

## ONE

### CONGREGATE, CONGRATULATE, MISCALCULATE

**SATURDAY, JUNE 4: NEW ATLANTIS, WESTCHESTER, NEW YORK.** Some call themselves Galtans. Others prefer Atlantans. Either way, they are all devoted to keeping John Galt alive throughout the year, but especially on the first Saturday of June, every year. It is noon. The sky is cloudless; the sun is intense for late Spring. A line of late-model luxury cars is backed up for two miles on the highway south of the main entrance into New Atlantis. The first car waiting to turn in is a red Ferrari. Behind it is a Mercedes limousine. In burnished gold, over massive iron gates, are the words, "There is no evil except the refusal to think."

The cars that have already managed to enter are crawling, bumper-to-bumper. Taggart Drive winds its way up a gentle, shady slope, through a forest of tall, strong oaks as far as the eye can see. Fresh green leaves of late spring create a stately, comforting canopy. Overgrown lilac bushes are everywhere, long ago timed to be in full blossom on this day by Dagny Taggart. They have never dared disappoint. They have grown to be so many and so full that their aroma overpowers. Parking lots are already full. The only spaces left are on the grass.

Dagny Taggart founded New Atlantis, shortly after she followed John Galt to New York when he declared, “We are going back to the world.” Like Atlas, bearing the weight of the world, they had shrugged. They had gone on strike to rebel against (what they considered) the socialist destruction of the economy, sequestered themselves in the valley of Atlantis, and eventually overthrew the government. Dagny said she wanted New Atlantis to be her personal investment in keeping alive the success of (what Galt eventually called) the Rational Restoration of America. “A mecca for the mind and self-interest,” she called it, “a place where people of reason can flourish, turn ideas into profit, and never let anyone forget which people are indispensable to the nation.” Publicly, Dagny told everyone it was an act of pure self-interest: to see Galt’s mission continue and thrive. To *herself*, and only to herself, she confessed it was an act of personal self-interest: to express her devotion to Galt, the only man she ever loved. Upon her death, Dagny left her entire estate to the think tank to manage The Taggart Venture Fund, providing loans to promising profit-making projects.

First located just on the site of property she bought as her suburban summer home, the campus grew to 400 acres. Year after year, like any rapacious CEO gauging market demand and seizing opportunity, Dagny gobbled up surrounding estates to accommodate the growing community of acolytes who came to New Atlantis to be mentored throughout the year—and carry on Galt’s work throughout the nation and the world. Every year in June, the same month Galt and his followers had met in the valley of Atlantis decades before, the faithful return.

As cars make their way up Taggart Drive, at strategically placed clearings, passengers see monuments to Galt’s strike and the risks others took with him. At the first turn, on the left, is a vintage diesel engine from Taggart Transcontinental, a reminder of the industrial superpower that had to be destroyed so the old order could be crushed and

Galt's new nation could be born. At the next right is the plane that Dagny flew by accident into the secret valley of Atlantis, the trip that began her momentous conversion to the strike—and love and adoration of Galt. At the next left, there's a twenty foot expanse of bridge made out of Rearden Metal, homage to the man who next to Galt was the most creative and imaginative of their generation's industrialists—and to his revolutionary process. And, at the next turn, rests Ragnar Danneskjold's boat, the menacing "pirate" vessel that brought looters to justice, those who live off other people's ideas and inventions, the collective enemy Galt and his comrades finally defeated.

At the crest of the road burns an "eternal" flame, a reminder of Ellis Wyatt's Torch: the ultimate symbol of one heroic man's undying devotion to the power and rights of the individual over everything and everyone. Finally, below, in a burst of dramatic sunlight, a vast, open expanse of manicured lawn stretches in a gentle decline to the walls of d'Anconia Pavilion. The octagon-shaped, flying-saucer-like building dominates the landscape. The huge, gleaming, copper roof is supported by blue-green cantilevers of precious Rearden Metal. A massive gold dollar sign is planted in the middle. The walkway leading to the pavilion is made of railroad ties, another reminder of the Taggart railroad empire—and of Dagny's single-handed restoration of its intercontinental network after she and Galt returned from the valley. A giant replica of Galt's revolutionary motor sits before the main entrance into the Pavilion.

The crowd has been streaming into the 7,000-seat facility since the doors opened at 11 a.m. They parade slowly, wanting to be seen as belonging at New Atlantis. They are dressed as if they were going to church or an afternoon wedding or a luncheon at an exclusive country club. The women wear almost identical, loose-fitting, pastel summer dresses. Yellow seems to be the favored color this year. In spite of the warm weather, some wear close-fitting hats—berets or turbans. The men wear dark, mostly blue, suits with white shirts and

monochrome ties, mostly blue or green. The children, mostly teens, are dressed like their parents. There are hoards of young adults in their twenties, who stand out for not standing out. It's a living Norman Rockwell mural.

The lobby is bare except for a towering twenty-four-foot-tall, muscular, gold statue of Atlas on a pedestal in the middle. The mid-day light from a skylight on the gold creates a blinding glare. Legs spread, his right slightly in front of the left, the Titan stands straight, looking up, as though he wouldn't deign to meet anyone below the heavens eye-to-eye, a self-satisfied smirk on his face. His left hand is pressed against his waist akimbo. His right hand is stretched above his head and out in front of him, lightly bent at the elbow, its palm upturned. His index finger playfully supports a massive, blue-green globe of the Earth, ten feet in diameter, made from Rearden Metal. He gives the impression of a cocky basketball player about to sink a shot he can easily make, but taking his sweet time, spinning the ball just to lord his physical prowess over everyone, the whole world—his opposing teammates, and even his own. This is the ultimate Atlas at the top of his game; a swaggering bully, a poseur, an exhibitionist, a giddy narcissist drunk with power, reveling in himself—and reveling in others reveling in him. On the front of the pedestal are the words, "Drug yourself on self-interest: You can never get enough."

After they pay for their \$50 tickets—the motto of New Atlantis is "Nothing is for nothing"—people are given a gold plastic dollar-sign lapel-pin with the number 67 attached to the middle of it and a blue-green plastic bracelet, on which is stamped "To each according to what he produces." For an extra \$25, they can buy a bracelet made out of real, blue-green Rearden Metal, an exact replica of Dagny's. Business is brisk, though many of the women are wearing those they have purchased in previous years. It's long been marketed as the best way to "prove" they *really* belong at New Atlantis.

On the middle of the three walls at the back of the stage, a 10'x 20' national flag is mounted—red and white horizontal stripes, a field of

blue in the upper left-hand corner with fifty white dollar signs superimposed. Painted in black on the wall to its left are the words, "Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of production and trade." On the right, "I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine." The stage is bare, except for a lectern far forward in the middle, on the front of which hangs a huge gold dollar sign. On the remaining five walls surrounding the audience, stained glass windows carry different messages: "Rational Self-Interest Is Godliness," "Money Is the Greatest Good," "There Is No Evil, Except Refusing to Think," "Mind and Body Are One," and "There Are No Contradictions. Everything Is As It Seems."

Richard Halley's haunting Fifth Concerto is playing, in the arrangement Dagny first heard. At noon, the pavilion is already half-full. For decades, the faithful have returned yearly to renew their vows. But their pilgrimage has been especially meaningful since Galt, Dagny, and their generation have died—and the torch has fallen directly upon their successors. Dagny was the last to die twenty years ago. Every year since then, their heir-apparent, Hilton Manfred, universally celebrated as "The Prophet of Profit" and senior fellow at New Atlantis, has delivered "Manfred's Creed," his annual lecture and status report on the state of politics and the free market. Current and former New Atlantans (his preferred label), along with their families and friends from around the world, have come together to drink their yearly dose of what they all call "rational steroids."

At 2 p.m., it is standing-room-only. Three TV screens outside allow the overflow crowd to watch. The music stops. All at once, the crowd falls completely silent. They are all prepared for the ritual they know so well to begin. Over the loudspeakers comes the familiar voice of Manfred's assistant, Baron Rooky.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please stand, salute the flag, and repeat the Pledge of Patronage with me: I pledge my patronage to the brand of the Corporate States of America and to the profits which it commands. One Emporium, under Mammon, with liberty and lucre for all."

As a “standby” test-pattern counts down from ten to one, simultaneously on three giant TV screens in the pavilion, Rooky announces, “And now, live from the Oval Office of the White House in Washington D.C., the President of the Corporate States of America, the Honorable Hamilton ‘Ham’ Cooper.”

“My fellow profit-seekers, it is my greatest pleasure to speak to you personally every year at New Atlantis, and especially this year on the 67th anniversary of the Galtian Restoration. Like every year, it is important to remember former times, not only with nostalgia, but with a renewed dedication to the seriousness of our mission. Three score and seven years ago, John Galt brought forth on this continent a market-driven nation, conceived in rationality and dedicated to the proposition that people and profit are never created equal.”

To everyone’s shock, it sounds as though a voice has spoken over the president saying, “bullshit.” But it happens so quickly no one can be sure. And the president appears to be unaware of it and doesn’t miss a beat.

“Now, we are engaged in a great competitive war, testing whether our market or any markets so conceived and so financed, can remain totally free. We are met on a great staging-ground of that war. And we have come to rededicate ourselves and New Atlantis, so that our markets, under Mammon, shall have increased infusions of capital—and that free markets of free-wheeling corporations, by free-wheeling corporations, and for free-wheeling corporations shall not perish from the earth.”

“From all of us at New Atlantis,” Rooky continues, “thank you, Mr. President. And now, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce a man who truly needs no introduction, an inspiration to us all: Professor Hilton Manfred.” Bursting into thunderous applause, the audience stands in rapt admiration as Manfred waddles to the podium. He shows no signs of being the least bit affected by the crowd’s enthusiasm, however. Almost contemptuously indif-

ferent to everything around him, the brainy-looking, bald, 4'9", stocky professor deposits a stack of loose papers on the lectern. He towers over the assemblage only once he mounts the booster step put there for him so he can be seen above the microphone.

Like an owl on a tree branch, looking out through his round, horn-rimmed glasses without blinking, mechanically, he surveys the audience quickly from left to right, right to left—then, glares straight ahead. Without small talk or introductory humor, he immediately gets down to business. He taps the microphone, which the audience, still applauding, takes as its cue to be seated. Mimicking a Christian making the sign of the cross, he leads the audience in tracing a dollar sign, in two strokes with his right hand—from his forehead to his upper chest and, from left to right, across his chest—intoning, “In the name of free markets, self-interest, and the holy goal of profit. Amen.”

“My fellow New Atlantans, John Galt lives! There is no God but the market. The market is God! Government is Satan!” Manfreed proclaims. The crowd jumps up and erupts in another thunderous round of applause, at the same time repeating in unison, “The market is God, the market is God, hi-ho the dairy-o, the market is God.” Finally able to begin after five minutes of vainly trying to quiet the audience, he declares, “John Galt lives through us. We are his prophets. He showed us the way to freedom. We trust in ourselves. We trust in free markets. Markets never fail. Markets are all.” Again, the audience goes wild and the applause is deafening. “Decades ago, Galt’s Rational Restoration turned our failing, socialistic, anachronistic, government-dominated nation of looters into the Corporate States of America. We boldly changed our name from united to corporate as an act of historical will, the sign of our entirely new beginning, a declaration to the world of our shared sacred values and a rejection of everything that had poisoned our national being. We were cleansed and cleansed ourselves of the stench of stagnant, festering socialism.

“Word of our Restoration could be heard around the world. Nation after nation watched with envy as we dedicated ourselves to ourselves, picked up the pieces of our ignoble past, and converted ourselves into an engine of unbridled prosperity. We liberated every man, woman, and child to follow their self-interest, not the public interest—and to make no excuses for it. We became truly free for the first time in our history. If someone else hurts, we finally understood, that’s their problem, not yours or the government’s. That’s what Band-Aids are for. If I’m okay, but you’re not, well it’s too bad for you. *Vita sugit*: Life sucks. Suck it up or get sucked up. Such simple, honest, self-evident (but too long ignored) declarations freed us from the mental shackles of ever thinking we owe anybody else anything. We are the source of the greatest transformation of society in human history. We threw off the chains of government. We ended regulations and oversight that have added costs but no benefits to every sector of business. I never tire of relishing in the glory that we have brought upon ourselves.

“At this our yearly time to celebrate together, I am thrilled to report the breaking news that, though it has taken us decades, for the first time in our history, in all of our fifty states and our territories, we have finally done away with the last vestiges of outmoded legislation that imposed undue hardship on manufacturers to prove the safety and effectiveness of drugs. That’s right! Consumers in the market are now *totally* free to make their own choices on what is best for them. Scientists and researchers and their employers are now free to develop what may be miracle cures, without having to spend years testing them to the satisfaction of some small-minded government bureaucrat. They will come to market faster than ever before. And once again, the morality of the market will protect the public. Manufacturers’ self-interest will guarantee that they will make their products and procedures safe and effective. Otherwise, no one will buy them. In the few instances in which problems may arise, the market

will alert the public to hazards and drugs will be discontinued or modified. The market works perfectly—if only people will let it!”

“Yes, yes, John Galt lives!” shouts a man in the audience and the entire assembly applauds and stands, this time stomping its feet. Manfred looks up and, for the first time, acknowledges the crowd. Once again, he crosses himself with a dollar sign, at which people begin jumping up and down and clapping their hands over their heads. After five minutes of unabated frenzy, Manfred finally gets the crowd to quiet down and sit.

“In the recent past, we have lifted all environmental regulations and taxes that have stifled the growth of businesses and siphoned off their profits. We have outlawed dreaded unions that have crippled the private sector.” Thunderous applause. “They can no longer force wages up and secure benefits or strike and bring business to a standstill.” Thunderous applause. “We have eliminated the corporate income tax. There are no more minimum wage laws, occupational safety, leave and overtime laws.” Again the audience applauds wildly. “We have liberated business and liberated labor.” The audience on its feet begins to chant, “Manfreed, man freed, man freed!”

Suddenly, out of nowhere, over the loudspeakers, a mysterious male voice thunders, “John Galt is dead!” The crowd is thrown into total confusion, near panic. Some people are visibly frightened. People shake their heads, asking each other What? What did you hear? Who’s talking? Where’s it coming from? Was that the same voice that said “bullshit” when the president was speaking? But no one has an answer.

Obviously disturbed, Manfred looks around the pavilion, waiting for someone to give him an explanation for the unprecedented interruption. The head of the technical staff rushes out from backstage and whispers in his ear. But from the way he shrugs his shoulders and shakes his head from side to side, as well as the puzzled expression on the professor’s face, it appears he has no explanation.

And just when the audience settles down and he prepares to speak, again the voice declares, “John Galt is dead!”

Squinting and looking around the pavilion to see if he can identify where the voice came from, shaken but not wanting to wait too long to suggest that whoever was interrupting had gotten the best of him, Manfreed speaks haltingly, as though waiting for another attack, but continues: “Year after year, we have proven that true democracy rests on Free-for-All economics—unencumbered by regulation and dedicated to the proposition that self-interest is Godliness. You now live in a system that strives to protect your ‘natural liberty.’ You have been freed from the debilitating, false notion that you are your ‘brother’s keeper.’ And you are free of any guilt for believing and acting upon your self-interest. You know you are only your own keeper. You want nothing from anyone else, nor will you give anything to anyone else. We have liberated each and everyone to go it alone and to fulfill themselves on their own terms.

“We have eliminated government from any role in the destructive act of mediating between the public and business and industry. It’s every man for himself. We’ve proven that, if you can find it on the Internet—and you can find *everything* on the Internet—you don’t need government to do it. We have preserved inherited wealth. We have eliminated tariffs. We have ended the false and misplaced idea of consumer protection. Rational human beings can protect themselves. We have totally dismantled the government agencies that intervened between you and the providers of goods and services. You can now have what you want when you want it. Decades ago, we ended what used to be called ‘the social safety net’—the welfare-state’s Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and all the disempowering programs that pandered to people’s needs and that enslaved them without their even knowing it. It was a net that trapped them—and from which we liberated them.”

Smiling for the first time, regaining his stride after the disturbing, inexplicable interruption, Manfreed continues, “Markets, as we know,

protect us in more ways than government can or than we can imagine. Free markets make free agents. Free markets make free men. On the walls around us are written the timeless truths that energized John Galt and that have guided *us* ever since. You now live freer than ever. You all know the benefits that you have enjoyed and continue to enjoy. That's why you're here today—to celebrate your liberation. We have prospered. We have remade our economy. We have remade ourselves. We have drugged ourselves—and continue to drug ourselves—on the libation of total liberation that can only come from pursuing our unbri-dled self-interest. Each and every one of us is Atlas in our own universe. The world is ours.

“A free market is the closest thing to a miracle mankind can achieve. And yet, ironically, it is the ultimate achievement if, and only if, people get out of its way. Mortals cannot improve upon it, because to intervene and attempt to do so is to fiddle with freedom. Imagine a place where all individuals can express themselves uninhibited and undaunted—a state of nature, in which people are kept from suppressing others. Through the competition of the market, some people may rise and achieve; others may fall and fail. Markets are inherently unequal and always volatile. Their volatility ensures their freedom. And that's true beauty.

“The free market is pure democracy. No one is guaranteed or deprived of a place. In the dynamic of the market, no one can be on top, or even successful, forever. There is always someone with a better idea waiting to raise the bar and force others to meet or exceed them—and make others relinquish their place and fight to regain it, if they choose or can. The market polices itself. The market confers advantage and takes away advantage. The market is king, lord over all: It can mitigate racial differences, bring harmony to the nation, and foster creativity and innovation. Just let the market work, unbri-dled by regulation, and peace will reign.

“But it has not been easy to achieve the glorious prosperity we celebrate today. I know you have heard this account retold every year.

You know the story. But today, this year especially, *really* put yourselves in the place of Galt, Dagny Taggart, and their fellow captains of industry. Just imagine the moral courage it took for them to do what they did. Just imagine what it was for them to turn their backs on everything they had built. When they acted, they had no idea of the outcome of the risks they were taking. But out of their deepest and most admirable self-interest, Galt, Dagny Taggart, and the other captains of industry—the creative, rational minds who joined forces with them—destroyed what they had created to save it.

Once again, the mysterious voice over the loudspeaker blares out, “John Galt is dead!” The audience is visibly disturbed. Many fidget in their seats. Some stand up and look around to see if they can discover the source of the interruption.

His jaw clenched but pretending not to have heard the disturbance, Manfreed continues. “They first went on strike, retreated from the world. They brought a corrupt nation to its knees. It had devolved into nothing more than millions of people putting their hands out for whatever charity the government threw their way. Galt and company watched as, one by one, industries collapsed without them and as the strong arm of government foolishly and ineptly intervened, making matters worse—until there was nothing left.

“People across the territory were in open revolt and on the verge of taking up arms. Galt and his allies accomplished their goal. They proved they were the true and only engines of the economy. And finally, he and the others returned, rolled up their sleeves, and rebuilt what they had once destroyed. That’s how powerful and creative they were. They rewrote our Constitution. They renamed our nation. They transformed the failed United States of America into a glorious corporate state. They restored fifty deadbeat states into the prosperous Corporate States of America we celebrate today and that we will for years to come. They set an example for all of us to follow. They set an example for the world to follow.

“They, we, have accomplished much by committing ourselves to a relentless agenda. Year after year, we have fought reactionary forces. Sometimes, they have even won—fortunately, only temporarily. We *never* give up—and never will.”

Again, the voice over the loudspeaker blares out, “John Galt is dead!” Visibly shaken and exasperated, Manfred says, “At the same time that we have shown that the Free-for-All market benefits everyone without exception, we have fought off criticism—vehement, preposterous attacks—that our system, the perfectly organized market, impoverishes anyone, exploits the poor, and rewards only the rich and powerful. But we never let our defenses down. We never rest. We live in perilous times—more perilous by the minute. We may be challenged, but we are winning. And we will continue to win, as long as we remain committed to our goals and purposes.”

Suddenly, Manfred’s microphone goes dead. Then, a loud, uninterrupted, wailing sound emanates from the speakers. He looks up in frustration and disbelief. The audience begins to squirm. A technician immediately runs on stage. He whispers to Manfred and then, managing to get the microphone working again, tells the crowd it is just a minor problem, people are working on it, and it will be fixed immediately. The wailing stops. Manfred begins again. Again, his microphone goes dead.

To no avail, Manfred tries to speak loud enough to be heard in the vast pavilion. He waits, furious. And after two minutes, his microphone appears to be working, so he hesitates but continues: “The Galtian Restoration is constantly under threat from minds that were never completely reeducated and that have passed on their misplaced notions to younger generations. As a result, there are still some looters among us who hold on to vestiges of our shameful past. They make the absurd claim that some people have not prospered because of *us*. They say others have been forced into poverty. Of course, they refuse to accept responsibility for their own failure. The looters’ game

is to try to foist guilt on you and me—guilt for their failure, their weakness, and their irresponsibility; guilt for our success, strength, and power. They want us to provide for the needs they say they have. And I’m sorry to say that there are still even some people who feel pity and give them what they beg for.

“Let me be perfectly honest with you, my fellow New Atlantans. On this, the 67th anniversary of the Galtian Restoration and the founding of New Atlantis, we can take absolutely nothing for granted. In fact, as never before, we are perilously close to losing the battle others fought so nobly before us and for which we have worked for so long. The whole Restoration hangs by a thread. All of us need to recommit to drinking deeply, to drugging ourselves on all of the principles that have thus far guided our success. We need to take on the world full force and to hold it within our grasp. We all need to become Atlas on steroids in communities across this nation and across the world.

“As you know, in November, we will have national elections. And by what can only be called a fluke of election reform, Cary Hinton is in danger of being elected president.” The audience gasps, then stands, chanting, “No, no, Cary, no. No, no, Cary, no.” Hoping to quiet the audience, Manfred shouts, “If she is elected, you can say goodbye to everything we have accomplished over the last sixty-seven years.” The audience chants even more loudly “No, no, Cary, no.”

“That’s no exaggeration,” Manfred continues, struggling to be heard. “The great, integrated, free market that we have created will be destroyed.” The audience gasps, then begins to chant, “Cary, Cary, go away, come again another day—not!”

“My friends,” Manfred says, “Cary Hinton is our sworn enemy. She will undo all of the advances we have made and take us back to the Dark Ages of government intervention and socialism. If nothing else, we all need to understand that we are in a constant state of revolution. We can take nothing for granted. We must always be vigilant. Forces are always working against us.

“As many as ten states within our Corporate States are on our active watch-list for takeover by government interventionists, a new generation of looters. Around the world, thirty nations are potentially sliding into socialism. There are always people who will backslide because they have been brainwashed by holdouts who were brought up under a debilitating system of government and economics and never became worthy converts. They are not up to the challenges of accepting responsibility for their actions and letting the Free-for-All market work. They would rather intervene for their personal, short-term interest and blood-suck the energy of others. They are parasites. And we must stop them from taking from the rest of us.

“In part, we are our own worst enemy: Our very success has sown the seeds of the backlash we are seeing. Last year was a banner-year for turning crises into free-market opportunities at home and abroad. To mention just a few: Floods in Mississippi swept away dilapidated houses and businesses—mostly fishing and small farming—on prime, waterfront property, to which owners had questionable title, it turns out. Owners could never afford insurance and could not possibly afford to rebuild. So, a smart developer, true to his glorious self-interest, realized the unique opportunities of the situation and bought up 40,000 acres.

“Free from any government interference, he’s been able to get title to the land, dredge it, sell lots, and build state-of-the-art houses and commercial sites. He has almost finished creating a total corporate city. Water, electricity, roads, libraries, schools, parks—everything that was once mistakenly thought to be the responsibility of government is now privately owned. The developer is his own government, meaning there is no government beyond him. It’s pure Free for All economics. The beauty of it is, whatever people want they can get—as long as they pay for it, no different than going to a movie or buying groceries. And for the owner, everything, and I mean everything, is pure profit. He is setting the pace for others here and abroad.”

The audience applauds. But once they settle down, a tall, young man, with a shock of red hair, probably in his mid-twenties, stands up, looks around, raises his hand to get Manfred's attention and, without waiting to be called on, asks, "Where are the 25,000 people who used to live on that land in Mississippi going to live? And how are the 7,500 businesses put out of business going to earn a living?"

"Quiet, quiet. Out of order," many in the audience call out.

"Don't you know your place?" the woman next to him yells.

Unmoved, the young man just stands and looks straight ahead at Manfred.

"No, no, it's all right," the professor replies. Unable to hide his dismay that anyone would presume to ask a question in the middle of his speech, let alone challenge him, but showing no outward sign of anger, Manfred instantly decides to turn the unprecedented moment into a teaching experience.

"Young man, I won't ask you who you are or where you come from. I just want you to know I feel sorry for you. Have you learned nothing? Are you one of those misguided souls who delude themselves into believing that they are responsible for others? Have you forgotten the first rule of self-interest—that there is nothing *but* self-interest, that we *can* only act out of self-interest, that we *should* only act out of self-interest, and that we don't owe anybody anything? Are you still feeling guilty for your success and the failure of others? Worse yet, are you a looter? Do you want others to be responsible for your failures, and do you want to live off them? Do yourself a favor and free yourself from your regressive, inhibiting, socialist ideas. They destroyed our country once. Don't let them do it again. Honor John Galt." All eyes on him, the young man chooses to say nothing more and sits down.

"Around the world, Free-for-All market successes have occurred, though none as sweeping as what's happened in Mississippi. We can only hope for more like that in the near future. But in Mexico, right on our doorstep, perfect positioning, the sweeping privatization of public

services has taken place on a grand scale. And our corporations have been able to cross the border and reap profits no one ever dreamed of. The national gas and oil resources have been sold to a private conglomerate in the Corporate States, and it is already been reaping huge profits. Don't believe press reports of protests and riots because of increased prices. Outside agitators who have been paid to do the dirty work of international companies competing with ours are responsible for all the trouble. Our companies' private security forces have everything under control. Similar privatization deals are occurring on every continent. Our corporations are acting like Atlas—heavy with limitless possibility, drugged on the power of self-interest.

“No matter how much criticism we hear, no matter how loud voices may be raised against our fundamental beliefs, let us never forget that all of these breathtaking improvements and opportunities have been possible for one reason alone: Total deregulation of our economy and market, complete non-interference by government, the end of unions. Our government has been converted into a board of directors responsible first and foremost to corporations. The idea was so simple it was lost on generations of leaders here. But now its possibilities inspire almost everyone.

“Some people disparage us by saying we live by the ‘law of the jungle.’ But I think of that as a positive. They’re paying us the highest compliment without knowing it. The flip side of ‘the law of the jungle’ is ‘survival of the fittest.’ And that’s what we’re all about. Now more than ever, each of you needs to carry the message that will sustain and save world economies. Our goal is to convert all nations to the Free-for-All market. As we have proven time and time again, it is a finely wrought machine. It is perfect. It is an expression of ‘natural law.’ In the perpetual war that we need to keep waging, that we will never be free from waging, government is our sworn enemy. Greed is Good. All good comes from greed. That is all ye need to know.”

Expecting the mysterious voice to break in, Manfred pauses and surveys the audience, hoping to be able to spot the slightest move

that would reveal his whereabouts. But there's dead silence and no one so much as stirs.

"We now come to the final portion of today's program," Manfred says, appearing relieved to be able to begin. "I have the great pleasure of inducting three of our most promising New Atlantis associates into the Circle of Atlas, the corporate body that manages New Atlantis. Will Enrique Reyes, Zora Tremmon, and Albert Swift please come forward? They are living examples of the power of the Free-for-All market in action. They came to New Atlantis three years ago from different parts of the country and the world. Together, they created the most outstanding for-profit proposal we have seen in two decades. They presented it to the board of the Taggart Venture Fund at the end of their first year and received a \$500,000 loan. Today, they head a thriving company, and not just a thriving company but a model for all companies and an inspiration for others to bring ideas to market.

"Their product, Atlas Energy, is a high-potency drink sold throughout the world, and their chain of Atlas Fitness Centers is franchised throughout the Corporate States with plans to expand worldwide later this year. They have repaid their loan with interest, as well as a twenty percent share of their profits—and believe me, those are already in the millions with enormous opportunities for growth. And, as I'm sure you realize, they have only been able to achieve their success in such lightening speed and with such spectacular results because, and *only* because, they have been free of government over-regulation. Bureaucrats have not had the power to stand in their way."

With the trio now on the stage, he motions toward them and says, "Enrique Reyes developed the secret formula for the most sophisticated and effective high-energy drink ever produced. It's so powerful that I hesitate to call it just a drink, though that's what they call it for marketing purposes. I would call it a drug, in the best sense of the word.

Believe me. It's everything you can imagine in a liquid that can transform the chemistry of your body and add years to your life. I've been drinking it since it first went on the market, and I've never felt better. Escaping from Cuba, where socialism has suppressed free markets and taken the creative life out of people for more than half a century, Enrique is a scientific genius with a natural aptitude for business. He's proof that you can't extinguish the human spirit. He's flourished in the Corporate States.

"Zora Tremmon was born in the Corporate States to parents who fled totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe. She created the computer and social network programs that market and manage the sales of Atlas Energy, as well as the franchises of Atlas Fitness Centers.

"Albert Swift, a native of California, created the patented Titan Whole-Body Harmony Machine that is available only at Atlas Fitness Centers. There is truly nothing like it anywhere in the world. Independent scientific studies reveal that regular use lowers body rhythms, harmonizes the brain, and produces unique levels of physical strength.

"The proprietary, thirty-day program developed at Atlas Fitness Centers, combining a regimen of the Atlas Energy Drink and the Titan Machine, guarantees weight loss, energy gain, and total-body toning. It actually cures conditions like diabetes and shows promising early signs of helping reverse the effects of spinal cord injury and Parkinson's."

He shakes each of their hands and gives them a miniature statue of Atlas like the one in the lobby with their name and Circle of Atlas inscribed on the base. "Let's hear a round of applause for our free-market heroes," he adds, looking out at the audience. "You can buy the Atlas Energy Drink as you exit the pavilion. Drug yourself on it. It works like nothing else! Take a Fitness Center brochure to find out how to join the one nearest to you. And consider becoming a franchisee. And now, fellow Atlantans, until next year, good day."

After a lengthy, thundering ovation, the crowd slowly make their exit. Above them, a small airplane buzzes the campus tugging a banner

on which are written the words “Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty.” Most people shake their fists at it and shout, “John Galt lives! The market is God!” The red-headed, young man looks up and smiles.

Inside, backstage, an enraged Manfred, barks at his assistant, Baron Rooky. “How could you let this happen? You’ve made me look like a fool.”

“Me?” Rooky fires back. “I had nothing to do with it.”

“Find out who that red-headed bastard is, who said ‘bullshit’ in the middle of the president’s speech, who the hell cut into my speech, and how he did it, or you’re out of here. We’ve got to crush those fuckers completely. And I *mean* completely! This is war. I don’t know who’s behind this. But no one gets to do this to Hilton Manfred. There *can* be only one winner. And there *will* be only one winner!”