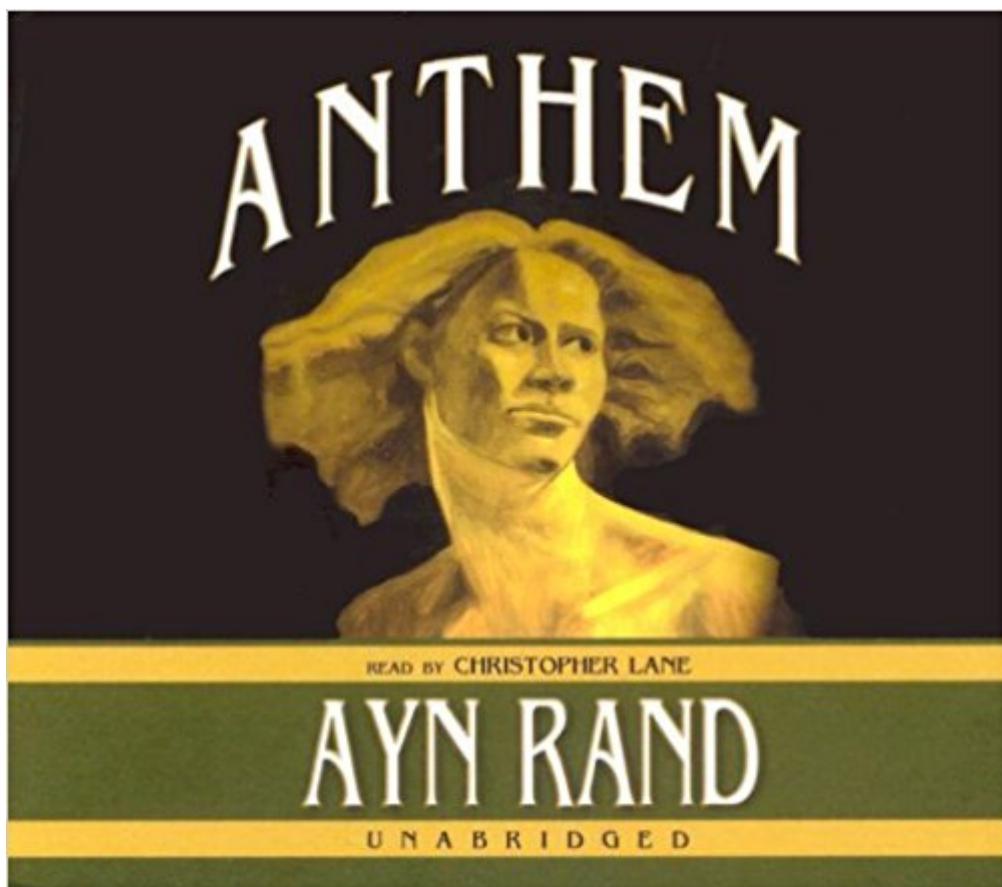


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Anthem



Synopsis

He lived in the dark ages of the future. In a loveless world he dared to love the woman of his choice. In an age that had lost all trace of science and civilization he had the courage to seek and find knowledge. But these were not the crimes for which he would be hunted. He was marked for death because he had committed the unpardonable sin: he had stood forth from the mindless human herd. He was a man alone. Ayn Rand's classic tale of a future dark age of the great "We," in which individuals have no name, no independence, and no values, anticipates her later masterpieces, *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rand's dark portrait of the future was first released in England in 1938 and reedited for publication in the United States in 1946. This 50th-anniversary edition includes a scholarly introduction and a facsimile of the original British version, which bears Rand's handwritten alterations for its American debut. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A writer of great power. She has a subtle and ingenious mind and the capacity of writing brilliantly, beautifully, bitterly. (The New York Times) --The New York Times --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is vintage Ayn Rand -- a powerful, imaginative, futuristic tale of the driving force of EGO in the

Self, and the lack of it. The story personifies the devastating impact of collectivism taken to Socialistic extremes; when nameless beings and all-powerful collectives occupy and control what was once a free state where individual liberty reigned. But there is hope, for the intense [We-ness] that suffocates, it suffocates itself, too, in the end. And so long as there is still the germ of an "I" to sprout -- to question, to reason, to shatter and then reveal the awful truth of collectivism -- liberty will again shine brightly. Rand sketches the mechanistic extreme of we-ness in order for us to grasp it fully, and I thank her for that. This is a fabulous book for monthly book clubs to explore. It will surely provoke intense dialogue but perhaps also confusion for those heretofore clueless about the true meaning liberty vs. collectivism. There has never been a better time to sort out this vital interface.

Anthem is a good story with unusual characters, plot and setting. It is also an excellent introduction to the thought of philosopher novelist Ayn Rand and the ideas of liberty in general. It is a story that begins in a captive culture without even the hint of individuality let alone of individual liberty. One man who does not even know he is a single human being because the words for it have been erased from his society, slowly discovers that he has a mind, he can learn, he can love, and he can live as something other than a cog in a mindless machinelike society. He discovers what it is to be a man. And the reader discovers the importance of having the words to describe and express individuality. This is a short interesting novella with profound implications. If you have not read it, it will be fun to read and worth the short time it takes to read. You may come to love it as some of us do and revisit it happily from time to time. Newer editions also include a copy of the older edition as it was first published in England in 1937 with editing markup for the American publication in 1946. For those interested in editing, it is a fascinating example of how to change the mood and tone of a story while leaving the plot and message intact.

Equality 7-2521 who speaks of himself in the first person plural makes a few discoveries that lead him to rethink the nature and purpose of man. I will not go through this short story blow by blow, as the fun in this book is to discover what Equality 7-2521 discovers. Would you draw the same conclusion or follow the same course? You will find yourself kibitzing and cringing. "You are what your deep, driving desire is. As your desire is, so is your will. As your will is, so is your deed. As your deed is, so is your destiny." (Brihadaranyaka IV.4.5) For the person that is new to Ayn Rand this is as good place to start, as any and it will be an eye opener. If you have the time to read "Atlas Shrugged" the concepts, thoughts, and speeches are more complete. Pro or con, you cannot afford to pass this book. You may be surprised to find that you are surrounded by Objectivists.

I always think that Ayn Rand is most useful for teenagers and young adults who have only heard the Progressive side of life. She has some things to offer about individualism and as a counter to the collective hive. Of course, for me, her extreme views limit her application in real life. William F. Buckley referred to "Atlas Shrugged" as a thousand pages of ideological fabulism while noting that it is the largest selling novel in the history of the world and that he had to flog himself to get through it. I think this is correct. But for many who have never heard these kinds of ideas before it is like water come to a desert. And this novella is nice because it is short and simple. It is more of a fable. Far from perfect, I think it does capture the problem of collectivism by taking it to its extreme lengths. Something useful in illustrating ideas to young people.

This is my first try at an Ayn Rand book. I am not sure why I was never assigned this author while I was in high school. Because of what others TOLD me I decided to avoid her tomes. This short parable was part of my challenge to myself to read Outside my comfort zone. I am glad I did. I started and finished the book in one short evening. The author's use of names and plural referrals was taxing for a short time. I then got in the groove and could speed past those potholes. The problem with allegory and parables is that they have hidden meanings espoused by the author. One is not always sure when the story is finished if the true meaning has been exposed. In reading other reviews I see that there are many different understandings of what this author was trying to say. I will think on this for a while before I make my judgment. It may be that I will have to read it again.. I am glad I found this book. It has made me think .

I had not read Anthem in twenty five years. Reading it again was a wonderful experience! With the recent wave of dystopian, futuristic novels, Anthem came to my mind and I wished so badly I had not parted with my copy years ago. I was thrilled this edition was available. This is a coming of age story for any age and is perhaps more appropriate now than when it was written. This is a must read for any lover of freedom and a true "anthem" to the individual. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

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