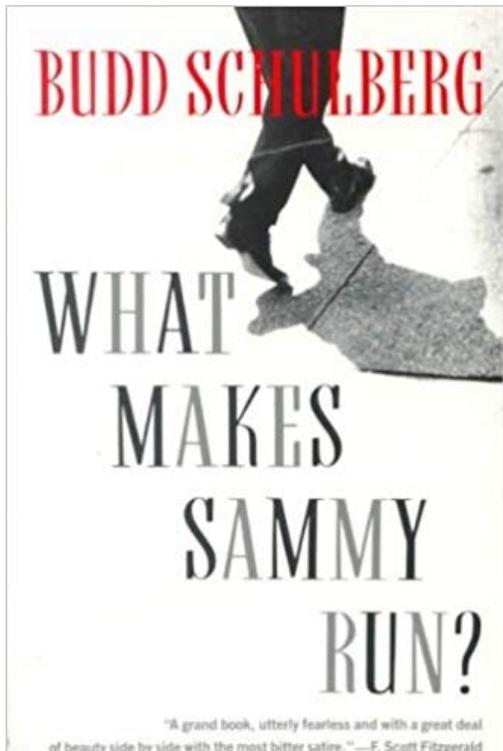


What Makes Sammy Run?WHAT MAKES SAMMY RUN? by Schulberg, Budd (Author) on Dec-06-1993 Paperback by Budd Schulberg



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Deeroman

If anyone knew the highs and lows of show business it was Budd Schulberg. Schulberg was one of the best screen writers of his generation ("On The Waterfront" and the WOEFULLY under

appreciated "A Face In The Crowd") and one of the most honest. That honesty comes through in "What Makes Sammy Run".

Sammy Glick is a poor Jewish kid from the streets who wasn't about to let anything stand in the way of his success. That includes love, honesty, trust, friendship and morality. "What Makes Sammy Run" is told from the perspective of Al Manheim, who meets Sammy at age 16 when Sammy comes to work as a copy runner for a newspaper. Al despises the kid on first sight but finds himself fascinated at the same time and makes it his mission to find out "What Makes Sammy Run?". Through the book Al develops a grudging respect and a bit of pity for Sammy, even as Sammy runs over everyone in his path in an effort to reach...what? That's the big question and what makes "Sammy" an exceptional book.

Readers interested in how Old Hollywood worked, and what the town was like in the Golden Years will find much to enjoy in "Sammy". I came to this book through a late '60s Dick Cavett interview with Bette Davis who said this is the best book ever written about Hollywood. If it's good enough for Bette, it's good enough for me. And you. Give it a shot, you won't be disappointed.

Nikobar

I had a hard time figuring out how many stars to give this book. I think 4 is too many but 3 seemed too little. It is a very interesting book. When Schulberg is writing about '30s Hollywood, you have no doubt you're in the hands of an expert guide. When he strays from that, the book is less convincing.

This is the story of Sammy Glick who is a consummate narcissistic hustler. It's told by Al Manheim who is a reasonably decent, sane guy and you ask yourself why he would be so fixated on Sammy. He's so different. Yet, it makes sense because Sammy is a fascinating spectacle. Even though, in a way, he's insufferably boring. How interesting can a shallow person whose only interest is in self advancement be? Well, actually, very. You just don't come across that many people who are so single mindedly devoted to their own self advancement. There is a horrible splendor to it!

When the book gets too far from Hollywood, it drags a bit. Al's visit to Sammy's boyhood home on the Lower East Side is the least successful part of the novel. I think the LSE was a kind of Mars for Schulberg. Schulberg grew up in LA, wealthy and my guess is, not very religiously observant. Here we have crime, poverty and Orthodoxy. It's not Al or Schulberg's world and it shows. Also Schulberg is at his most annoying when he tries to explain things that don't need to be explained. The reader already suspects this is the kind of place Sammy came from. We can't wait to get back to Hollywood! There the author is in his element.

This edition contains two short stories which are in effect early treatments of Sammy notable largely for having Sammy come from the Bronx rather than the Lower East Side. There is also a biographical note from Schulberg which contains a funny story. John Wayne apparently hated the novel (I like John Wayne but I have a hard time believing he actually read it and the thought of him reading a book about largely Jewish urban characters strikes me as funny. He would have made a hysterical Sammy Glick on par with his Ghengis in The Conqueror.). He wanted to beat up Schulberg and apparently took a crack at it. John Wayne upholding the honor of Louis B. Mayer, that's funny!

Keath

Hollywood is the perfect place for Sammy Glick. His only talent is the ability to ruthlessly usurp the talent of others as he steps on their back to get ahead. He starts out as a copy boy for a New York newspaper and quickly learns how to game the system. While he has no scruples, his boss at the paper, Al Manheim, has a moral conscience and an obsession with figuring out "what makes Sammy run." Al both despises and is drawn to Sammy. After Sammy makes his way to Los Angeles, where he works as a writer for one of the big studios, Al ends up there as well. But Sammy, an alpha in a dog

eat dog world, doesn't write - he steals the writing of a nebbishy colleague. Surrounding himself with the rich, powerful and beautiful, he has an uncanny knack for being at the right place at the right time. He soon becomes a producer. As Al starts piecing together Sammy's back story he realizes that Sammy is climbing up the ladder of success but it's a rope with no end in sight. While he strives for money, power, and prestige he never stops to see the collateral damage he causes. He doesn't care who he hurts or alienates on his way to the top because he has no regard for his fellow man. This is a powerful morality tale, an inside look at the Hollywood machine, and a timeless page-turner written in 1941.

Frey

The question "What makes Sammy run? " had become part of our language in considering a person's life mission. The author offers insights into how very different that question was heard in its original context in the 1940s and 50s. Framing the original novel with a foreword and updated comets from the 70s and 80s we realize how disgust for selfish behavior described in the book got transformed to admiration of such a self centered get ahead attitude. Now the 21st century reader could easily imagine a Sammy Glick in high tech or financial sector ... and the same personality type would still elicit both revulsion and a grudging envy. Maybe underneath is a plea for simple, virtuous , compassionate morality and true friendship... hard to find in any age.

Lucam

She was being interviewed by Dick Cavett and described this as the definitive insider's view of the Hollywood's darker nature: So you know it is an honest take. F.Scott Fitzgerald's recommendation is noted on the front cover: So you know it is well written. Written in the 1940's it created quite the explosion back then. Dorothy Parker also recommends it: So you know it is devilishly clever. Now I know why Martin Short named his Hollywood gossip columnist character Jiminy Glick.

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