's collapse should it be unable to obtain the coal it needs. Both Hank and Ken are ready to go to jail for their action. Hank senses that there is a deep connection between the fact that he must hide his business deal with Ken and the fact that he must hide his romance with Dagny, a connection which, if he could identify it, would answer all the unanswered questions of his life.

Dagny also doesn't want to attend the wedding. She has more pressing work. She's just hired Quentin to try to unlock the secret of the motor and she now thinks, as more of Colorado's industrialists, like Robert Marsh, retire and vanish, that there is an actual destroyer loose in the world, extinguishing the lights of the country. This is her real enemy, with whom she is in a race: By the time she rebuilds the motor, will there be any world left to use it? But she attends because it is her brother's wedding.

At the wedding Dagny and Hank learn that, despite the failure of the San Sebastián project, Jim and his gang expect that, like a law of nature, Francisco will somehow keep making money, from which they will extract their unearned cut. They all hold shares in d'Anconia Copper. Francisco, saying he's committing treason, mysteriously warns Hank not to deal with d'Anconia Copper. He then announces that tomorrow there will emerge numerous accidents and problems at d'Anconia Copper because of the playboy's mismanagement. Hank, Francisco and Dagny, like three pillars in the room, watch Jim and his gang scurry away in panic at the news of the impending collapse of d'Anconia Copper's stock.

## II.3 – WHITE BLACKMAIL

As Dagny and Hank's affair continues to deepen, Hank is grasping the joy that is possible to two human beings. He is starting to think that he was lying to himself when he damned both himself and Dagny in the morning at Ellis Wyatt's house. But he continues to castigate himself for the affair, on the premise that he has wronged Lillian.

Lillian discovers that Hank is having an affair and assumes that what he seeks from it is meaningless, physical sex with a floozy. She tries to drive home to Rearden the “animalistic,” “materialistic” nature of his urges and how he must now constantly stand in guilt before his own eyes and hers. She hammers away at his self-esteem and the idea that he could regard himself as morally perfect. But she does not want to leave him. She vows that she'll never divorce him, that she can't be bought with money or anything material, and that he'll have to face her presence daily, as a reminder of his guilt. Hank notes that Lillian does not seem to feel pain at his infidelity and senses that there is some flaw in her scheme of punishing him, but cannot identify it. But he realizes, after she leaves, that his greatest victory over himself was letting her leave his hotel suite alive.

Hank, however, does not think he is in the

wrong when Dr. Ferris tells him he's broken one of their laws by selling Rearden Metal to Ken Danagger. Dr. Ferris demands that Hank sell the State Science Institute Rearden Metal for Project X or else face prosecution. Hank notes that Dr. Ferris too doesn't seem troubled that one of the country's laws has been broken—“What do you think they're for?” Dr. Ferris asks him. What Dr. Ferris and the other looters want is to cash in on the guilt experienced by the lawbreaker. Hank tells Dr. Ferris that there's a flaw in his system, which he'll discover when they put Hank on trial for the illegal sale.

News of the indictment sends Ken to his breaking point—it's not that he won't have the strength to fight, it's that he'll refuse to submit to the injustice. Dagny is now convinced there is a destroyer in the world, whom she'll shoot on sight because he's targeting the pillars of the economy when they near their breaking point (Ken is the last competent coal producer left). She quickly goes to see Ken to warn him against the destroyer, but she's too late. As she enters Ken's office, another man is exiting, and Ken informs her that he has decided to retire.

Hank, alone in his office, thinks about the course of action Ken has taken and why, given the love each man had for the other, they never sought, as they did in their mills and mines, to build the kind of world among men that they actually wanted.

Francisco comes to see Hank (in the hopes that Hank is now himself closer to going on strike, a direction in which Francisco will try to move him even further). Francisco explains to Hank why Hank's mills and life are the embodiment of morality and that, in response to Hank's enormous virtues, he's being rewarded with pain: Rearden Metal has actually made Hank's life harder not easier. Francisco tells Hank that the worst sin is to accept undeserved guilt and pay blackmail not for one's vices but for one's virtues. He tells Hank that Hank's implicit moral code is a code of life. What then, he asks Hank, is the nature of his opponents' moral code? What are they after?

But at this point, Hank doesn't really think the question matters because Hank can't be stopped by the looters; he won't break as Ken did. Francisco wonders how Hank can continue to carry the injustices he does and think he won't break, but learns the answer to his unasked question during the accident at the furnaces of the mills, during which Hank saves Francisco's life. Precisely because of Hank's enormous ability and moral courage, he doesn't think anyone or anything can stop him. Francisco leaves (he knows that Hank is still not yet ready to strike).

## II.4 – THE SANCTION OF THE VICTIM

In the lead-up to Hank's trial, Hank's family continues to throw insults at him for his life devoted to business, hoping that he won't take a stand in the courtroom and that he'll make a deal to avoid jail time.

But this time Hank actively notes Philip's pleasure at the newspapers attacking Hank and Lillian's attempt to dismiss the notions of right and wrong and the idea that anyone can achieve moral perfection. For the last three months Lillian has been droning on about Hank's guilt because of his affair, but he only feels indifference at her accusations. He now names the flaw in her scheme of punishment. She is unconcerned with herself doing what is right, but needs Hank to be immensely concerned with doing what is right. Hank must view his own action as wrong and feel guilt for not living up to the right—according to Lillian's moral code of what is right. But Hank rejects that code. He's left wondering whether Lillian consciously knows the nature of her scheme of punishment—but does not hate her enough to believe that she does.

When confronted with Philip's naked moral criticisms of him, however, Hank tells Philip he'll throw him out on the street if he ever says anything like that again. Hank notes that none of his family will stand openly in defense of their moral code, and knows that the essence of the issue is the sanction of the victim. He has allowed them to spout moral

denunciations of him by half-accepting and never challenging their moral code.

As the trial approaches, Taggart Transcontinental's main line is falling apart. Dagny has been able to obtain permission to buy enough steel rail to patch the worst parts. Though Hank does not expect to be sentenced to jail, he tells Dagny that she will be getting rail of Rearden Metal instead of steel; he has a reliable source of copper (d'Anconia Copper). Hank makes Dagny promise that she will never admit that she knew of this illegal transaction; Hank's doing it so that he can continue to bear his work.

At his trial, Hank offers no defense, for he does not view himself guilty of any wrongdoing. He tells the court—and the public at large—that he works for himself and is proud of the fortune he's earned. He explains the moral code behind his work and says he needs no one's permission for his right to exist. He will not pretend, by acknowledging that his trial is a proceeding of justice, that moral right lies on the side of the government and its laws. If they want to seize his metal and throw him in jail, they must do so openly, without the cover he would be granting them by acknowledging that they have a moral right to do so. The judges don't know what to do. They dare not acquit Hank and they dare not send him to jail. So they suspend his sentence and fine him five thousand dollars.

The crowd applauds Hank, but he knows they will support the looters' schemes the next day, because they've been told all their lives that that within them which made them cheer Hank is evil. Hank wonders why people are so willing to accept what they've been taught and thereby damn the best within themselves. He realizes that the actual sentence his trial has imposed on him is to figure out the answer to this question.

Anxious to know what Francisco thought of his speech, Hank goes to see him. Francisco asks Hank if he is actually practicing fully what he preached in his courtroom speech. Hank, desperately wanting to find a man he can respect and admire, asks Francisco how

he can be a woman-chaser. Francisco explains to Hank the meaning of sex as a celebration of virtue and achievement, and the similarity between those who seek an unearned stature in matter (money-chasers, like Jim and Boyle) and those who seek an unearned stature in spirit (woman-chasers). Hank recognizes that he's led a split life: he never accepted the looters' view of money but he did of sex.

In their conversation, it emerges that Francisco's position as a chaser of women is camouflage for a purpose of his own. Francisco tells Hank that, because of impatience, he's revealed too much to Hank. Seeing this as a confession of trust, Hank tells him of the trust he's put in Francisco: Hank has secretly made d'Anconia Copper his supplier of copper. Hank is willing to be branded a criminal so that he can outlast the looters' system and keep in existence the kind of productive men who must be kept in existence. Hank's first order of copper left San Juan by ship on December fifth. Francisco is in a state of despair at the news, yelling at Hank that he warned him not to deal with d'Anconia Copper. Francisco picks up the telephone—and stops. He seems to have the power to prevent something, but does not exercise it, swearing to Hank in the name of the only woman he's ever loved that he is Hank's friend.

Three days later, Hank learns that Ragnar Danneskjöld has sunk the ships carrying the copper.

## II.5 – ACCOUNT OVERDRAWN

The inability to obtain copper causes Rearden Steel's first-ever failure, as it can't deliver the rail promised to Taggart Transcontinental. But it hardly matters, as the whole economy is collapsing. Danagger Coal is decaying after Ken's retirement. The shortage of fuel is interfering with Taggart Transcontinental's ability to provide transportation, causing a cascade of other business failures. Intellectuals like Bertram Scudder and Dr. Pritchett welcome and justify the new hardship. The government and the looters are seizing more

and more control over economic affairs, under Wesley Mouch's orders, and are imposing more and more sacrifices. Accidents are becoming more frequent, including the collapse of the Atlantic Southern's Mississippi bridge, which leaves only Taggart Transcontinental's bridge linking the country. And a pirate, Ragnar Danneskjöld, roams the seas, sinking aid vessels of plundered wealth and the copper-carrying ships of d'Anconia Copper. The whole country is in desperate need of copper and Hank must obtain coal on the black market.

A Washington man, Mr. Weatherby, is now present at Taggart Transcontinental's board meetings. Taggart Transcontinental's business decisions must now meet with Washington's (favor-based) approval. Railway unions are demanding a raise in wages and shippers a drop in rates. Jim is losing the magical title of "the public" that he's enjoyed for so long, and so losing the role of receiver of other people's forced sacrifices. Mr. Weatherby wants Jim's help in breaking the National Alliance of Railroads, in return for preventing shipping rates from being ordered to be cut. Jim expects Dagny to find some way to make it all still work, as the whole board of Taggart Transcontinental expects Dagny to somehow return the railroad to profitability. Dagny tells them that their policies have brought Taggart Transcontinental to its present desperate state, but they ignore her and any suggestion to ease the regulations strangling business. They know that the Rio Norte Line must be closed to (temporarily) halt Taggart Transcontinental's bleeding and that its closure will be the final death blow for Colorado, but they want it to be Dagny's decision, because she has the ability to somehow make the unworkable work. But Dagny refuses this time, and the Board eventually decides to kill the line. Mr. Weatherby reminds them that they require the government's permission to close a line and also threatens to require repayment of Taggart Transcontinental's frozen bonds. So Jim agrees to approve the union wage increases and in return Mr. Weatherby allows closure of the Rio Norte Line.



Francisco, knowing that the Rio Norte Line will be killed, comes to Dagny, both to help her cope and, unbeknownst to her, hoping against hope that she's closer to being ready to strike. She's not: her plan is to begin tearing up the Rio Norte Line that she created, in order to try to save the rest of Taggart Transcontinental.

And so, along with Hank, Dagny, who is denounced as a greedy profiteer by the crowd, rides on the last run of the Rio Norte Line.

Knowing that his power is slipping in Washington, Jim sees Lillian in the hope that she can again “deliver” Hank to him as she did at his wedding party, because Hank is a valuable commodity that Jim could trade in Washington. Both Lillian and Jim are pleased by the destruction of the Rio Norte Line, but neither knows how to bring Hank back in line after his trial.

Lillian sees an opportunity, however, when she realizes Hank is onboard the Comet under an assumed name. She meets him at the train platform and discovers that Dagny is his mistress. She's shaken by the knowledge that his mistress is not a floozy and understands, more than Hank does, that this relationship has helped Hank discover the value that is his self and freed him from the guilt she's been trying to inculcate. Lillian demands that Hank stop seeing Dagny, but he tells her he would continue the affair even if it took Lillian's life. Hank sees, in Lillian's denigration of Dagny's desire for Hank as animalistic and depraved, the ugliness of that which had been his own view. He is now completely free of Lillian.

But he tells Lillian that no one is to discuss Dagny or their affair—and Lillian grasps that her scheme to undermine Hank still has a crack through which it could succeed.

## II.6 – MIRACLE METAL

As the nation's economy collapses, Wesley and the others plot the passage of Directive 10-289. This set of directives attempts to freeze the economy in its present state.

Wesley and the others don't care that conditions could therefore never improve. They only want to somehow stay in power and not be swept away in the collapse they're causing. They want to get away with living. Under the directives workers will be prevented from leaving their jobs and businessmen from closing their doors, inventing anything new or changing their production schedules. Wages, prizes and profits will be frozen at current levels and everyone will be forced to continue to spend what they have been spending. Patents will be transferred to the government and the Unification Board will settle all disputes concerning the new laws.

The only question is: Can they get away with it?

But the country has been prepared for these dictatorial policies by the same ideas that the meeting's participants offer to one another, with an iota of sincerity and much evasiveness, to justify their schemes. On the premises that every problem's solution is to give the government wider powers, that industrialists are greedy creatures lacking a social spirit, that need counts but profits do not, that the heart is superior to the head, and that individual intelligence and individual minds are superstitions, Directive 10-289 is passed. The only major obstacle left is uncooperative individuals like Hank, who stood up to such unjust laws at his trial. He may refuse to sign the Gift Certificate, voluntarily handing over the patent to Rearden Metal to the government. But in exchange for being allowed to raise railroad rates, Jim promises that he can deliver Hank.

Francisco calls Dagny to see if Directive 10-289 is the final straw for her, but she hasn't seen the news yet. When she learns of the moratorium on brains, she resigns, refusing to work as a slave or as a slave-driver. She leaves for a mountain cabin, to contemplate what to do next. Hank remains, however, because he still has a way to fight them: he won't sign the Gift Certificate and pretend that theirs is a civilized system.

Dr. Ferris meets Hank in his office, telling Hank he will sign. The blackmail this time is

to expose Hank's affair with Dagny and watch Dagny's name dragged through the gutter. Hank cannot bear the thought. In a ruthless act of thinking, Hank contemplates how it is that his life has come to this moment, where his two greatest values, Dagny and Rearden Metal, are now in conflict with one another. He grasps that he has given his enemy its weapon.

The idea that his affair with Dagny is low and dirty, a vile secret that must be hidden from respectable people's eyes, was Hank's first estimate of his and Dagny's desire for each other. Although he no longer holds that view, and now realizes that he's loved Dagny from the first time he saw her, the error was his. He, and not Dagny, must now pay for it. Dr. Ferris's scheme rests on the affair having deep meaning to Hank, yet Hank being unable or unwilling to proclaim its nobility. Although Hank could now publicly defend his affair with Dagny, as he did defend his mills at his trial (and as Dagny later does on the radio), the price will still be paid by Dagny, not him; it is she that everyone will be whispering about.

But Hank is a man who pays his way. By splitting mind from body, spirit from matter—by devoting himself to his mills but never acknowledging the spiritual nobility of money-making and by sleeping with Dagny but damning the spiritual happiness that his sexual desire for her brought him—Hank has allowed the spiritual realm to destroy his achievements in the material realm. He realizes that this, the soul-body dichotomy, is what leads people to damn as evil their material life on earth (and so the whole noble realm of business) and to damn the very fact of their existence as a sexual being, as he himself had done in regard to his sexual desire for Dagny. He's now answered the question that he was left with after his trial, the cause of all the pain in his life. In exchange for keeping his affair with Dagny secret, he signs the Gift Certificate surrendering Rearden Metal.

## II.7 – THE MORATORIUM ON BRAINS

Although Orren had made plans to start manufacturing Rearden Metal once Hank had signed the Gift Certificate, the pirate Ragnar Danneskjöld lays waste to his furnaces. As Hank walks home on a lonely night, Ragnar confronts him—to return some of his wealth and to give Hank hope in his time of despair.

Ragnar represents the opposite of Directive 10-289: whereas the directive commits the massive injustice of attacking the mind and human ability, Ragnar defends these. Hank can neither condemn Ragnar's illegal actions nor approve of them. But when he hears that Ragnar will not permit anyone to manufacture Rearden Metal, Hank wants to laugh—but Hank knows that if he laughs this time, as he laughed at the news of Ellis's fire and at the crash of d'Anconia Copper stock, he will never see his mills again. He pulls back. But when the police come looking for Ragnar, Hank is ready to defend Ragnar with his life.

The result of Directive 10-289 is that the best people at Taggart Transcontinental and elsewhere are quitting their jobs (as Dagny has done) and becoming “deserters,” unwilling to live as serfs. They are being replaced by men who do not exhibit personal integrity, effort or competence. At Taggart Transcontinental Clifton Locey has replaced Dagny. He seeks to hold her job yet not allow any decisions to be pinned on him, all the while trying to copy what Dagny has done on any issue of importance.

The practical result of Directive 10-289, the moratorium on brains, is the tunnel catastrophe. In defiance of Dagny's strict policy, Clifton Locey orders that the backup Diesel engine at the Winston, Colorado, tunnel be given to Chick Morrison from Washington, who's speaking around the country to try to boost morale. Kip Chalmers, another person with connections in Washington, demands transportation. The people now running Taggart Transcontinental, like Clifton Locey and Dave Mitchum, exist by always shirking the

responsibility of judgment and decision (another form of trying to get away with living). Responsible, competent individuals like Dagny and Bill Brent are always their victims. When such individuals desert (or are destroyed), there is no one left to deflect retribution. The train is ordered into the tunnel—and all the passengers are killed. When they were still alive, these passengers had voiced or supported ideas that contributed to the justification for and passage of Directive 10-289.

## II.8 – BY OUR LOVE

When the tunnel is destroyed, Dagny is at the cabin. She has nothing left to live for; she can find no purpose to pursue. She can neither remain at Taggart Transcontinental simultaneously as slave and slave-driver, nor find any other course of action that would help build the kind of world she loves and wants to see made real. She would be betraying Taggart Transcontinental by remaining in the world and working under the looters' directives and yet seems to be betraying it by deserting it. She can find no answer.

Francisco comes to her, thinking that she has chosen to strike. He confesses his love for her, that he's given up d'Anconia Copper and is deliberately destroying it because of his love for it, that he's one of the first men to have quit. He tells her it's an age of moral crisis and that the guilt is their own: "We produced the wealth of the world—but we let our enemies write its moral code." They then willingly paid ransom for the privilege of living by their own code while keeping mankind alive. What their enemies count on is Francisco and Dagny's love of virtue, which makes them bear every burden so long as they can keep working and producing. To be free of the enemy, Dagny must learn to understand them. Until she does, she will continue to prop up men like Jim and feed and empower them. She must withdraw her mind, the fount of her productivity. But Dagny cannot. When she hears of the tunnel disaster on her railroad, she rushes back to save Taggart Transcontinental.

At Taggart Transcontinental, Jim, unable to locate Dagny, has prepared his resignation letter. But he withdraws it upon Dagny's return. Somehow, he believes, she will again manage to save him and Taggart Transcontinental. He tells her she was responsible for the disaster—because she quit.

To save Taggart Transcontinental, Dagny reroutes traffic to the days before the tunnel was built. She'll next travel to Colorado to see the state of Taggart Transcontinental's line.

Dagny learns that Hank has signed the Gift Certificate. When she telephones him, she says that they've both given in and they're both paying ransom for their love of the earth and for keeping production and human intelligence alive on it, but that price is no object any longer. They'll go down with the last wheel and syllogism.

## II.9 – THE FACE WITHOUT PAIN OR FEAR OR GUILT

Alone in her apartment, Dagny thinks of what she is working for—for her vision of existence and of creating a world for her kind of man—but that she will never reach her vision. Francisco comes to her, hoping that there remains a chance he can convince her to strike. He tells her he has not given up the future and that she'll stop when she discovers that her "work has been placed in the service, not of that man's life, but of his destruction." Until then, they're enemies: Francisco is trying to destroy Taggart Transcontinental to put it beyond the looters' reach. She grasps that he's one of the destroyer's agents.

When Hank enters Dagny's apartment, he confronts Francisco for his betrayal (his refusal to prevent the sinking of the ships of d'Anconia Copper). Hank learns that Dagny is the woman Francisco loves—and slaps Francisco. Restraining himself from killing Hank, Francisco leaves. Hank learns from Dagny a question that has haunted him: Francisco is the first man she slept with. Hank realizes that by stating this fact, Francisco could have beaten him, but chose not to. His

love and respect for Francisco remain, but he's lost the right to Francisco's friendship.

Dagny receives a letter that Quentin is quitting because of Directive 10-289. She telephones him and he promises that he won't disappear until she reaches him in person in Utah and has a chance to convince him to continue his research for her. Dagny leaves for Utah and Colorado, with plans for Hank to join her in a week.

## II.10 – THE SIGN OF THE DOLLAR

Dagny senses that the world is slipping away and that there's no one left who's worth running trains for. She must reach Quentin and resume the quest for the motor, even though it is no longer clear what the motor could help her achieve. On board the Comet heading to Utah and Colorado, Dagny meets the tramp Jeff Allen. She learns from him the story of the collapse of the Twentieth Century Motor Company and of its cause: the moral ideal that they tried to implement fully. She also learns of the young engineer

named John Galt, who promised to stop the motor of the world in response to the Starne-ses' implementation of the moral slogan "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

The crew abandons the train Dagny's on—one of many "frozen" trains—and the passengers demand that she do something (hers is the ability, theirs the need). Setting off with Owen Kellogg, whom she happens to meet onboard (he's headed to Galt's Gulch in Colorado), she goes to find help and to continue her effort to reach Quentin. In the course of their conversation, Owen asks Dagny why she thinks Ivy Starnes's purpose is life—to which Dagny has no answer.

Dagny manages to find an airfield and a Dwight Sanders monoplane and heads for Afton, Utah. When she lands and discovers that Quentin has just left in a stranger's plane, she realizes he's been taken by the destroyer and sets off in pursuit. Unable to abandon a mind like Quentin's and her quest for the motor, Dagny crashes in the mountains of Colorado.

## PART THREE

### III.1 – ATLANTIS

Dagny crashes her plane in the valley hidden behind a ray screen. When she awakes, and sees the sunlight, green leaves and face of the man kneeling beside her, she feels that this is the world as she had expected it to be, but had never been able to reach before. The stranger is the destroyer, John Galt. They are attracted to each other, and he seems to know much about her.

As John carries her from the crash site, he tells her of some of the valley's residents, such as Richard Halley, Francisco, Ellis, Lawrence Hammond, Dwight Sanders, Judge Narragansett, Dick McNamara. She meets Midas Mulligan and Dr. Hugh Akston, who tells Dagny that John is the inventor of the motor and his third pupil. Dagny feels as though she's died and gone to heaven, attaining

another form of existence, but John tells her it's the other way around. This is not a utopia for the dead and departed, but for the living.

She learns that of the stories about John Galt, the one that is literally true is that he was the young engineer at the Twentieth Century Motor Company. He tells her that he has stopped the motor of the world—by doing nothing. When she asks John, "What is it that you're all doing here?" he answers simply, "Living." Dagny thinks to herself that she never heard this word sound so real.

John shows her all the men he's taken away from her. She discovers that in the valley, whose currency is gold, she's penniless; it's a place, Ellis tells her, where they trade in achievements not failures, values not needs. John is deliberately making it as hard as possible for Dagny to leave this place.

Dagny wants to see the powerhouse containing John's motor, and he takes her there. She learns the oath she must pronounce to unlock the powerhouse's doors—and the door to the valley: "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." To her, the powerhouse is a temple, and they both struggle against their desire for each other. John repeats the oath, and Dagny knows that this solemn act contains the core of all that's happened to the world in the twelve years since John first took it, at his last meeting at the Twentieth Century Motor Company.

In the evening Dagny attends the dinner at Midas's home. John tells her that they are all on strike. They are the men of the mind, who've carried the world on their shoulders, been tortured for it, but have never before walked out.

John names the types of injustices the men of the mind have faced:

Through all the ages the mind has been regarded as evil, and every form of insult: from heretic to materialist to exploiter—every form of iniquity: from exile to disfranchisement to expropriation—every form of torture: from sneers to rack to firing squad—have been brought down upon those who assumed the responsibility of looking at the world through the eyes of a living consciousness and performing the crucial act of a rational connection. Yet only to the extent to which—in chains, in dungeons, in hidden corners, in the cells of philosophers, in the shops of traders—some men continued to think, only to that extent was humanity able to survive. Through all the centuries of the worship of the mindless, whatever stagnation humanity chose to endure, whatever brutality to practice—it was only by the grace of the men who perceived that wheat must have water in order to grow, that stones laid in a curve will form an arch, that two and two make four, that love is not served by torture and life is not fed by destruc-

tion—only by the grace of those men did the rest of them learn to experience moments when they caught the spark of being human, and only the sum of such moments permitted them to continue to exist. It was the man of the mind who taught them to bake their bread, to heal their wounds, to forge their weapons and to build the jails into which they threw him. He was the man of extravagant energy—and reckless generosity—who knew that stagnation is not man's fate, that impotence is not his nature, that the ingenuity of his mind is his noblest and most joyous power—and in service to that love of existence he was alone to feel, he went on working, working at any price, working for his despoilers, for his jailers, for his torturers, paying with his life for the privilege of saving theirs. This was his glory and his guilt—that he let them teach him to feel guilty of his glory, to accept the part of a sacrificial animal and, in punishment for the sin of intelligence, to perish on the altars of the brutes. The tragic joke of human history is that on any of the altars men erected, it was always man whom they immolated and the animal whom they enshrined. It was always the animal's attributes, not man's, that humanity worshipped: the idol of instinct and the idol of force—the mystics and the kings—the mystics, who longed for an irresponsible consciousness and ruled by means of the claim that their dark emotions were superior to reason, that knowledge came in blind, causeless fits, blindly to be followed, not doubted—and the kings, who ruled by means of claws and muscles, with conquest as their method and looting as their aim, with a club or a gun as sole sanction of their power. The defenders of man's soul were concerned with his feelings, and the defenders of man's body were concerned with his stomach—but both were united against his mind.

And John explains that for such a system and world view to endure, the men of the mind had to willingly choose to keep the system and its proponents afloat. Beginning with John, the men in the valley no longer make that choice.

She learns of the particular reasons for Dr. Akston, Midas, Judge Narragansett, Richard, Dr. Hendricks, Ellis, Ken, Quentin and John going on strike, and of the different rules and moral code that govern life in the valley.

Dagny knows she will have to make a choice—to join John and the strike, or return to her battle in the world. Being a scab in the valley, both she and John recognize, will make her choice harder not easier—because she now sees, concretely and in the flesh, the kind of man and the kind of existence for which she wants to win the world.

### III.2 – THE UTOPIA OF GREED

The next morning Dagny, as she fixes breakfast for herself and John, meets the third pupil, Ragnar. Both Ragnar and John don't know why Francisco is not here to join them for their annual breakfast. She learns of the gold account Ragnar is collecting and holding for her. Like Hank, she cannot condemn Ragnar—she knows his course of action is just—but she also cannot accept his money.

John decides that Dagny is going to stay the whole month in the valley, as the rest of the strikers do; after the month is up, she must decide whether she will remain or go back to the outside world. She declares that she will pay her way for the month—by being his cook and housemaid, something she wants to do more than anything else in the world.

The next day she meets Owen and learns that the outside world believes she died in a plane crash. He relayed her last instructions, to get a job for Jeff Allen and to telephone Hank should anything happen to her. Though she wants to fight Hank's battle with him, she does not ask John for an exception to the valley's policy of no outside communication for the month of their vacation.

The following day, Francisco finally arrives. He had been searching for the wreckage of Dagny's plane. He confesses his continued love for her and his acceptance of the fact that he's lost her to Hank. Everything he's done since leaving her is to enable her to reach her kind of world, the world she deserves. But Dagny knows that she's now in love with another man, John (as he is in love with her and has been from the moment he first saw her, ten years ago). And later, when they are alone, John tells Dagny of the first time he saw her at the passenger platform of the Taggart Terminal, not wanting to let their moment of intimacy pass.

At dinner at Dr. Akston's house, Dr. Akston wordlessly gives Dagny the title of John's wife, which John acknowledges. But Dagny begins to wonder whether John will sacrifice their love for the sake of not hurting Francisco, when she learns that John sent Francisco to see her at the cabin in Woodstock (just after she had quit Taggart Transcontinental because of the passage of Directive 10-289). When Francisco asks that Dagny stay with him for the last week in the valley, she wants the decision to be John's. To her relief, he refuses Francisco's request.

Later, when she sees Hank's plane and his continued, desperate search for her, Dagny feels the pull of the courage of men like Hank, still fighting for their world so long as they see even one chance left.

She then decides to return to the world because a chance of success still exists. She thinks the looters cannot refuse to see the truth forever, when their very lives will depend on them grasping the truth. Dr. Akston tells her the last premise for her to check is whether her enemies do in fact desire to live. He says "that the answer was the hardest thing for any of us to grasp and to accept."

John also decides to return to the world despite the dangers he'll face—and Francisco grasps the reason: John's in love with Dagny. It's a fact Francisco acknowledges and tells them both that he accepts.

Before Dagny leaves the valley and parts with



John, he tells her that if she finds her quest to achieve her kind of world hopeless, she must recognize her error and not commit the sin of thinking human ideals are unreachable and then damning the earth, life and all of existence, as past thinkers have done. She must instead question her premise.

### III.3 – ANTI-GREED

Dr. Stadler is precisely a man who has committed the sin John warns Dagny about: Dr. Stadler has damned the world as an irrational realm in order to justify his own irrationality and his choice to abandon the fight for the ideal. “What can you do when you have to deal with people?” he constantly tells himself.

At the demonstration of Project X, Dr. Stadler confronts the result of his policy: his life and mind have been placed in the service of evil.

Project X, made possible through Dr. Stadler's research and the name he's given to the State Science Institute, turns out to be the development of a weapon by which the government can control an unruly populace. And to control the populace, to keep them at bay, has been Stadler's unstated but life-long policy. His view, which he rationalizes to himself, has been that “materialistic” people, concerned with making a living for themselves, cannot be reasoned with. What Dr. Stadler now discovers is that Dr. Ferris (the valet of science) and his gang in Washington are no longer minions doing Dr. Stadler's bidding (such as providing him with a research laboratory) but are instead his masters, who tell him where to stand and what to say. And even if he wanted to, Stadler now has nowhere left to turn but the government, since he's helped destroy private scientific research.

At the demonstration of Project X, a young reporter pleads with Dr. Stadler to tell the truth to the world about who is trying to rule it, but Dr. Stadler instead turns against the young reporter—as he turned on John Galt many years ago when John damned him for helping establish the State Science Institute. John's chosen path led to the strike and to the

establishment of Galt's Gulch, a haven for men of the mind; Stadler's chosen path has led to a war against the mind and the rule of brutes.

And the growing rule of brutes is what Dagny returns to find when she rejoins Taggart Transcontinental. Cuffy Meigs—a man with a gun in one pocket and a rabbit's foot in the other—is the Washington man in charge of the Railroad Unification Plan (another scheme of “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need”). Cuffy does openly what Jim and Lillian and their cocktail-party crowd did in a more veiled fashion: he plunders the railroad while dispensing favors. Cuffy's power at the railroad consists of having final say over what constitutes that mysterious thing called the “public welfare.”

Jim conveys to Dagny the attitude that in disappearing, she betrayed a duty she had to him. He also wants her to appear publicly; Jim and the Washington gang need her to reassure the public that she still accepts and will continue to work under their system (as Hank's signing of the Gift Certificate is being used to show that he supports the current system). Dagny senses panic and a new level of open irrationality in Jim. There is no way for Jim to pretend that looting the Atlantic Southern, by means of the Railroad Unification Plan, will enable Taggart Transcontinental to endure (as Jim may have once been able to pretend to himself when he helped destroy the Phoenix-Durango). And Dagny senses that Jim knows his policy is irrational, but has some means of escaping that knowledge.

Dagny refuses Jim's request to appear on Bertram Scudder's radio program to help reassure the nation. But Lillian comes to see Dagny, to inform her that she will comply—or else Lillian will expose Dagny's affair with Hank. Lillian is counting on Dagny thinking of herself as a whore, who dares not face the public's knowledge of her sin. Lillian takes pleasure—the faint, flickering pleasure possible to a dead soul, one devoid of the desire for gain—that for once Dagny will have to act on Lillian's will, not her own. Dagny agrees to appear on the radio and declares to the world, as Hank declared in his courtroom speech

about the creation of Rearden Metal, that she regards her affair with Hank a product of virtue not vice. She informs the world of the real reason Hank signed the Gift Certificate.

Alone in her apartment that evening, Hank comes to see her and tells her that he knows the source of all his pain—accepting that mind and matter, soul and body form two separate, conflicting worlds. And he tells Dagny here, at the end of their relationship, what he should have told her at the start: of his love for her as the embodiment of all that which he cherishes in life.

Hank learns from Dagny where she was for the past month and that there is a John Galt, who is the inventor of the motor and the destroyer. But like Dagny, Hank can't abandon his fight for the world, not so long as there is still some hope of victory.

### III.4 – ANTI-LIFE

The progress of Hank's life and his relationship with Dagny led him on a path of self-discovery, which he eagerly pursued. But the progress of Jim's life and his relationship with Cherryl lead him on a path of self-discovery, which he resents and seeks to avoid.

Jim is afraid to face that which is his self, not wanting his years to sum up to anything, yet finding that they have. He has just put the final touches on his greatest scheme, the formation of the Interneighborly Amity and Development Corporation, which will operate all the industrial properties of the People's States of the Southern Hemisphere, and the impending nationalization of d'Anconia Copper. Jim wishes to celebrate, yet simultaneously not to know what he wants to celebrate or why. It is not money or greed, he reluctantly admits to himself, that moves him.

He goes home to Cherryl, sensing that this is dangerous, yet evading that momentary knowledge, as is his habit. He boasts to her of the big scheme he's hatched, of its non-profit, public spirited nature, and of being greater than Dagny and Hank and Francisco because he's beaten them all. As he's said to Cherryl

before, they can build a rail track and he can break it, just like breaking a spine. This is the kind of pleasure and celebration Jim seeks tonight—to be himself, fully for once—yet without the responsibility of knowing what is his self. When Cherryl had whispered to him, trembling, “You want to break spines?” he screamed back at her “I haven't said that! . . . I haven't said that!” The danger involved in going home tonight is that Cherryl is starting to see that which is the self that Jim's created.

Cherryl's yearlong marriage to Jim, who is in spirit and soul a killer, has destroyed Cherryl. But in stark contrast to Jim, she wants to discover what has happened to her; it's her only remaining want, her last hold on life. She could not understand Jim and set out to learn about him and to learn “everything Mrs. James Taggart is expected to know and to be.” What she learned is that Jim wants her to fail at her quest, to remain socially awkward and Jim's inferior, dependent on him (as he is dependent on her for some unnamed thing). When she finally achieved a state of poise, social grace and enjoyment, Jim tells her he wished she would learn to keep her place and not embarrass him. At that moment, she first feels she is in the grip not simply of the inexplicable, but of evil. When she grasps that Jim's circle of intellectuals are phonies, and tells him that he's been taken advantage of by con men, he shows a flash of amusement. It's she who's been taken in by him.

When Cherryl came to doubt that Jim is the heroic leader of Taggart Transcontinental, as she had assumed, she went to Taggart Transcontinental to find out. She learned the whole truth from Eddie Willers. When she confronted Jim about his deception and his letting her believe he was a hero, he blamed her. He wants to be loved by someone who knows that love is earned, as Cherryl knows, without the burden of creating any reason why he deserved to be loved. He wants a universe in which nothing has to be earned or paid for. In exchange for her hero worship, he offers, as his only claim to value, the fact that he suffers. That this is the nature of the universe—a universe in which Jim Taggart stands at the

top—is unbearable to Cheryl. It is not a realm in which a spirit such as hers can live.

Her only remaining wish had been to discover what destroyed her and what she discovers, tonight when Jim comes home, is that she is facing a looter of the spirit.

All of you welfare preachers—it's not unearned money that you're after. You want handouts, but of a different kind. I'm a gold-digger of the spirit, you said, because I look for value. Then you, the welfare preachers . . . it's the spirit that you want to loot. I never thought and nobody ever told us how it could be thought of and what it would mean—the unearned in spirit. But that is what you want. You want unearned love. You want unearned admiration. You want unearned greatness. You want to be a man like Hank Rearden without the necessity of being what he is. Without the necessity of being anything. Without . . . the necessity . . . of being.

“Shut up!” Jim screams back at her. Neither one of them can face the full sight of what Jim's self is.

As in effect a last act, a settling of debts, Cheryl goes to see Dagny to tell Dagny she now knows that it was Dagny's ability not Jim's that she worshipped. Dagny tells Cheryl that she must not think, as she is now thinking, that the fact that people like Jim exist means it is their kind of universe. But Cheryl is paralyzed, unable to fully understand Jim's world, unable to fight it, and unable to conceive of a real alternative. Dagny senses Cheryl's precarious state and tells Cheryl she doesn't want her to return home tonight, but Cheryl tells her not to worry.

At Cheryl's home, Lillian has come to see Jim in the hope that he can use his pull in Washington to prevent Hank from divorcing her. But Jim can't. When Lillian smiles at the news of Jim's scheme to destroy Francisco and d'Anconia Copper, Jim knows that this is what he had wanted to celebrate. What unites the two of them is a desire to bring down great men. They sleep together to defile

Hank's honor—the only words they exchange are “Mrs. Rearden”—a celebration of the triumph of impotence over life.

Cheryl returns home to discover Jim's infidelity. She confronts him and learns that he married her because she was ambitious and struggling to rise—it was this kind of soul that he had to simultaneously lord over and be worshipped by. He chose her because she's good—to torture the good because it's good.

She runs out, but finds there's nowhere to go to escape Jim. It's a world made in the image of Jim's ideas and soul; Dagny is only a lone and doomed exception in a universe in which actual virtue is deliberately met with pain. Cheryl can find no words to make sense of it all; she just senses that there is no escape and no exit. When a social worker castigates her for thinking of herself and her own enjoyment, Cheryl screams, “Not your kind of world,” and throws herself into the river.

### III.5 – THEIR BROTHERS' KEEPERS

The looters' policies are bearing their fruit, with almost no one left to deflect justice, i.e., with almost no one left to save them from the consequences of their policies. The economy nears collapse, but the looters still think that Dagny and Hank and people like them will always be around to somehow do something to prevent total collapse—and they need Dagny and Hank to reassure them of this allegedly unalterable fact.

But the fact is that copper is scarce and Taggart Transcontinental is being looted by Cuffy and his cronies. As things break down across Taggart Transcontinental and across the entire country, the burden is continually shifted from one person's shoulders to another's because that other is (temporarily) able to carry it. But there are fewer and fewer such people to shift the burden onto.

The Railroad Unification Plan, which attempted to shift the burden of maintaining Taggart Transcontinental in existence onto other railroads' shoulders, is failing. Mean-

while, Taggart Transcontinental's schedule is no longer fixed or reliable; trains are run at the whim of Cuffy and his pals, who sell “transportation pull” in the name of national emergencies and the public welfare. A new class of men, hit-and-run businessmen wielding political pull, emerge like jackals and are heralded by society's leaders as progressive businessmen. Taggart Transcontinental, like the rest of the economy, is becoming a corpse consumed by maggots. And it makes no difference, Dagny thinks to herself about what she's witnessing, whether the maggots exhibit the charity-lust of the humanitarians or the gluttony of a Cuffy Meigs.

At the same time, Jim wants to gloat over Francisco's destruction, the very kind of man Jim needs in order to continue existing. The nationalization of d'Anconia Copper is justified by the moral slogan that man is his brother's keeper, but Francisco refuses to play his part. At the moment of nationalization, Francisco blows up what remains of his company. Moreover, all the men of outstanding ability, whom the People's States had been counting on to run the nationalized property, have vanished. “Brother, you asked for it!”

The people of New York City understand wordlessly, at some level and to some compromised degree, why Francisco did it—and that he has avenged them. Hank knows it was an act of avenging not only Francisco, but also himself. But Hank thinks he's lost the right to accept Francisco's friendship. He learns from Dagny that Francisco and Ragnar too are agents of the destroyer.

With no prospects for achievement and no long-range goals left, Hank is now bored to death at work. The only thing keeping him at work is the image of men like those in Minnesota, who despite all the hardships have managed to produce a bumper crop of wheat. He's been selling metal “illegally”—legality is now an outdated notion—to the manufacturers of farm equipment. But both he and Dagny expect collapse, if not this year, then the next.

Yet just as Jim needs Dagny's reassurance that somehow things will continue to work, so

the other looters need Hank's. They temporarily suspend some of the regulations handcuffing him, hoping he will continue to produce, while offering their “friendship.” In the works is the Steel Unification Plan, and they need Hank to reassure them that, somehow, it will work.

Philip is sent to Hank's mills to keep a watch on him—they can't afford Hank vanishing—and Philip pleads that Hank should give him a job because he's his brother. When Hank explains why he is refusing, Philip says, “Since when did you take to abstract philosophy? You're only a businessman, you're not qualified to deal with questions of principle, you ought to leave it to the experts”—but Hank, having learned all that he's learned, cuts him off. Hank realizes Philip genuinely believes that Hank feels nothing because Hank doesn't suffer. Hank grasps that throughout his years and his long struggle, his enemies have been men who worship pain—pain as proof of their own virtue, as a claim to moral entitlement, to the effort and help of those not in pain. They're men who worship pain.

When Hank gets his divorce from Lillian, by bribing officials who need to pretend theirs is still a tribunal of justice, he feels divorced from the whole of the human society that supports such a tribunal. Aside from Dagny, the last element of the human left in Hank's personal life is the Wet Nurse, who respectively asks Hank for a job and warns Hank that the Washington boys are up to something. They've been slipping real goons into Hank's mills via the Unification Board.

But despite Hank and Dagny's efforts, Minnesota collapses. In the kind of event playing out across the Taggart system and the economy as a whole, freight cars to carry the wheat harvest have been diverted from Minnesota by order of Cuffy. It seems that everyone but Dagny knew of the looming catastrophe in Minnesota, but no one but she is left to assume responsibility for averting the disaster. She tries, but she cannot save Minnesota. The state descends into chaos. And the manufacturers of farm equipment, whom Hank had been dealing with, go bankrupt.

Finally, when a copper wire breaks at the Taggart Terminal, there is no other brother on whose shoulders can be shifted the burden of production: the Terminal goes dark. When this happens, Dagny is at a conference with the looters, who are seeking her reassurances. She sees that they are content to return to a pre-industrial age, like a “fat, unhygienic rajah of India” who will rule impoverished hordes with a club, on the unstated premise that their subjects will produce enough for there to be something to loot.

And it is to a pre-industrial age that the nation is headed. To keep the trains running, Dagny must resort to manual signaling by lanterns. She wonders, in trying to save Taggart Transcontinental and so the country for the next moment, why she's doing it, what's in it for her. She sees John in the crowd of Taggart Transcontinental workers. As the reward for all her days—and his reward for all of his—she must have him, now. She goes down an abandoned tunnel, and he follows and makes love to her.

But John knows that given their conscious premises, they remain enemies. He knows the price of his action may be his life, and he willingly chose to pay it for this moment. Dagny has the capacity to recognize John for what he is; she can deliver him to his enemies and will do so if she continues to serve them, as she is currently serving them. John warns her that she must not try to see him.

### III.6 – THE CONCERTO OF DELIVERANCE

The looters are preparing to spring the Steel Unification Plan on Hank. They cannot risk Hank vanishing, so they must persuade him that he can still exist under the plan (and he must, at a deeper level, persuade them that he can). But they also cannot risk him staying and taking a public stand against the Plan, similar to what he did at his trial, so they have to show the country that unrest at his mills required the government to step in and seize control.

To accomplish this second aspect, the looters

are making it look as though Hank is refusing wage demands made by the steel workers' union. The newspapers keep reporting that they fear an outbreak of violence at the mills. To accomplish the first aspect, of Hank not vanishing, the government freezes Hank's bank accounts, while apologizing that it's only a bureaucratic mix-up. They schedule a conference with him, at the exact time and date they plan to manufacture an armed riot at his mills.

Hank's family knows he is close to quitting and vanishing, and schemes to somehow make him stay and continue providing them with an unearned livelihood. Hank goes back for the last time to what had once been his home, and notices that his mother is allowing Lillian to stay there. He sees that this is his mother's and Lillian's common revenge against him. His family pleads for mercy and forgiveness, and is met with his indifference, with his unwillingness any longer to grant status to any other standards or code but his own, and with his sense of justice, which would forgive innocent errors but not conscious evil.

In a last effort to wound his pride and self-esteem, Lillian throws at him the fact that she, his wife, slept with Jim Taggart. He doesn't care, and she collapses into the non-existence of her own soul. As he leaves, he tells his mother that he would have forgiven them, had they, who know the hopelessness of his situation, urged him to quit and vanish.

Hank goes to the conference with the looters. He's met with moral slogans and philosophical justifications that he has heard all his life in justification of the looters' public policies. In the midst of the conversation, he grasps why going on strike is the only way to fight the looters.

He realizes that the Steel Unification Plan is so irrational that not even they can pretend that it will work. What then makes them propose it? What are they counting on? “Oh, you'll do something!” Jim cries to him. In that sentence, which Hank has heard all his life, he now sees the source of all the suffering he's endured at the hands of his enemies. It is Hank who has given them cause to pretend

that the universe is a place where the irrational can somehow be made to work.

If he had accepted the Equalization of Opportunity Bill, if he had accepted Directive 10-289, if he had accepted the law that those who could not equal his ability had the right to dispose of it, that those who had not earned were to profit, but he who had was to lose, that those who could not think were to command, but he who could was to obey them—then were they illogical in believing that they existed in an irrational universe? He had made it for them, he had provided it. Were they illogical in believing that theirs was only *to wish*, to wish with no concern for the possible—and that *his* was to fulfill their wishes, by means they did not have to know or name? They, the impotent mystics, struggling to escape the responsibility of reason, had known that he, the rationalist, had undertaken to serve their whims. They had known that he had given them a blank check on reality—his was not to ask *why?*—theirs was not to ask *how?*—let them demand that he give them a share of his wealth, then all that he owns, then more than he owns—impossible?—no, *he'll do something!*

He has sanctioned their irrationality. To end it, he must withdraw his sanction by withdrawing his ability.

He leaves the conference—too early—to return to his mills for the last time.

As he approaches, he sees the mob trying to storm his mills, and takes a side road, where he sees the Wet Nurse, Tony, on the slag heap. Tony had wanted to warn Hank and was shot because of it. When he dies, Hank feels a desire to kill the boy's teachers, who had thrown him into the world after crippling the boy's only means to live: his mind and its ability to distinguish right from wrong.

As Hank walks to his mills with the dead boy in his arms, he sees that someone has organized a defense of his mills. But then a goon clubs Hank—and is himself shot. The

shooter and organizer is Francisco, who's been working at the job Hank once offered him, furnace foreman. Their friendship is sealed. Francisco tells Hank the things Hank is now ready to hear. Hank is on strike.

### III.7 – “THIS IS JOHN GALT SPEAKING”

Dagny laughs at the news that Hank and his best men at the mills have quit. But when Jim pleads with her to bring Hank back because she's the only one who can reach him, her smile vanishes. She sees an aspect of what John has told her: the looters' route to the strikers is through her.

Dagny thinks that Hank has been liberated—yet she also thinks that she should remain in the world because there's still a chance to win. She desperately wants to see John, whose address she's found, but dares not.

With Hank's disappearance, the country is in a panic and descending into the chaos of civil war. Mr. Thompson promises to address the nation on November 22 and speak about the world crisis.

Jim tricks Dagny into attending the radio broadcast, to show that at least she still remains and supports the government. But Mr. Thompson's broadcast does not take place. John takes over the radio waves and proceeds to offer the nation a true report on the world crisis.

In his speech, he announces that the men of the mind are on strike. He states their reasons: the code they live by is the morality of life and the strikers are through making concessions to the opposite code. The world, he tells them, is suffering from a moral crisis, caused not by people failing to practice what the world regards as moral, but by people practicing it consistently. The strikers are no longer there to deflect the consequences of the world's view of morality. The world's moral code, he explains, is the morality of death—a morality that preaches sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice. The preachers of this morality, the mystics of spirit and the mystics



of muscle, who now rule the world, seek a universe in which their wishes supersede reality. If the people of the nation want the strikers to return, they must make the most difficult choice of their lives. They must grasp the evil of the morality of death and of its preachers, and reject both. They must embrace the code of the strikers, the morality of life—and then themselves go on strike, in whatever fashion is open to them.

The knowledge that John presents in his radio broadcast is the cause of the events of the past twelve years—including all the events in all the preceding chapters of the book. Equipping the men of the mind, like Francisco, with the knowledge contained in the broadcast is precisely what has led to the strike. The result is that the world is collapsing because of and into its own evil. Only a radical change in ideas can change its fate.

### III.8 – THE EGOIST

The looters refuse to accept the reality of John's broadcast, though Tinky Holloway remarks that “we seem to have heard it.” Dagny tells them to give up and get out of the way and leave free the men who know what to do, but they refuse. Her advice, however, is the birth of Mr. Thompson's plan to make a deal with John Galt, the man who knows what to do. Dr. Stadler screams that it's John or them, and that they must kill John. And it is Dr. Stadler, who still has enough memory of the homeland he's betrayed, who tells Mr. Thompson that if they want to find John they must have Dagny followed, since she is obviously one of John's kind.

Dagny learns from Eddie that Eddie's been giving John—the nameless Taggart Transcontinental worker he's been talking to for years—information about Taggart Transcontinental. Eddie wonders whether he was helping to protect the railroad or betray it, and Dagny answers “Both. Neither. It doesn't matter now.” But she warns Eddie not to look for John. Eddie tells her that she's going to quit one of these days, but she still holds out the dim hope that the looters will give up.

Across the nation, however, John's radio broadcast is having an effect. The best men left in the system are going on strike, withdrawing their minds. Pleas from Washington go out that Mr. Thompson is willing to negotiate with John. They're unable to locate him. Rearden Steel, after a few months of nationalization, shuts down. The economy has collapsed.

Mr. Thompson summons Dagny to find out if she knows where John is. She tells him to start decontrolling, but he says that's out of the question. Mr. Thompson then hints that John might be dead, and that he can't control the Ferris-Lawson-Meigs clique that would want him dead.

Now desperate, Dagny goes to see John, to make sure he's still alive, and learns how he's been living for the past twelve years. John tells her not to regret her decision of coming to see him—it wasn't indifference that brought her here—but that she must now decisively choose a side, the looters' side. If they discover what she means to him, they will torture her to win his compliance. Should that happen, in the last action left to him to preserve his values, John will kill himself.

When the government agents arrive, Dagny turns John in. The looters want John to become Economic Dictator of the country and somehow return it to prosperity. Mr. Thompson and a succession of looters try to persuade John to accept their deal, but they discover that their moral slogans have no effect on him: he answers and rejects them all. They discover that they have nothing to offer John. When Mr. Thompson tells John that he's got John's life to offer him, John answers, softly, “It's not yours to offer.” The looters are discovering that they cannot make a mind think and serve them if it chooses not to.

Mr. Thompson hopes there is someone John wants to see, to use threats to the life of that person to blackmail John, but the only person John asks for is Dr. Stadler. Dr. Stadler pleads with Mr. Thompson not to have to see John, but loses. Face to face with John, Dr. Stadler pleads that he couldn't help it, that he's not to blame.

Meanwhile, Dagny collects her reward for turning John in. Faced with the choice between John's destruction or the world's, she chooses the world's: she lies to Mr. Thompson that John will give in if they treat him well. And when Eddie tells Dagny no transcontinental trains are able to leave San Francisco, she won't leave New York City. Eddie will go instead: Dagny can rebuild Taggart Transcontinental wherever she goes, but Eddie cannot; he will act in defense of Taggart Transcontinental, in the only way left to him. They part.

Dagny is now close to going on strike. As she watches the looters' responses to John, and their still-growing evasiveness, she questions whether she is correct in believing that they want to live. Her mind is made up when they try to pretend to the country that they've made a deal with John Galt by parading John on television. Seeing the visceral hatred of John in the faces of men like her brother Jim, she finally grasps the depraved state of their souls, the sight of which had been too much for Cheryl to bear. Dagny is finally free of the hold the looters' world had on her.

John—giving the world a visual demonstration of what he had told them on the radio about the kind of sanction the looters' system needs from its victims but would no longer get from the strikers—exposes the gun that is the source of his “voluntary compliance.” Standing straight and facing the camera, he says, “Get the hell out of my way!”

### III.9 – THE GENERATOR

Dr. Stadler, panicked by John's defiance and by Mr. Thompson's personal threats, must now face the (material) world he has helped create: a world in which the mind is unnecessary and brute force rules.

Afraid of being killed by Mr. Thompson if John refuses to give in, and by John himself if John does cooperate, Dr. Stadler drives in terror to the site of Project X. He must seize control and rule—there is no other way to live on earth (he pretends to himself). But his progeny, the “materialistic” man of brute

force and no mind, Cuffy Meigs, has beaten Dr. Stadler to the site.

The one drunk, the other hysterical with terror, Cuffy and Dr. Stadler battle for control of the weapon and in the struggle end up setting off the weapon and destroying themselves, the facility and its environs, including the Taggart Bridge, the country's last transcontinental link.

Meanwhile, Dagny overhears the looters plans to torture John, to take him to the grounds of the State Science Institute and to the Ferris Persuader. She telephones Francisco. Back at her office, when she hears that the Taggart Bridge has been destroyed, Dagny seizes the phone and feels the last pull of the looters' world and of the burdens she should never have had to carry. She puts down the phone. She's on strike.

Dr. Ferris, Wesley and Jim torture Galt, somehow hoping the pain they inflict can make him choose to think and to save them—which is the naked essence of their schemes and policies over the last twelve years. When the generator breaks down, John mockingly reveals to them their utter impotence: they even need John to repair the generator powering the machine they are using to torture him. Jim stands before John and comes face to face with his own self for the first time: he wants John dead even if that means his own death is to follow. Jim is a killer “who destroyed values for being values, who killed in order not to discover his own irredeemable evil.”

Jim cannot bear the sight of his self—and collapses. Dr. Ferris and Wesley help Jim out of the room, saying to the universe that they'll be back, afraid of suffering the same fate as Jim and for the same reason.

### III.10 – IN THE NAME OF THE BEST WITHIN US

The men of the valley come to the grounds of the State Science Institute to try to rescue John. Dagny shoots a guard in her way who seeks to exist without the burden of deciding

what is true and false, right and wrong. Hank takes a bullet during the rescue. But he, Dagny, Francisco and Ragnar manage to reach John. He is unharmed. They leave the grounds of the State Science Institute and return to the valley. As they fly over New York City, and the lights of the city go out, John and Francisco and Ragnar know that their strike has accomplished what it had to accomplish.

Meanwhile, Eddie has been able to get one train to leave San Francisco. But it breaks

### LEARNING STRATEGIES TO USE BEFORE READING: SUGGESTED TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

*Atlas Shrugged* is a story about the nature of morality. The strikers are on strike against the moral code that rules their world and seek to live by the new moral code that John Galt teaches them. An excellent kind of question to pose to students before they begin reading the novel is a question that asks them to reflect carefully on their own current moral views, i.e., on their present understanding of right and wrong, good and evil, as well as on what the world seems to regard as good and evil.

You could then ask students to revisit the question and their answers once they've finished reading *Atlas Shrugged*. Ask the students to state whether they would change their answer in any way and make them explain the reasons why they would or would not make changes.

Or you could have students revisit the question, but this time ask them to answer it not from their own perspective but from the perspective of one of the characters in the story (e.g., Dagny Taggart or her brother, Jim). Ask them to explain how they think Dagny or Jim would have answered the question and why. This type of exercise helps students realize that there exist different moral views, different views of right and wrong, and there also exist reasons and arguments that give rise to these different views. Your students, as they develop into adults, are going to have to decide for themselves what they think is right and wrong and their reasons why.

Listed below are just some examples of the

down in the middle of a desert in Arizona. The men abandon the train, but Eddie cannot let go of the irreplaceable value that is industrial civilization and that which makes it possible, man's reasoning mind. He collapses on the rail.

In the valley, the strikers prepare to end their strike and to begin rebuilding the world, their world. "The road is cleared," John tells Dagny. "We are going back to the world."

many questions of this kind that you could ask students, and even for the questions listed you may have to reformulate a particular question so that you are confident that your students, given their age and existing knowledge, are able to understand and grapple with the question. But I think it will usually be possible to revise one of the listed questions in order to make it appropriate for your class.

#### Questions focused on individual people:

1. Name a person you know that you think exemplifies what it means to be moral, i.e., to be good, and then explain what it is about the person that makes you classify him as moral.
2. Choose a person from history that you think is a moral hero, i.e., who exemplifies what it means to be morally good to an exemplary degree, and then explain what it is about the person that makes you classify him as a moral hero.
3. Do you think Bill Gates is a moral person? Explain why or why not.
4. Industrialists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, individuals like Rockefeller and Vanderbilt, were denounced as robber barons. Do you think these individuals were good or bad? Explain.
5. Who do you think is more moral, Galileo or Mother Teresa?

#### Questions focused on the nature of morality as such:

6. Imagine that your fourteen-year-old cousin asks you, "What is morality? What does it mean to be moral?" Write a letter to your cousin stating and explaining your answer.
7. Imagine that your fourteen-year-old cousin asks you, "What is good and what is evil?" Write a letter to your cousin stating and explaining your answer.
8. Throughout your life, your parents and teachers have no doubt often told you that you should be good. What do you think they mean by "being good"? In contrast, what does it mean to do something wrong?

#### Questions focused on specific accounts of the nature of morality:

9. A famous moral slogan from Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* is "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Do you think that this moral slogan is correct or incorrect? Explain.
10. One moral idea, given expression to in the Bible and many other works, is that blessed are the poor in spirit. What do you think this means? Do you agree with it? Explain.
11. In matters of morality—of right and wrong, good and evil—many people say that the heart is superior to the head. What do you think this view means? Do you agree with it? Explain.
12. Many people say that being good is difficult because, to use the Biblical wording of this idea, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Do you agree with this idea? What do you think this idea even means? Explain.

#### Questions focused on specific aspects of widely held moral views (especially those aspects that play a significant role in the story of *Atlas Shrugged*):

13. Many people say that mercy is superior to justice. What do you think this claim means? Do you agree with this claim? Why or why not?
14. In Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia says that mercy "is twice blest: it blesseth him that gives and him that takes." Do you agree with this? What do you think mercy is? Does it conflict with justice? What is justice? Is mercy more important than justice? Why or why not?
15. Many people say that being selfish is evil. If you pursue your own happiness as your highest goal in life, does that make you selfish? Does it make you evil? Explain your answers.
16. Many people say that you are your brother's keeper? What do you think this means? Do you agree with this idea? Why or why not?
17. Many people say that in today's increasingly interdependent world, no man is an island and independence is a luxury one cannot afford. Do you agree with this sentiment? What is independence? Is it desirable? Explain.
18. In matters of love, many people say that the heart is superior to the head. What do you think this saying means? Do you agree with it? Explain.
19. In today's world, most people say that compromise is a virtue. What does this mean? Do you agree with it? Can you compromise and still be a person of integrity?

## LEARNING STRATEGIES TO USE DURING READING: SUGGESTED EXERCISES AND QUESTIONS

*Atlas Shrugged* is a novel that contains many characters who face significant and often difficult choices. As a result of the choices these characters make (or fail to make), they undergo significant growth or decay through the story. A useful strategy to use while students are reading the novel is to have them track the characters' progression and to ask them to think about and evaluate the choices the characters are making—and what implications those choices may have.

You could even have students formally debate some of the decisions the characters make, for example, whether Hank Rearden is right to refuse to sell Rearden Metal to the State Science Institute, which after all is a government organization, or whether Dagny Taggart is right to leave the valley and go back to the outside world, when most of the individuals she admires are already in the valley, on strike.

*Atlas Shrugged* is also a mystery novel and builds intrigue. It would be useful to have students track some of the mysteries and unanswered questions that the characters themselves (and the students, as readers) encounter throughout the story. You could even assign a particular character, for instance, Hank Rearden or Dagny Taggart, to different groups of students and have them track and discuss the mysteries and unanswered questions that surround their particular character. Students will have fun looking for mysteries and questions in the story to pay attention to as they read further into the novel.

In what follows I list in the form of bullet points some of the main events of the novel, chapter by chapter, then some of the mysteries that arise in that chapter (in the form of questions that could be posed to students, though of course not every chapter contains mysteries), and then some further questions that you could ask students at the end of each chapter. Of course the list is not exhaustive, but it should help you get started if you want to give your students this kind of assignment.

### I.1 – THE THEME

#### Some of the main developments:

- Eddie Willers confronts James Taggart about the decrepit state of Taggart Transcontinental's Rio Norte Line servicing Colorado
- Dagny Taggart tells Jim that they are going to use Rearden Metal, not steel, to save the Rio Norte Line
- Owen Kellogg quits

#### Some mysteries:

- What does the phrase “Who is John Galt?” mean? What does it convey?
- Why is a prosperous street one on which only one in four stores is closed?
- Why does Eddie Willers feel like “your days are numbered”?
- What is the brakeman on the train whistling? Is it Halley's Fifth Concerto?
- Why does the brakeman watch her tensely, as Dagny whistles the theme she overheard him whistling, as she leaves the train?
- Why does Owen Kellogg quit? Why is he not open to any deal?

#### Some questions:

- How do Dagny and Jim's attitudes toward business and solving problems differ?
- Why does the president of Taggart Transcontinental, James Taggart, seem so oblivious to the company's problems?

### I.2 – THE CHAIN

#### Some of the main developments:

- First pouring of Rearden Metal and the bracelet of Rearden Metal
- The reader's first exposure to Hank's family life

#### Some mysteries:

- What does Paul Larkin's warning to Hank about Hank's man in Washington mean?

- What exactly is a “man in Washington”?

#### Some questions:

- Why does Hank want a neon sign “Rearden Life” above the days in the past that have led him to this present moment?
- What does Hank want to celebrate and why does he find no one with whom to celebrate?
- How would you characterize Hank's relationship with his family? What does their view of him seem to be? What is his view of them?

### I.3 – THE TOP AND THE BOTTOM

#### Some of the main developments:

- A meeting between Jim, Orren Boyle, Paul Larkin and Wesley Mouch
- The reader learns of Dagny and Jim's rise in Taggart Transcontinental
- Dagny and Jim's disagreement about the San Sebastián project

#### Some mysteries:

- What agreement is reached by Jim and his friends in the cellar-like barroom?
- Why are Dagny and the newsstand owner concerned about what is happening to people? What is happening to people?
- Why does Eddie like talking to the Taggart Transcontinental worker he often talks to and who is he? Why does the worker like talking to Eddie?

#### Some questions:

- How would you describe the differences between Jim Taggart's rise and current position at Taggart Transcontinental and Dagny's?
- What do you think is the basic cause of Jim and Dagny's disagreement over the San Sebastián project?

### I.4 – THE IMMOVABLE MOVERS

#### Some of the main developments:

- Robert McNamara, Taggart Transcontinental's contractor on the Rio Norte Line, retires

- The San Sebastián mines are nationalized and Jim takes credit for Dagny's achievement of minimizing Taggart Transcontinental's resulting loss
- The Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule is passed, which will put the Phoenix-Durango out of business
- Ellis Wyatt gives an ultimatum to Dagny
- First rails made of Rearden Metal for Taggart Transcontinental are being loaded and sent for delivery

#### Some mysteries:

- Why does McNamara retire and vanish?
- Why is Dagny so lonely?
- Why does Conway say that he will not fight the Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule?
- Why does Hank call himself and Dagny a couple of blackguards? What does he feel about this accusation? Why?

#### Some questions:

- What does Dagny seem to want from life? And judging from his relationship with Betty Pope, what does Jim seem to want from life?
- Why does Conway not fight the Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule?
- Why does Hank think the Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule doesn't matter ultimately and that Conway will be back?
- Why does Hank tell Dagny not to waste time trying to figure out men like her brother?

### I.5 – THE CLIMAX OF THE D'ANCONIAS

#### Some of the main developments:

- The San Sebastián mines turn out to be worthless
- Dagny confronts Francisco d'Anconia about the project
- The reader learns of Dagny and Francisco's childhood friendship, romance and last night together



**Some mysteries:**

- Why does Jim dislike Francisco?
- Why does Jim feel armed after he goes off to college?
- Why does Francisco leave Dagny? What is he talking about, in their last night together?
- What has happened to the Francisco Dagny once knew?
- Why is there a discrepancy in Mrs. Gilbert Vail's story about her relation to Francisco?
- Was Francisco trying to accomplish anything through the San Sebastián project?
- What is it that Francisco thinks Dagny will one day have enough of?

**Some questions:**

- Why does Dagny have a mixed reaction toward Francisco?
- What is the meaning of the San Sebastián project?

**I.6 – THE NON-COMMERCIAL****Some of the main developments:**

- The Rearden's anniversary party
- Dagny trades for Lillian's bracelet of Rearden Metal
- Hank and Lillian alone: the reader learns of their romance

**Some mysteries:**

- What does the legend about John Galt mean?
- Why does Francisco want to talk to Hank?
- Why does Hank have such a strange reaction toward Dagny?
- Why did Lillian marry Hank—and why does this question haunt Hank?

**Some questions:**

- Why does Hank sit paralyzed in his dressing room?
- What are the opinions of most of the guests about the Equalization of Opportunity Bill and why?

- What does it mean to say that Hank is a materialist and most of Lillian's guests are spiritual people?
- Why must Dagny trade Lillian for the bracelet of Rearden Metal?

**I.7 – THE EXPLOITERS AND THE EXPLOITED****Some of the main developments:**

- Dagny is having trouble with the rebuilding of the Rio Norte Line
- The State Science Institute wants Hank to withdraw Rearden Metal from the market, but Hank refuses
- The State Science Institute smears Rearden Metal
- Dagny meets with Robert Stadler
- Because of the fear surrounding the use of Rearden Metal, Dagny must leave Taggart Transcontinental and complete the Rio Norte Line (now renamed the John Galt Line)
- Desperate, Dagny asks Francisco to buy bonds in her new company, but he refuses
- Passage of the Equalization of Opportunity Bill, which rips from Hank part of his business empire

**Some mysteries:**

- Why does Hank lie to Dagny about flying back to New York?
- Why does the State Science Institute want Rearden Metal off the market? Why does it want the rights to Rearden Metal?
- What does Francisco feel for Dagny?
- Why is Francisco shocked when Dagny renames the line the John Galt Line?

**Some questions:**

- Why are people so fearful of using Rearden Metal?
- Why does Dagny refuse to debate Bertram Scudder? Why does Jim want her to?
- Why does Dagny go to see Dr. Stadler? What is his reaction to her? Why won't he speak out on behalf of Rearden Metal?

**I.9 – THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE****Some of the main developments:**

- Hank denounces himself and Dagny for their desire for each other, but he will continue the affair
- Jim meets Cheryl Brooks
- Companies are moving to Colorado
- Hank and Dagny go on vacation—and discover the motor

**Some mysteries:**

- Why does Hank have the evaluation he does of his affair with Dagny?
- Why is Jim interested in Cheryl?
- Why does Hank want to know the first man Dagny slept with?
- What has happened to Starnesville?
- Who invented the motor?
- Why was the motor abandoned?
- Why is Owen working the odd job that he is working?

**Some questions:**

- Why are companies moving to Colorado?
- Why does Hank expect the country's political situation to improve?
- Why does Hank want Dagny to wear the bracelet of Rearden Metal?

**I.10 – WYATT'S TORCH****Some of the main developments:**

- Dagny and Hank search for the inventor of the motor—which reaches a dead end with Dr. Hugh Akston, a cook in a diner
- Directives are passed by Washington that will effectively kill Colorado
- Wyatt sets fire to his oil fields when the directives are passed

**Some mysteries:**

- Why is Dr. Akston working as a cook in a diner?

- Why does Dagny agree to leave Taggart Transcontinental, perhaps never to return? Why does Jim agree to their arrangement?
- Why is the bum in the diner in such a state of resignation? What are his views about life and morality?
- Why does Hank not sell the rights to Rearden Metal?
- How does Hank cope with the passage of the Equalization of Opportunity Bill?

**I.8 – THE JOHN GALT LINE****Some of the main developments:**

- Dwight Sanders quits
- Hank is forced to sell his ore mines (to Larkin) and his coal mines (to Ken Danagger)
- The first run of the John Galt Line
- Hank and Dagny sleep together

**Some mysteries:**

- Why does Dwight Sanders quit?
- Why is Dagny so lonely?
- Who is pacing in the shadows outside of Dagny's office and why?
- Why does Ellis have such a mixed reaction to the success of the John Galt Line?

**Some questions:**

- Why does Mouch get a job in Washington? What was the agreement that he reached with Jim, Boyle and Larkin?
- What do Dagny and Hank experience on the first ride of the John Galt Line? What does this achievement mean to each of them?
- What are Jim's and Philip Rearden's reactions to the John Galt Line?
- Why do Dagny and Hank sleep together?

- Where does the cigarette he gives Dagny come from?
- What does Dr. Akston know about the inventor of the motor?
- Why does he tell Dagny to give up her search?
- Why does he tell her the secret she is trying to solve involves something much greater than the invention of the motor?
- Who was Dr. Akston's third pupil and why is he proud of his three pupils?
- What happened to Ellis Wyatt?

#### Some questions:

- Why do both Dagny and Hank feel incapable of battling against the people who are trying to kill Colorado?
- What is the nature or natures of the various people Dagny meets in her search to find the inventor of the motor?
- What are the justifications given for the directives that are passed?
- What has Hank learned about Lillian and about his attitude toward her?
- What does Dr. Akston mean when he says to Dagny, "Check your premises"?
- Why does Ellis do what he did?

## II.1 – THE MAN WHO BELONGED ON EARTH

#### Some of the main developments:

- The American economy is disintegrating and people try to switch back to coal from oil, now that Wyatt has vanished
- Thanks to subsidies from Washington, Taggart Transcontinental is profitable, a fact which Jim is proud of and about which Dagny feels ashamed
- Ferris's *Why Do You Think You Think?* has just been published
- In her quest to find the inventor of the motor, Dagny meets with Stadler, who points her toward a young scientist named Quentin Daniels

- The Fair Share Law is crippling Hank's ability to make business decisions, and Washington appoints a Deputy Director of Distribution (Tony, the Wet Nurse) to "interpret" the un-interpretable legislation

#### Some mysteries:

- Why is Stadler disturbed that Ferris is late for their appointment and disturbed by Ferris's manner in their meeting?
- What is Project X and why isn't Stadler too concerned about discovering what it is?
- Why is Ferris upset that people like Ellis Wyatt and Lawrence Hammond are vanishing, since these people are denounced by the likes of Ferris?
- What young face does Stadler remember, and why is this man the person Stadler most longs to see but has to hope is dead?
- Why do more of Colorado's industrialists vanish, after Wyatt does?
- Why does d'Anconia Copper make a deal with the boys in Washington?
- What is the trail that Hank feels that he has glimpsed, during his encounter with the representative from the State Science Institute?
- Why does Dagny feel that Stadler is the one person she must not call? Why does Hank say Dagny is Stadler's victim and what does Hank mean when he says that these people depend on some kind of sanction, which Dagny and he should not give them?
- Who is the John Galt that Stadler once knew?

#### Some questions:

- What is Hank's attitude toward people? Why?
- What is Stadler's attitude toward people? Why?
- Why won't Stadler speak out against Ferris's book?
- Why must Washington appoint the Wet Nurse? What does this say about its directives?

- What is the Wet Nurse's attitude toward Hank?
- What is Hank discovering about his affair with Dagny?

## II.2 – THE ARISTOCRACY OF PULL

#### Some of the main developments:

- Dagny meets and hires Quentin Daniels
- Hank makes a secret deal with Ken Danagger
- Jim asks Cherryl to marry him
- At their wedding party, a gathering of many powerful figures, Francisco speaks of the meaning of money and the power of the whip vs. the power of the dollar
- Francisco warns Hank not to deal with d'Anconia Copper, and then lets out the information that d'Anconia Copper will suffer numerous accidents tomorrow

#### Some mysteries:

- Why can't the man at the cigar stand discover where the cigarette with the dollar sign was manufactured?
- Is Lillian joking when she says she wished she caught Hank having an affair?
- What does Francisco mean when he says that John Galt claimed the John Galt Line?
- Why does Francisco warn Hank not to deal with d'Anconia Copper and why does he say he's committing treason in telling Hank this? Treason to what?
- How does Francisco know that there will be accidents at his company and why does this not bother him? What is he after?

#### Some questions:

- Why must Hank and Ken make a business deal in secret? What does this say of the system in which they are operating?
- Why does Cherryl find Jim so difficult to understand? What does Jim want from their relationship and marriage?

- What is the meaning of the wedding and guests in attendance, to men like Orren Boyle?
- What is Lillian's wedding gift to Jim? Why is it so valuable to Jim? What is Lillian after?
- Why can't Lillian imagine that Hank and Dagny are having an affair?
- Why does Francisco mean by "the aristocracy of pull"?

## II.3 – WHITE BLACKMAIL

#### Some of the main developments:

- Lillian discovers that Hank is having an affair
- Hank refuses to sell Rearden Metal to Ferris for Project X, even though Ferris threatens to expose his illegal deal with Ken
- Ken retires and vanishes after the news of his indictment
- Afterwards, Francisco comes to Hank's mills, asking Hank why he chooses to carry the burden he carries
- During an accident at the mills, Hank saves Francisco's life

#### Some mysteries:

- Why does Hank wonder whether there is a flaw in Lillian's scheme to punish him?
- What is the flaw in the looters' system that Hank thinks he's discovered, and which they will discover too if they put him on trial?
- Who was the man in Ken's office, and why is Ken retiring?
- Why is there a cigarette with a dollar sign in the ashtray on Ken's desk?
- Why does Francisco come to see Hank, and what was the question that Francisco started to ask Hank before the furnace breakout, but now won't ask because he knows the answer?

#### Some questions:

- Why won't Lillian leave Hank? What is she after?

- Why does Ferris say that the laws are meant to be broken?
- Why is Dagny now convinced there is a destroyer loose in the world?
- What is Francisco trying to explain to Hank when he comes to the mills?

## II.4 – THE SANCTION OF THE VICTIM

### Some of the main developments:

- Taggart Transcontinental's main line is falling apart, and Dagny arranges with Hank to obtain rails of Rearden Metal
- Hank goes on trial and refuses to offer a defense because he does not think he is guilty of any wrongdoing; he gets a suspended sentence
- Hank goes to see Francisco after his trial, a meeting in which they discuss whether Hank is fully practicing what he preached in his courtroom speech and whether Francisco is a woman-chaser
- Hank tells Francisco that d'Anconia Copper is his supplier of copper, and Francisco seems to have the power to avert a future disaster at d'Anconia Copper—the sinking of ships by the pirate Ragnar—but Francisco does not exercise this power

### Some mysteries:

- Why do the judges only fine Hank five thousand dollars, thus not really declaring him either innocent or guilty?
- Why has Hank made Francisco feel impatient? Impatient about what?
- Why does Francisco want to be known as a playboy when he is not one?
- Why is Francisco dismayed when he learns Hank has been dealing with d'Anconia Copper? Why does Francisco think he could prevent attacks on his ships by the pirate Ragnar?

### Some questions:

- Why does Hank's family hope he will cut a deal rather than go to trial?

- What is the flaw in Lillian's scheme to punish Hank, which he now realizes?
- What is the actual sentence that Hank thinks the trial has imposed on him? What is he trying to figure out?

## II.5 – ACCOUNT OVERDRAW

### Some of the main developments:

- Because of its shortage of copper, Rearden Steel suffers its first failure: it can't deliver the rail promised to Taggart Transcontinental
- More widely, the whole American economy is further disintegrating
- A Washington man, Mr. Weatherby, now attends Taggart Transcontinental's Board meetings and must approve its decisions
- The Board votes to close the Rio Norte Line, and Francisco comes to see Dagny afterwards
- After the last run of the John Galt Line, Lillian discovers that it is Dagny with whom Hank is having his affair

### Some mysteries:

- Why does Francisco come to see Dagny?
- Who is the man to whom Francisco has given his life?

### Some questions:

- Why does the fact that Hank is having an affair with Dagny shock and disturb Lillian?
- What is the connection that Lillian sees between Rearden having an affair with Dagny and his actions at his trial?
- What is the change that Lillian glimpses when Hank tells her that no one is to discuss Dagny or their affair?
- Why is there now a Washington man present at Taggart Transcontinental's Board meetings?

## II.6 – MIRACLE METAL

### Some of the main developments:

- Directive 10-289 is debated and passed
- Dagny quits after learning of its passage

- Ferris visits Hank at his mills, telling Hank that if he does not sign the Gift Certificate handing the patent on Rearden Metal to the government, they'll expose his affair with Dagny and drag her name through the gutter
- Rearden discovers his full love for Dagny and signs the Gift Certificate

### Some mysteries:

- Why does Francisco call Dagny to see what her reaction is to the passage of Directive 10-289?

### Some questions:

- Why is Directive 10-289 passed? What justifications for it are offered? What is it meant to accomplish? Why is one of the questions: "Can we get away with it?"
- Why does Dagny quit?
- What does Hank learn about himself and the looters when he contemplates signing the Gift Certificate? What does this have to do with his courtroom trial and the sentence he thought it actually imposed on him?
- Why does Hank sign the Gift Certificate?

## II.7 – THE MORATORIUM ON BRAINS

### Some of the main developments:

- As Rearden walks home alone from his mills, Ragnar comes to see him and offer him a bar of gold from the large account he is holding for Hank
- Across the country, some of the best, most competent people are quitting, refusing, like Dagny, to work under Directive 10-289
- Clifton Locey replaces Dagny at Taggart Transcontinental
- A catastrophe occurs at Taggart Transcontinental when a coal-burning engine is ordered into the tunnel

### Some mysteries:

- Who is Ragnar?

- Who is the friend to whom Ragnar refers?
- What is the gold-standard bank that Ragnar is referring to? Where is the Mulligan Bank, if not in Chicago?

### Some questions:

- What does Ragnar the pirate believe in? What does he mean when he says that he is trying to destroy Robin Hood? Why has he become a pirate?
- Why does Hank think that if he permits himself to laugh, he will never see his mills again?
- What events led to the tunnel catastrophe? What is the cause of those events?
- Why are the passengers on the doomed Comet mentioned at the end of the chapter?

## II.8 – BY OUR LOVE

### Some of the main developments:

- Dagny is at the cabin in the woods, trying to figure out what to live for: it seems impossible to live with Taggart Transcontinental and impossible to live without it
- Francisco comes to her and she learns he still loves her and that he's one of the first men who quit
- Dagny rushes back to Taggart Transcontinental when she hears of the tunnel disaster
- Jim was about to resign but does not because Dagny has returned
- Dagny phones Hank, learns that he too has given in by signing the Gift Certificate, and says that they'll both go down with the last wheel and syllogism

### Some mysteries:

- What was Francisco whistling?
- Who told Francisco where Dagny was?

### Some questions:

- Why does Dagny feel it is impossible to remain at Taggart Transcontinental and impossible to live without it? Why then does she go back?
- Why does Francisco think Dagny is wrong to go back?



- Why does Jim call Eddie a traitor to the people for not revealing where Dagny is?

## II.9 – THE FACE WITHOUT PAIN OR FEAR OR GUILT

### Some of the main developments:

- Francisco comes to see Dagny at her apartment, hoping he can persuade her to quit
- Hank enters, Francisco learns of Dagny and Hank's affair, and Hank learns that Dagny is the woman that Francisco loves—and that Francisco is the first man she slept with
- Quentin writes to Dagny to tell her he's quitting because of Directive 10-289

### Some mysteries:

- Who was in Ken's office, if it wasn't Francisco?
- Why is the Taggart Transcontinental worker upset when he learns about Quentin Daniels, and about Dagny and Hank's affair?

### Some questions:

- Why does Quentin quit? Are his reasons similar to Francisco's?
- Why does Francisco not want to beat Hank, when he could have by telling Hank he slept with Dagny before Hank did?

## II.10 – THE SIGN OF THE DOLLAR

### Some of the main developments:

- Dagny meets Jeff Allen aboard the Comet headed west, and learns of the fate of the Twentieth Century Motor Company
- When its crew abandons the Comet, Dagny meets Owen Kellogg aboard and they set off for help

- When Dagny reaches Afton, Utah, she learns that Quentin has just left in a stranger's monoplane, and sets off in pursuit, only to find herself on the verge of crashing

### Some mysteries:

- What happened to the John Galt that Jeff Allen speaks of?
- Where is Kellogg headed?
- Why has Daniels left, after promising not to, and with whom?

### Some questions:

- What is the meaning of the Twentieth Century Motor Company's collapse? Was theirs a noble theory that failed in practice? Or was the theory itself evil?
- What is happening to the whole country? Why is it on the verge of collapse?
- Why is Dagny so desperate to reach Daniels and prevent the destroyer from taking him?

## III.1 – ATLANTIS

### Some of the main developments:

- Dagny crash lands in the strikers' valley and is shown around the valley by John Galt

### Some mysteries:

- Mysteries resolved:
- Many of the industrialists like Ellis Wyatt who vanished are in the valley, on strike
- The destroyer and the inventor of the motor are the same man: John Galt
- John Galt is Akston's third pupil

### Some questions:

- What does John mean when he answers Dagny's question, "What is it that you're all doing here?" simply: "Living"?
- Why are the strikers on strike? Against what? In the name of what?
- What is the meaning of John's oath?
- Why is Dagny conflicted about the valley and the strike?

## III.2 – THE UTOPIA OF GREED

### Some of the main developments:

- Dagny meets Ragnar
- Galt decides that Dagny will remain in the valley for a month, and then she must choose whether she will stay or not
- Francisco arrives late and learns that Dagny is alive
- Francisco realizes and accepts that Dagny and John are in love with each other
- Dagny decides to return to the world

### Some mysteries:

- Resolved:
  - John was Stadler's third pupil

### Some questions:

- What is the nature of Dagny's conflict, as she tries to decide whether she should go back to the world or not?
- Why does Francisco accept the fact that Dagny and John are in love with each other?
- What last premise does Akston tell Dagny she must check? What does he mean?
- What is the meaning of John's words to Dagny, just before she leaves the valley?

## III.3 – ANTI-GREED

### Some of the main developments:

- Stadler attends the demonstration of Project X and refuses to speak out against it
- Dagny returns to Taggart Transcontinental, where the brute Cuffy Meigs is now the Washington man in charge
- Jim wants Dagny to appear in public to show that she still supports the system; she initially refuses but changes her mind when Lillian tries to blackmail her to appear
- On Scudder's radio program Dagny proudly speaks of her affair with Hank
- Hank confesses his love for Dagny, here at the end of their relationship

### Some questions:

- What is the meaning of Project X? Why won't Stadler speak out against it? What does the Project reveal about Stadler's own life and policies?
- Why does Dagny think that Jim is going to pieces?
- Lillian tells Dagny that she, Lillian, is devoid of greed? What does Lillian mean?
- In what ways are Dagny's and Hank's attitudes toward life and its spiritual meaning different from Lillian's and Stadler's?
- Why does Hank think he is the richer, even though he's lost both Rearden Metal and Dagny?

## III.4 – ANTI-LIFE

### Some of the main developments:

- Jim, who has helped arrange the imminent nationalization of d'Anconia Copper, wants to celebrate, but fights with Cherryl
- Cherryl goes to see Dagny as a last act, a settling of debts
- Lillian comes to see Jim in the hope that he can help stop Hank from divorcing her
- Lillian and Jim sleep together, to spite Hank
- Cherryl returns and discovers Jim's infidelity and his true nature—and commits suicide

### Some questions:

- What at root does Jim want to celebrate?
- Why is Jim afraid to face the true nature of his self?
- What does Cherryl learn about Jim's motivation and their relationship and marriage? What was Jim after from their marriage?
- Why does Cherryl commit suicide?

### III.5 – THEIR BROTHERS' KEEPERS

#### Some of the main developments:

- The American economy nears full collapse, as there are only a few great minds left in the world to shoulder the burden of carrying it
- At the moment of d'Anconia Copper's nationalization, Francisco blows up what remains of value in his company
- Hank is bored to death, but the vision of trading with men in Minnesota is a last thread causing him to care about his business
- But despite Hank's and Dagny's efforts, Minnesota collapses into chaos
- Dagny and John make love in the tunnels of Taggart Transcontinental—and he warns her that she must not try to see him again

#### Some questions:

- What is the meaning of the idea that you are your brother's keeper? What are the consequences of this idea? Why does Francisco reject the idea?
- What do Hank and Dagny learn about the motivation of their enemies? What do Hank and Dagny still find difficult to understand about them?
- Why does John choose to sleep with Dagny now?

### III.6 – THE CONCERTO OF DELIVERANCE

#### Some of the main developments:

- Hanks meets his family one last time at his former home, where they plead for mercy
- Hank attends the meeting with the gang from Washington about their proposed Steel Unification Plan—and leaves when he realizes that he has made possible their whole irrational view of the universe
- Hank returns to his mills, to discover a government-staged riot in progress

- Tony, the Wet Nurse, tried to warn Hank and was shot because of it; he dies in Hank's arms
- Francisco saves Hank's life, and Hank learns that Francisco has been working at his mills and is the man who organized his men against the government goons

#### Some questions:

- Why does the gang from Washington need Hank to accept the Steel Unification Plan?
- What does Hank grasp about the nature of his enemies and his sanction of them? Why does this lead him to strike?
- Why does Hank say he would have forgiven his family if they had urged him to quit?
- What is the meaning of the Wet Nurse's fate?

### III.7 – "THIS IS JOHN GALT SPEAKING"

#### Some of the main developments:

- John Galt takes over the airwaves and gives an accurate report on the world crisis, explaining that the men of the mind are on strike

#### Some questions:

- Why does John go on the radio?
- What does he say is responsible for the world crisis?
- What does he mean by the Morality of Life?
- What does he mean by the Morality of Death?
- Why does he tell the people of the world that they must choose between the two moralities and that there are reasons why they are frightened to make a choice?

### III.8 – THE EGOIST

#### Some of the main developments:

- Many of the best people left in America heed John's call to go on strike, further hastening the collapse of the nation

- Worried about vague threats directed at John's life, Dagny goes to see John—and leads the looters to him
- The looters try in vain to make a deal with John
- They parade John on television, but he exposes to the camera the gun at his back
- In their visceral reaction to John, Dagny grasps the deepest motivation of men like her brother—and is ready to strike

#### Some questions:

- Why do the looters want to find Galt?
- Why do they think he will be open to a deal? Why isn't he?
- What explains Stadler's reaction to Galt? Why does he want Galt to die?
- What does Dagny grasp about men like her brother in this chapter?

### III.9 – THE GENERATOR

#### Some of the main developments:

- Stadler flees to Project X, where he struggles with Cuffy Meigs for control of the weapon; together they destroy themselves and the surrounding countryside, including the Taggart Transcontinental bridge
- Dagny overhears the looters' plan to torture John, telephones Francisco and then goes on strike
- Ferris, Mouch and Jim torture John
- As they torture him, Jim must face the fact that he wants Galt dead even if it means his own death, and Jim collapses at the sight of his true self

#### Some questions:

- Why does Stadler flee to Project X? What are the similarities between his views and actions and those of Cuffy Meigs?
- Why are the looters torturing Galt? What do they want Galt to do? What does this reveal about their whole system and way of life?

- Why does Jim collapse when they are torturing Galt, and why are Ferris and Mouch likely to share the same fate?

### III. 10 – IN THE NAME OF THE BEST WITHIN US

#### Some of the main developments:

- The men of the valley, led by Francisco, Ragnar, Hank and Dagny rescue John
- The lights of New York City go dark
- Eddie has managed to get one train to depart from San Francisco, but the crew abandons it and Eddie collapses on the rail
- John decides that the road is cleared and that the strikers will return to the world

#### Some questions:

- What is the meaning of Eddie's fate?
- What has John accomplished through his strike? In what way is he the leader of a moral revolution?

## LEARNING STRATEGIES TO USE AFTER READING: SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. Why does John Galt go on strike when the Starnes heirs take over the Twentieth Century Motor Company? Do you think he is right or wrong to start a strike? Explain.
2. Whose side are you on in the strike? The strikers? The leaders of society? Neither? Explain.
3. Many find in *Atlas Shrugged* a celebration of business. Yet the story contains both businessmen who are heroes, like Hank Rearden and Dagny Taggart, and businessmen who are villains, like Orren Boyle and James Taggart. What are the differences between these types of businessmen? Is the story a celebration of business?
4. Hank Rearden says that the killer tenet which destroys a man is the soul-body dichotomy—that this wrong idea has been the source of his life's pain. What do you think this dichotomy is? How has it wreaked havoc in Hank's life?
5. Ragnar Danneskjöld tells Hank Rearden that the man he must destroy in men's minds is Robin Hood. What does Ragnar mean? Do the events in the story support Ragnar's view? From the perspective of the real world, do you agree or disagree with Ragnar?
6. Are some laws made to be broken? How does this idea relate to the whole story of *Atlas Shrugged*?
7. Dagny is the last to go on strike. Why do you think this is? Why did Francisco tell John that she would be the last to hold out? What does she grasp that finally convinces her that she must strike?
8. To put it mildly, Hank has a rocky relationship with his family? How and why does that relationship change over time? What is the difference between Hank's view of and dealings with his family at the start of story and at its end? How does this relate to the novel's theme?
9. What is the view of love that emerges in *Atlas Shrugged*, both of familial love and romantic love? How does it contrast to other, popular views of the nature of love?
10. Why does Francisco assume the disguise that he does? Why does he think he is safe, that his enemies won't discover what he is up to?
11. Suppose that instead of meeting Ken Danagger in his office and urging him to strike, John Galt had written him a letter. What do you think the letter would have said?
12. Ragnar says he loves that which has rarely been loved, namely, human ability. What do you think this means? How does it relate to the idea: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need"?
13. Do you think the Twentieth Century Motor Company had to collapse once it implemented the moral slogan "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need"? How do you think this relates to the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the Iron Curtain at the end of the 20th century?
14. John Galt says in his radio broadcast that this is an age of moral crisis—but that the world is made in the image of its virtues and not its vices. What does this mean? Do you think the preceding events in the story confirm or disconfirm John's diagnosis?
15. Jim and Cheryl's relationship destroys Cheryl. Why does she find her husband so hard to understand? What does she eventually discover about him? Why is the discovery too much for her to endure?
16. In his radio broadcast John Galt tells the people of the world that they must learn to stand at reverent attention at the achievements of man's mind or they won't be long for this earth. What do you think he means? Do you think preceding events of the story show people who regularly fail to stand at reverent attention at the achievements of man's mind?
17. Hank Rearden learns in the story that the issue of sanction is a crucially important issue. What do you think the issue is?

- How does it play out in Hank's life and what are the things that he comes to grasp about the whole issue and its importance?
18. What does Francisco mean by an aristocracy of pull? What is the relation between this issue and Francisco's claim that the phrase "to make money" contains the essence of morality?
  19. What is the form of punishment that Lillian wants to inflict on Hank when she discovers that he's having an affair? What is the similarity between this and the State Science Institute's attempt to blackmail Hank through his illegal deal with Ken Danagger?
  20. What is the meaning of money to Francisco? To James Taggart?
  21. What explains, at the deepest level, the tunnel catastrophe?
  22. What are John Galt's arguments for his claim that the moral code that dominates the world, the Morality of Death, is a mystical code of morality—i.e., a code of morality that exempts itself from rational scrutiny and the need to offer rational arguments in its defense?
  23. What are the opposing views of love of Cheryl Brooks and James Taggart? Which do you think is correct? Which have you heard proclaimed around you more often?
  24. Why does John Galt say that Dr. Robert Stadler, his former teacher, is his worst enemy? Do the events of the story illustrate this? Explain.
  25. After seeing the valley, learning of the strike and falling in love with John Galt, why does Dagny nevertheless return to the outside world? How does this relate to the whole meaning of the story?
  26. What do you think Eddie Willers's role is in the story? How does he help convey the novel's theme? Why do you think his fate is left open in the last chapter?
  27. Galt in his radio broadcast says that "the noblest act you have ever performed is the act of your mind in the process of grasping that two and two make four." This is a startlingly different account of what it means to be moral from those accounts usually given. What does John mean? How does this issue connect to the strike, to the rest of the story's events and to the novel's theme?
  28. What does it mean to love your life? Why does John Galt say that he is a man who loves his life, that individuals like James Taggart and Lillian Rearden do not love their lives, and that the people of the world only do so sporadically and inconsistently?

## FURTHER RESOURCES

There do not yet exist many good secondary sources on *Atlas Shrugged*. I list below what I think is by far the best book, in which you can explore in much greater depth the themes and characters contained in the novel, the meaning of the novel's individual part and chapter headings, Rand's process in writing the novel, the reception the novel received, literary aspects of the novel, analyses of some of the speeches, and much more. I should note, however, that I am a contributor to the book, so this is not a recommendation from a neutral person!

- *Essays on Ayn Rand's "Atlas Shrugged,"* edited by Robert Mayhew, Lexington Books (2009).



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

**ONKAR GHATE** is a senior fellow at the Ayn Rand Institute in Santa Ana, California. He specializes in Rand's philosophy of Objectivism and is the Institute's senior instructor and editor. Publications include "The Part and Chapter Headings of *Atlas Shrugged*" and "The Role of Galt's Speech in *Atlas Shrugged*," both in *Essays on Ayn Rand's "Atlas Shrugged,"* ed. R. Mayhew (2009). He received his Ph.D. in philosophy in 1998 from the University of Calgary.

## ESSAY CONTESTS

The Ayn Rand Institute sponsors annual student essay contests on Rand's novels. Using the contests as an assignment is a natural extension of the classroom experience that:

- Builds upon what students have learned
- Encourages critical thinking
- Awards cash prizes for winning submissions (\$2 million awarded to date!)

For information on contest deadlines, eligibility, and prizes, visit [aynrand.org/contests](http://aynrand.org/contests).

## AN OBJECTIVIST BIBLIOGRAPHY

### AYN RAND'S NOVELS

*We the Living* (1936): Set in Soviet Russia, this is Ayn Rand's first and most autobiographical novel. Its theme is: "the individual against the state, the supreme value of a human life and the evil of the totalitarian state that claims the right to sacrifice it."

*Anthem* (1938): This novelette depicts a world of the future, a society so collectivized that even the word "I" has vanished from the language. *Anthem's* theme is: the meaning and glory of man's ego.

*The Fountainhead* (1943): The story of an innovator—architect Howard Roark—and his battle against a tradition-worshipping society. Its theme: "individualism versus collectivism, not in politics, but in man's soul; the psychological motivations and the basic premises that produce the character of an individualist or a collectivist." Ayn Rand presented here for the first time her projection of the ideal man.

*Atlas Shrugged* (1957): Ayn Rand's complete philosophy, dramatized in the form of a mystery story "not about the murder of a man's body, but about the murder—and rebirth—of man's spirit." The story is set in a near-future America whose economy is collapsing due to the inexplicable disappearance of the country's leading innovators and industrialists—the "Atlases" on whom the world rests. The theme is: "the role of the mind in man's existence—and, as corollary, the demonstration of a new moral philosophy: the morality of rational self-interest."

### AYN RAND'S OTHER FICTION

*Night of January 16th* (1934): A courtroom play in which the verdict depends on the sense-of-life of jurors selected from the audience.

*The Early Ayn Rand* (1984): A collection of stories and plays written by Ayn Rand in the 1920s and 1930s, plus passages cut from *The Fountainhead*.

## AYN RAND'S NONFICTION

*For the New Intellectual* (1961): A collection of the key philosophical passages from her novels. The 48-page title essay sweeps over the history of thought, showing how ideas control the course of history and how philosophy has served for the most part as an engine of destruction.

*The Virtue of Selfishness* (1964): Ayn Rand's revolutionary concept of egoism. Essays on the morality of rational selfishness and the political and social implications of such a moral philosophy. Essays include: "The Objectivist Ethics," "Man's Rights," "The Nature of Government" and "Racism."

*Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* (1966): Essays on the theory and history of capitalism, demonstrating that it is the only moral economic system, i.e., the only one consistent with individual rights and a free society. Includes: "What Is Capitalism?" "The Roots of War," "Conservatism: An Obituary" and "The Anatomy of Compromise."

*Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* (1967): The Objectivist theory of concepts, with Ayn Rand's solution to "the problem of universals," identifying the relationship of abstractions to concretes. Includes an essay by Leonard Peikoff, "The Analytic-Synthetic Dichotomy." The second edition (1990) includes transcripts of Ayn Rand's workshops on her theory—containing her answers to questions about her theory raised by philosophers and other academics.

*The Romantic Manifesto* (1969): Ayn Rand's philosophy of art, with a new analysis of the Romantic school of literature. Essays include: "Philosophy and Sense of Life," "The Psycho-Epistemology of Art" and "What Is Romanticism?"

*The New Left: The Anti-Industrial Revolution* (1971): Ayn Rand's answer to environmentalism, "progressive" education and other contemporary antireason movements.

*Philosophy: Who Needs It* (1982): Everybody needs philosophy—that is the theme of this book. It demonstrates that philosophy is essential in each person's life, and shows how those who do not think philosophically are the helpless victims of ideas they accept passively from others. Essays include "Philosophical Detection," "Causality Versus Duty" and "The Metaphysical Versus the Man-Made."

*The Ayn Rand Lexicon: Objectivism from A to Z* (1986): A mini-encyclopedia of Objectivism, containing the key passages from the writings of Ayn Rand and her associates on 400 topics in philosophy and related fields. Edited by Harry Binswanger.

*The Voice of Reason: Essays in Objectivist Thought* (1989): Philosophy and cultural analysis, including "Who Is the Final Authority in Ethics?" Also "Religion Versus America" by Leonard Peikoff, and "Libertarianism: The Perversion of Liberty" by Peter Schwartz.

*The Ayn Rand Column* (1991): A collection of Ayn Rand's columns for the *Los Angeles Times*, and other essays.

*Ayn Rand's Marginalia* (1995): Notes Ayn Rand made in the margins of the works of more than twenty authors, including Barry Goldwater, C. S. Lewis and Ludwig von Mises. Edited by Robert Mayhew.

*Letters of Ayn Rand* (1995): This collection of more than 500 letters offers much new information on Ayn Rand's life as philosopher, novelist, political activist and Hollywood screenwriter. Edited by Michael S. Berliner.

*Journals of Ayn Rand* (1997): An extensive collection of Ayn Rand's thoughts—spanning forty years—on literature and philosophy, including notes on her major novels and on the development of the political philosophy of individualism. Edited by David Harriman.









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