



Atlas Shrugged Is Coming to the Big Screen

Atlas Shrugged, Ayn Rand's legendary novel, was published in 1957. Instead of focusing on the old tale of victimized workers and greedy owners, the story turns the tables and shows what happens to the world when the innovators and producers go on strike, when the capitalists and owners turn out the lights and disappear.

The question has been asked on billboards, T-shirts, and bumper stickers for half a century: "Who is John Galt?" In *Atlas Shrugged*, he's the man who initiates and leads the strike of the producers.



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"There is only one kind of men who have never been on strike in human history," states Galt in the novel. "Every other kind and class have stopped, when they so wished, and have presented demands to the world, claiming to be indispensable — except the men who have carried the world on their shoulders, have kept it alive, have endured torture as sole payment, but have never walked out on the human race. Well, their turn has come. Let the world discover who they are, what they do and what happens when they refuse to function. This is the strike of the men of the mind."

The shrugging comes when men of achievement refuse to accept their unearned guilt, refuse to have their strengths and accomplishments turned into weaknesses and sins.

"All your life, you have heard yourself denounced, not for your faults, but for your greatest virtues," Francisco d'Anconia says to successful industrialist Hank Rearden in the novel. "You have been hated, not for your mistakes, but for your achievements. You, who've expended an inconceivable flow of energy, have been called a parasite. You, who've created abundance where there had been nothing but wastelands and helpless, starving men before you, have been called a robber. You, who've kept them all alive, have been called an exploiter. You, the purest and most moral man among them, have been sneered at as a 'vulgar materialist.' Have you stopped to ask them: by what right? — by what code? — by what standard? No, you have borne it all and kept silent."

And so, what's there to say to Atlas, to the man who supports the world on his shoulders, a world that resents his strength? Answers d'Anconia: "To shrug."

Galt speaks to the world through a radio receiver: "I am the man who has deprived you of victims and thus has destroyed your world. While you were dragging to your sacrificial altars the men of justice, of independence, of reason, of wealth, of self-esteem — I beat you to it, I reached them first. All the men who have vanished, the men you hated, yet dreaded to lose, it is I who have taken them away from you. We are on strike against self-immolation. We are on strike against the creed of unearned rewards and unrewarded duties. We are on strike against the dogma that the pursuit of one's happiness is evil. We are on strike against the doctrine that life is guilt."

Galt's message tells us to leave those who would destroy us, to not turn over the world to those who are its worst, to rebel against the idea that it is evil to profit from achievements.



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on April 12, 2011

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