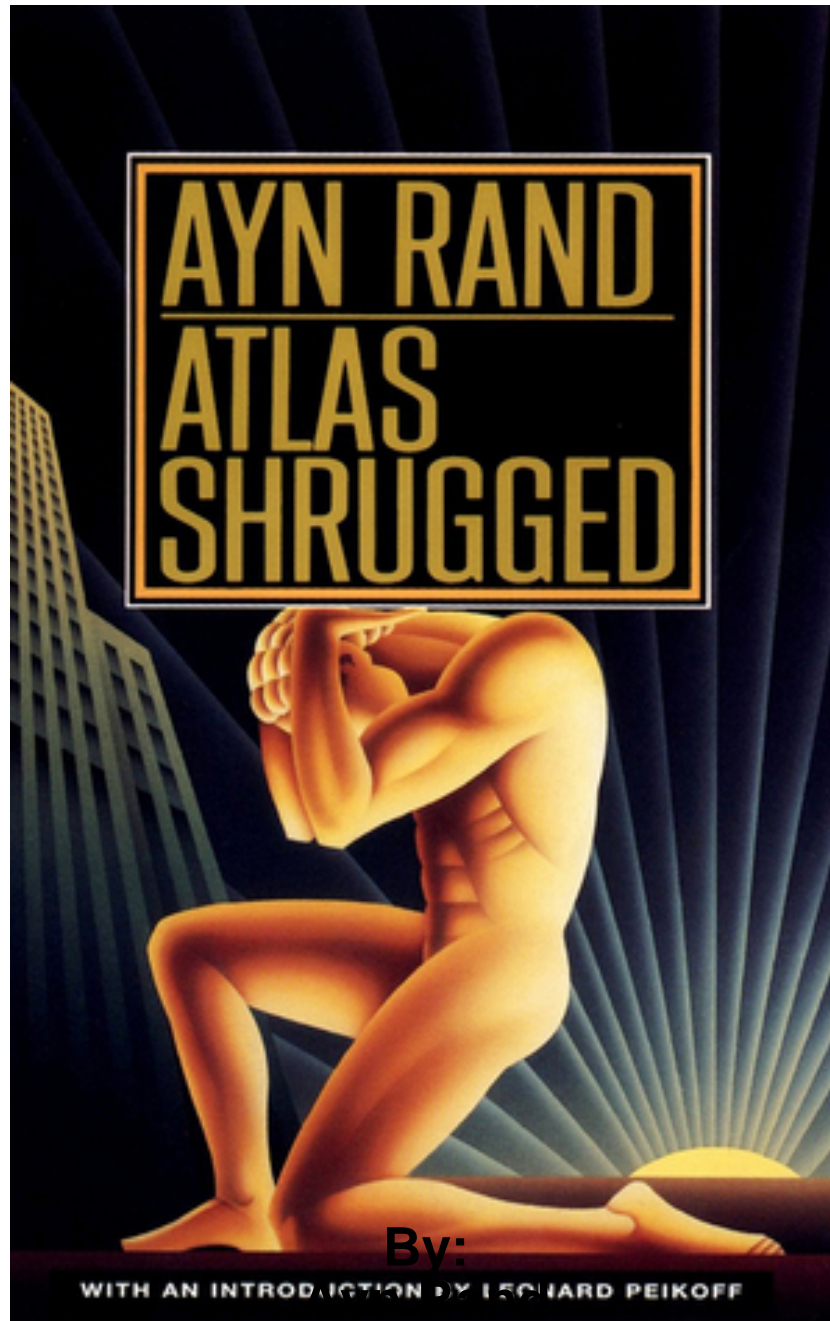


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What people Say:

Jason

Ayn Rand makes my eyes hurt. She does this, not by the length of her six hundred thousand word diatribe, but rather by the frequency with which she causes me to roll them. Do you want to know what I've learned after spending nearly two months reading Ayn Rand's crap? Here's a brief rundown,

style.

Socialists are scary. Socialists are frightening creatures who lurk in corners, waiting to pounce on you. They are unpredictable, they have curvature of the spine, and they often

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Socialists are scary. Socialists are frightening creatures who lurk in corners, waiting to pounce on you. They are unpredictable, they have curvature of the spine, and they often foam at the mouth.

Capitalists, on the other hand, are calm and rational beings who never lose their tempers. You can always trust a capitalist. And they are super easy to spot, too"just look for the hummingbirds who sew their clothes for them.

Ayn Rand's characters come in only two flavors, and which kind you get depends solely on the extent to which they embody her philosophical ideals. The capitalists (the "good guys") are the moral heroes of the story, the ones who fight back against economic regulation. This regulation is seen as unwanted intervention, the government essentially trespassing on one's property rights by means of unfair (unfair to the

, I might point out) legislation. The "bad guys" are, of course, represented by the socialists"the ones passing the legislation, although Rand does a good job of throwing anyone else into this category who, while not active participants in passing these laws, may not be totally opposed to them, either.

The problem with all of this is the fact that her characters are not at all believable. They are robots who mechanically spew forth her inane drivel or, if they are of the

Jennifer

This book really makes you take a good hard look at yourself and your behavior, which is why I think a lot of people don't like this book. It's a lecture and most people don't like to get lectured. I loved it. It gave me a good swift kick in the ass. While I've never been a "looter," I have made several irrational decisions in my life, which this 1000+ page lecture has helped me to stop doing. It teaches you to think with your mind, rather than your heart. It doesn't make you an uncaring person.

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Yes, the book is wordy, but her words are genius in my opinion. I loved the long radio speech. Skip it if you are hating the book or better yet, stop reading it. Go out and smell the flowers instead. Is the story black and white? Definitely. Authors have different styles - people complain. If every author wrote in the same style, people would complain.

I can't tell you how many co-workers I've met who complain about how the CEO is making so much money and they should get some of that money. Well, go to college, get a business degree and work your way up the corporate ladder if you want the CEO's salary. Don't sit around and expect those kinds of rewards because you work in accounts payable. You know what it takes, so do it and shut up. If it wasn't for the person who created this company, you wouldn't even have a job. I'm an administrative assistant making less money than the people complaining about wanting more money. It just makes me sick. But the people in Ayn's story didn't work for money. They loved their jobs. And she wasn't saying you had to be a rich, corporate big shot to hold the world up. There were teachers and stay at home moms in her little world in the mountains.

Ayn has extremely valuable points and if you are someone who is constantly looking for something to criticize in every book, then don't read it. If you can't handle looking at your imperfections, don't read it. If you have an open mind and are willing to learn something from every book and experience you have and grow as a person, then you will benefit from reading this book.

Richard

Ayn Rand's characters are almost completely defined by the extent to which they embrace her beliefs. A good guy by definition is someone who agrees with her; a bad guy someone who dares to have a different point of view. For all the lip-service Rand pays to individualism, she brooks no dissent from her heroes; none of her so-called individualists ever expresses a point of view significantly different from hers.

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To illustrate the gulf between Rand's characters and human reality, consider this behavior. When Dagny Taggart meets Hank Rearden, she dutifully becomes his property, for no other reason than that he's the most Randian male around. When John Galt arrives, ownership of the prize female transfers from Rearden to Galt, because Galt is the more Randian of the two. Does it ever occur to Hank to be resentful or jealous? Does Taggart experience loyalty or regret? Might Taggart love Rearden despite his lesser Randness? No, those are all things that human beings might feel.

(In a related departure from reality, sex in Randland is more or less indistinguishable from rape. Foreplay? Romance? Capitalists don't have time for that commie nonsense.)

The real focus of

is to extoll Rand's philosophy. (Not to debate it, since no one in Randland with any any intelligence or competence could have a different point of view.) About Rand's philosophy I'll just make two points (which I'm not going to bother providing evidence for at the moment).

The first is that, like most social Darwinists, Rand fell short in her understanding of natural selection. Her philosophy was largely based on the false belief that nature invariably favors individual selfishness. In reality, evolution has made homo sapiens a social animal; cooperation and compassion are very human traits. More importantly, even if cold selfishness were man's nature in the wild, it would

necessarily follow that that would be the best way for us to behave in our semi-civilized modern condition.

The second point is that, contrary to Rand's belief, pure laissez-faire capitalism never works; it invariably leads to exploitation of the poor and middle class and to environmental catastrophe. The best economic system that has ever been devised -- so far -- is a mixture of capitalism and

socialism.

Jason Pettus

Would you like to hear the only joke I've ever written? Q: "How many Objectivists does it take to screw in a lightbulb?" A: (Pause, then disdainfully) "Uh...one!" And thus it is that so many of us have such a complicated relationship with the work of Ayn Rand; unabashed admirers at the age of 19, unabashedly horrified by 25, after hanging out with some actual Objectivists and witnessing what a--holes they actually are, and also realizing that Rand and her cronies were one of the guiltiest parties

Would you like to hear the only joke I've ever written? Q: "How many Objectivists does it take to screw in a lightbulb?" A: (Pause, then disdainfully) "Uh...one!" And thus it is that so many of us have such a complicated relationship with the work of Ayn Rand; unabashed admirers at the age of 19, unabashedly horrified by 25, after hanging out with some actual Objectivists and witnessing what a--holes they actually are, and also realizing that Rand and her cronies were one of the guiltiest parties when it came to the 1950s "Red Scare" here in America. Here in Rand's second massive manifesto-slash-novel, we follow the stories of a number of Titans of the Industrial Age -- the big, powerful white males who built the railroad industry, the big, powerful white males who built the electrical utility companies -- as well as a thinly-veiled Roosevelt New Deal administration whose every attempt to regulate these Titans, according to Rand, is tantamount evil-wise to killing and eating babies, even when it's child labor laws they are ironically passing. Ultimately it's easy to see in novels like this one why Rand is so perfect for late teenagers, but why she elicits eye rolls by one's mid-twenties; because Objectivism is all about BEING RIGHT, and DROPPING OUT IF OTHERS CAN'T UNDERSTAND THAT, and LET 'EM ALL GO TO HELL AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, without ever taking into account the unending amount of compromise and cooperation and sometimes sheer altruism that actually makes the world work. Recommended, but with a caveat; that you read it before you're old enough to know better.

deanna

The best way to understand Rand's message in this book is to simply close it, and beat yourself over the head with it as hard as possible. This is essentially what Rand does throughout it's ridiculous length. I see no reason that a book with a strong lesson can't also have decent character development, natural dialog, and a believable plot. Of course, I also think that you can establish a theme with subtlety, and trust that your reader will figure it out. Ayn Rand writes as if the elements of fi

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I realize that I offend many atheists, agnostics and free thinkers by writing this, but as one myself, I have to say that a passionate love of Ayn Rand is not required for membership in that particular club. Save yourself a headache, and pick up the much shorter

. It's just as overdone, but weighing it at ounces rather than pounds, it'll leave a smaller dent in your head.

Oh, and if you're only reading it to answer the question on geeky bumper sticker "Who is John Galt?" He's the hero and a symbol of the capitalism in it's conflict over what Rand saw as the oppressive and ultimately destructive forces of large government type societies (you, know. . .socialism, fascism, etc.). It's usually stuck on the butt end of a car to express general disenchantment with big government, and a lack of heroes. Now you know, so go read something worthwhile, and if you insist on reading Ayn Rand, hit her non-fiction. Stripped of an attempt at storytelling, she doesn't do half bad.