



Anthem

Ayn Rand (1905 - 1982)

Read by:	Caden Vaughan Clegg	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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Genre:	Fantasy Fiction, Political Philosophy		

Anthem is set in a dystopian future Dark Age in which totalitarianism has extinguished individuality and imposed a strict order based on technology and collectivism. The main character is Equality 7-252, who is raised in a collective home and dreams of becoming a Scholar, since he was born with a “curse” that enables him to learn quickly and ask probing questions. His dream conflicts with the Life Mandate assigned by the Council of Vocations as a Street Sweeper. He discovers a tunnel in a work area containing metal tracks, a remnant from the Unmentionable Times. He goes exploring and soon steals some paper and begins a journal. He meets a Peasant girl, Liberty 5-3000, and falls for her, dubbing her “The Golden One”. Soon he rediscovers electricity and excitedly presents it to

the World Council of Scholars, who are horrified by the threat to their Department of Candles and seek to destroy the invention and punish the inventor. Equality grabs the invention and escapes to the Uncharted Forest. The Golden One joins him a day later. They settle in a house in the mountains and spend their time reading books discovered in the library. They rediscover the word “I”, grapple with finding words to express love, rename themselves Prometheus and Gaea, and make plans for a future in which individuality is regained.

Anthem was written while Rand was working on *The Fountainhead* and was published in England in 1938. It was revised and re-released in 1946 after the spectacular success of *The Fountainhead* and has since sold more than 3.5 million cop-

Ayn Rand (February 2, 1905 – March 6, 1982) was an American writer and philosopher best known for her novels *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* and for developing Objectivism, a philosophical system based on reason. She was born in Russia and immigrated to the United States in 1926, and the themes of her books and her philosophy reflect her deep aversion to the collectivism and statism of the Soviet Russia she fled. She wrote plays, screenplays, and novels with some success in the 1920’s and 1930’s. In the 1940’s she became involved in politics and published *The Fountainhead* in 1943, which became an international bestseller. Her last novel, *Atlas Shrugged*, was published in 1957, after which she dedicated her affairs to Objectivism and non-fiction writing. Her characters and her philosophy display a belief in ethical egoism, the primacy of individual rights, and the virtue of laissez-faire capitalism as the system best suited to manage human affairs. Her literary endeavors met with mixed critical reviews and her philosophy, which was highly critical of the entire discipline apart from Aristotle, was largely ignored and rejected by the intelligentsia. Nonetheless, she became popular among right-wing conservatives and a figurehead for libertarians, even though she opposed the libertarian label and Objectivism flatly rejected faith and religion. She gave numerous talks and speeches and often took controversial positions on issues of the day, including support for abortion, opposition to the Vietnam War and the draft, and advocating repeal of laws criminalizing homosexuality. She died in New York of heart failure in 1982.