



# Your Guide to Ayn Rand, Atlas Shrugged, and The Fountainhead

*Charles River Editors*

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## **Your Guide to Ayn Rand, Atlas Shrugged, and The Fountainhead** Charles River Editors

Includes a full length biography of Ayn Rand that examines her life, works, philosophy, Objectivism, and legacy.

Includes a primer on Atlas Shrugged and The Fountainhead that will quickly bring readers up to speed on the plots, characters, themes, symbols, and philosophy of Rand's classic novels.

Includes pictures of Rand and important people in her life.

Includes many of Rand's most famous quotes.

Includes a Bibliography for further reading.

"Government 'help' to business is just as disastrous as government persecution... the only way a government can be of service to national prosperity is by keeping its hands off." - Ayn Rand

The seminal events in Ayn Rand's life occurred when she witnessed firsthand the Bolshevik Revolution and the ultimate Communist victory as a teenager. Rand's experience with the maelstrom of this revolutionary zeal and cultural breakdown greatly contributed toward the formation of Rand's philosophy of objectivism, individualism and anti-religious ideas. During her last year of high school, she was introduced to the history of the United States and immediately decided to make America her model of what an ideal society should look like. Rand came to the United States as a young woman for a visit in 1925, and, as fate would have it, she never returned to Russia.

When Rand first embarked on writing The Fountainhead, her first major literary success, she intended to deliver a book that incorporated her philosophies on 20th century society while telling a story that was less politically inclined than her initial novel, We the Living, which was set in post-revolutionary Russia and promoted her tough, unwavering stand against communism. In The Fountainhead, Rand took many of the seeds of individualism that she sowed in We the Living, enhancing and heightening them into her new book's dominant theme. The Fountainhead clearly represents Rand's disdain for and rejection of the notion of collectivism, and holds not merely individualism but also objectivism, a philosophy attributed to the writer herself, as components critical to man's ideal state. Her objectivist posture, given its basic foundation in self-service and the belief that the pursuit of one's own happiness alone reigns supreme over any other human activity, was certainly polarizing. Supporters claimed that it was a natural progression from existentialism, while opponents asserted that it was systematically self-interested and therefore bordered on amorality. Rand began her most famous novel, Atlas Shrugged, in 1946. The novel consumed her, and in 1951, she moved back to New York City to devote herself to its completion. Atlas Shrugged was published in 1957 and is still considered her greatest work, as it touches upon a variety of social and philosophical topics such as metaphysics and epistemology while addressing the more "pop culture" areas of sex and politics. The book also sealed her association with the philosophical concept of Objectivism, which she called a methodology for "living on earth." The Objectivism movement caught fire, inspiring Rand to establish Objectivist periodicals from 1962 to 1976.

Though Atlas Shrugged had been a popular title when Ayn Rand published it in 1957, it's quite possible that the only reference to it that many Americans heard before 2009 came from the hit series Mad Men.

However, this staple of conservative and libertarian reader took on new life as the new Obama Administration sought to use government resources to fix financial problems. In 2009, with the global economy hemorrhaging jobs, and Western governments pouring hundreds of billions of dollars in taxpayer money to "bail out" troubled financial firms and large companies, frustrated people and political analysts turned to a book written over 50 years earlier as a guide out of the abyss.

Learn about Ayn Rand and her classics like never before.

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