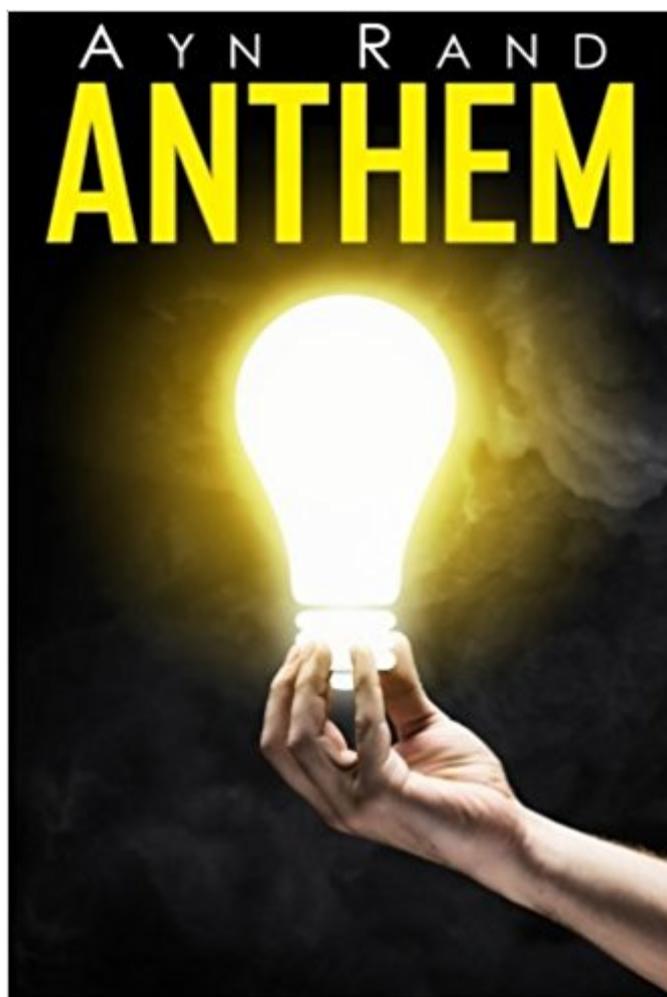


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Anthem



Synopsis

My happiness is not the means to any end. It is the end. It is its own goal. It is its own purpose.

--- Ayn Rand, Anthem

This Novella by Ayn Rand was first published in England in 1938. It takes place at some unspecified future date when mankind has entered another dark age characterized by irrationality, collectivism, and socialistic thinking and economics. Technological advancement is now carefully planned (when it is allowed to occur at all) and the concept of individuality has been eliminated (for example, the use of the word "I" is punishable by death). Rand, as a teenager living in Soviet Russia, initially conceived Anthem as a play. This is a novel upholding Rand's central principles of her philosophy and of her heroes: reason, values, volition, individualism.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is in my opinion, Ayn Rand's best book. There are a number of reasons for this, but I think most important is that unlike "The Fountainhead" or "Atlas Shrugged", she wrote a succinct piece, and didn't allow herself to ramble. Anyone wanting an introduction to Rand should start here, it won't take you long to get through, the writing is pretty good, and it lacks the convoluted plots and characters of her longer pieces. In a strange way it is at times quite moving, and also lacks some of the more objectionable statements that can be found in Rand's other pieces, bordering on racism & fascism at times... this is a classic struggle for Individualism against a smothering regime, but not a struggle putting down other people's individualism. I suggest that any person coming to "Anthem" should read "WE" by Yevgeny Zamyatin first. It was written in 1920, only a few years after the

Russian Revolution. Russian was Ayn Rand's native language and she would have been able to read this book in the original, in fact she left Russia six years after "We" was published. "Anthem" was written seventeen years after "We". Various features of "Anthem" seem to have been taken from "We" (Brave New World and 1984 were also influenced by it, but not to the same extent). The most obvious similarity is that the characters have numbers, not names, and don't think of themselves as "I" but "We" and there's also the diary format in common. A major difference is that in "Anthem", the society has regressed technologically. Although this particular Hive/Ultra-Communist set up has been much copied since in fiction, it was not so common when Zamyatin was writing.

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