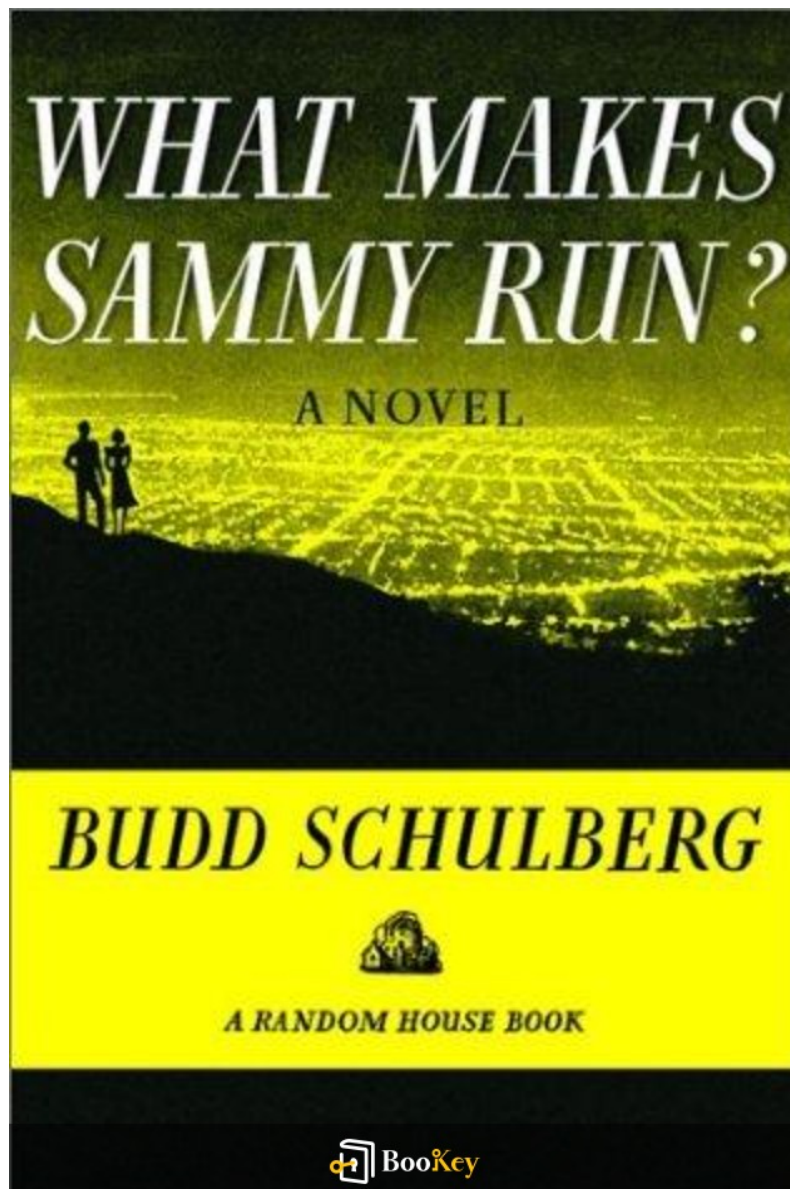


What Makes Sammy Run? PDF

Budd Schulberg



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About the book

Title: The Dark Side of Ambition in Hollywood's Golden Age

Overview:

Budd Schulberg's novel "What Makes Sammy Run?" takes readers on a gripping journey through the ruthless world of 1930s Hollywood, as experienced by Al Manheim, a veteran screenwriter.

Main Characters:

- Al Manheim: A seasoned screenwriter, both fascinated and horrified by Hollywood's ruthless ambition.
- Sammy Glick: An ambitious copy boy whose unscrupulous methods propel him to the heights of the film industry.

Themes:

- The American Dream: The narrative serves as a stark reminder of the moral compromises and betrayals that often accompany the pursuit of success.
- Ambition vs. Morality: Schulberg presents a critical look at the darker aspects of ambition, urging readers to consider what it truly costs to achieve greatness.

Significance:

This novel transcends its historical setting, offering a timeless critique of society's obsession with success and the ethical dilemmas one faces along

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the journey. With its rich character development and sharp social insights, "What Makes Sammy Run?" poses challenging reflections on ambition and destiny, ensuring its place as an essential read for those fascinated by these themes.

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About the author

Title: The Legacy of Budd Schulberg in American Cinema and Literature

Overview:

Budd Schulberg was a significant figure in 20th-century literature and film, renowned for his sharp insights into ambition and moral complexities.

Early Life:

- Birth Year: 1914
- Background: Born into a prominent Hollywood family; his father, B.P. Schulberg, was a well-known film executive.
- Influence of Upbringing: Growing up in the entertainment industry offered Budd a unique understanding of its dynamics.

Notable Works:

- Key Publications:
 - "What Makes Sammy Run?"
 - "On the Waterfront"
- Awards: Won the Academy Award for Best Story and Screenplay for "On the Waterfront."

Themes and Impact:

- Focus: Schulberg's writings often explored the complexities of the

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American Dream, shedding light on its corrupt facets.

- Significance: His sharp observations make his works enduringly relevant and stimulate deep reflection on societal values.

Conclusion:

Budd Schulberg's contributions to literature and film remain influential, prompting audiences to reconsider the interplay of ambition and ethics in modern society.

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What Makes Sammy Run? Summary

Written by Listenbrief

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What Makes Sammy Run? Summary Chapter List

1. Chapter 1: Introducing Sammy Glick - The Ambitious Young Man Who Dares to Dream
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1. Chapter 1: Introducing Sammy Glick - The Ambitious Young Man Who Dares to Dream

In Budd Schulberg's "What Makes Sammy Run?", readers are introduced to the character of Sammy Glick, a young man whose ambition and drive represent the relentless pursuit of success in the fast-paced world of journalism. At the center of the narrative is the portrait of a man unencumbered by traditional morals or ethics, eager to ascend the ranks at any cost.

Sammy Glick is depicted as an embodiment of youthful determination, rising from humble beginnings as a street-smart kid from the Bronx. He emerges as a determined young journalist with big dreams, fueled by an insatiable hunger for fame and recognition. This chapter lays the groundwork for understanding Sammy's character through a detailed exploration of his ambitions, motivations, and the stark realities of the world he aims to conquer.

From the outset, it is evident that Sammy is not your average aspiring journalist. He possesses an almost predatory instinct for opportunity, constantly scanning his environment for any chance to advance his career. This characteristic shines through in early anecdotes where he ventures into the offices of major newspapers, armed with a tenacity that disarms those around him and wins the admiration of his peers. Through swift networking



and an uncanny ability to charm, he crafts his image as a rising star in the newsroom.

Schulberg utilizes vivid imagery and engaging descriptions to encapsulate Sammy's relentless ambition. Readers are shown a young man who refuses to accept mediocrity; he yearns for the glitz, the lifestyle of the successful, and the accolades that accompany being at the top of the journalistic hierarchy. His dream of becoming a prominent figure in New York's publishing scene is almost palpable, creating a sense of suspense around his eventual journey.

The contrast between Sammy's aspirations and the realities of the journalism industry is stark. While he has the ambition, he lacks the conventional background or connections that many of his counterparts possess. However, instead of being deterred, Sammy's lack of support only fuels his desire to prove himself. He develops a fierce competitiveness, viewing colleagues not as comrades, but as obstacles to be overcome. It is this mentality—coupled with a lack of moral compass—that sets him apart and leads to his eventual rise.

Sammy's character is further fleshed out through interactions with existing members of the press, highlighting the generational conflicts and shifting values within the industry. Older journalists see a reflection of their own



youthful ambitions in him, yet they are shaded by the experiences that taught them hard lessons about the ethics of their profession. Sammy's youthful idealism, untrammelled by such weighty reflections, demonstrates a naive yet fervent desire to achieve success, inviting readers to both root for and recoil from him.

Additionally, Sammy's journey begins to provide insights into the motivations behind extreme ambition. His dreams are not merely about personal success; they correlate with a desperate need for validation and respect. Schulberg subtly layers this urgency within the narrative, compelling readers to reflect on the external influences that shape such intense ambition. Sammy embodies a paradox—he is a starving artist, but rather than traditional art, he pursues artifice in the form of words, stories, and headlines.

Ultimately, this first chapter serves as a powerful introduction that establishes Sammy Glick as a complex character. Through rich narrative detail and insightful examination, Schulberg invites readers to consider what drives ambition and the lengths to which some will go to achieve their dreams. Disturbingly relatable, Sammy serves as a cautionary figure whose relentless drive poses the question: When does ambition cross the line into something darker? In doing so, readers are compelled to look beyond the surface of Sammy Glick; they are left pondering the true cost of success in a



world that often prizes achievement over integrity.

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2. Chapter 2: The World of Journalism and Its Cutthroat Competition

In Budd Schulberg's "What Makes Sammy Run?", the landscape of journalism serves as both a backdrop and a character in its own right, highlighting the fierce competition that drives the characters within the narrative, especially the ambitious Sammy Glick. This chapter delves deep into the newspaper industry during the era of the story, revealing the gritty, high-stakes environment where ethics often take a backseat to ambition and the relentless pursuit of the next big story.

At the heart of this world is the newspaper office, buzzing with frenetic energy, where reporters and editors toil under pressure to outpace their rivals. Schulberg paints a vivid picture of the bustling newsroom filled with the sounds of ringing phones, typewriters clacking away, and the sharp conversations that dart back and forth over the desks. Within this atmosphere, Sammy stands out—not just for his raw ambition but for his strategic cunning as he navigates the unspoken rules of journalistic ethics and loyalty.

The cutthroat nature of journalism in this setting can be likened to a Darwinian survival of the fittest, where only the most ruthless thrive. Reporters are not merely tasked with the duty of informing the public; instead, they are engaged in a constant battle for exclusives, often resorting



to shady tactics to secure a scoop. For instance, emissaries may undermine one another by leaking tips or engaging in subterfuge to discredit competitors. This moral ambiguity becomes evident as characters compromise their principles for a break in the story that could propel them to the top.

A telling example from the text is Sammy's early attempts to climb the ladder of success. He openly disdains the traditional values of journalism, choosing instead to embrace the sensationalism that comes with a thrilling headline even if it distorts the truth. His aggressive pursuit of stories exemplifies how he readily steps onto the toes of others, making enemies along the way, but each bruise he inflicts on his peers further cements his position in the newsroom. The cutthroat competition creates opportunities but also pits reporters against one another, revealing layers of secrecy and manipulation.

Schulberg presents not only a critique of this irresponsible journalistic culture but also illustrates how the quest for success morphs the dreams and ambitions of individuals into self-serving motives. The desire to ascend the ranks catalyzes the questionable tactics that prior generations of journalists may have shunned. In Sammy's case, he personifies the emerging breed of journalists—one that prioritizes personal gain over the collective integrity of the profession. This shift exemplifies a larger trend in society, highlighting



how ambition can often overshadow ethical considerations.

Moreover, this world of journalism is marked by the glamorization of the reporter's life, juxtaposed against its darker underbelly. The allure of fame through exposure and recognition is enticing. For young reporters, including Sammy, the glitzy lifestyle associated with being a prominent journalist serves as a siren call, drawing them deeper into a world that often rewards the unscrupulous. This duality creates a tension that enriches the narrative and provides a fertile ground for exploring notions of success and failure.

In an industry characterized by relentless pressures, dwindling resources, and layoffs, the metaphor of the battle for the last piece of bread becomes strikingly relevant. As publications face declining readership in an era of rising digital platforms, survival becomes even more cutthroat, a reality Schulberg captures through the interactions and motivations of his characters. Through Sammy's interactions with his colleagues, Schulberg illustrates the disillusionment and desperation that often accompany such harsh realities, depicting a world where camaraderie is sacrificed at the altar of individual ambition.

The depiction of the journalism landscape in "What Makes Sammy Run?" serves as a microcosm of broader societal ambitions. It offers a critical lens on how the drive for success can warp moral compasses and compromise the

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integrity of vital institutions. Ultimately, this chapter not only sets the stage for Sammy's ruthless rise but also profoundly reflects on the landscape of journalism as it struggles to maintain its ethics amidst an increasingly competitive environment.

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3. Chapter 3: Exploring Sammy's Ruthless Pursuit of Power and Success

In Budd Schulberg's novel "What Makes Sammy Run?" the character of Sammy Glick exemplifies the extremes of ambition, cleverly maneuvering his way through the cutthroat world of journalism. Sammy's relentless quest for power and success is not just a narrative device; it reflects broader themes of American ambition and the moral compromises that often accompany it. This chapter delves into the mechanisms of Sammy's rise, highlighting the ruthless tactics he employs to ascend the ladder of the newspaper business.

From the outset, Sammy is portrayed not merely as an ambitious young man but as a formidable force willing to exploit any weakness for his gain. He starts as a lowly copy boy, but his keen observation skills allow him to gauge the desires and fears of those around him. He quickly learns that the world of journalism values sensationalism over substance, which becomes a cornerstone of his strategy. Sammy's knack for manipulating conversations and crafting stories that cater to popular demand opens doors that would otherwise remain closed to someone of his humble beginnings.

An apt illustration of Sammy's ruthless pursuit is his willingness to betray colleagues. For example, he engages in backstabbing, eagerly taking credit for others' ideas while undermining their work. This destructive behavior is



not portrayed simply as an essential evil of the industry; rather, it is indicative of the broader willingness of individuals to prioritize personal gain over ethical considerations. Sammy's actions are a reflection of the broader societal belief during the era that success, particularly in journalism, is paramount, regardless of the means employed.

One specific instance within the narrative highlights Sammy's Machiavellian approach when he writes a controversial article that incites public outrage. Rather than expressing any concern over the ethical implications, Sammy revels in the spotlight it provides him. This moment exemplifies his understanding that controversy can propel one's career forward, a tactic that resonates well in an age where shock value often overshadows journalistic integrity. It poses a question about the boundaries of ethical journalism: how far can one go in the name of success?

Sammy's drive also manifests in his personal relationships. He often uses people as stepping stones, devoid of any genuine emotional connection. For instance, he forms superficial alliances with established journalists, only to cast them aside when they no longer serve his purpose. This transactional view of relationships highlights a significant theme in the book: the isolation that comes with a singular focus on success. As Sammy climbs higher, the relationships he leaves in his wake often serve as cautionary tales, showcasing the collateral damage that ambition can inflict on others.



Throughout this chapter, Schulberg paints a vivid picture of a man whose pursuit of success knows no bounds. Sammy's story serves as a critique of the moral compromises that define not just individuals in the media industry, but the broader machinations of American capitalism. Therein lies the paradox of his ambition; while he achieves notable success, it comes at the cost of personal integrity and connection.

As readers observe Sammy manipulate situations and people to his advantage, it becomes clear that his ambition is intertwined with a profound emptiness. His defining characteristic is a lack of empathy, revealing the psychological toll that an unrestrained pursuit of power can exact. By exploring these themes, Schulberg invites readers to reflect on their values and the societal costs of relentless ambition, setting the stage for the moral dilemmas that will evolve in subsequent chapters.

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4. Chapter 4: The Morality of Ambition: Ethical Dilemmas in Sammy's Rise

In "What Makes Sammy Run?", Budd Schulberg meticulously navigates the complex landscape of ambition through the eyes of Sammy Glick, a young upstart in the competitive world of journalism in 1930s America. Sammy's relentless drive to succeed forces readers to confront the ethical dilemmas that accompany such ambition. This chapter delves into the moral quandaries Sammy faces and the broader implications of his choices on both personal and societal levels.

From the outset, it is clear that Sammy embodies a singular focus on his career at the expense of ethical considerations. He is not just a product of his environment, but also a manipulator of it. One of the starkest ethical dilemmas Sammy faces is the distinction between ambition and integrity. For instance, when Sammy eagerly agrees to betray a colleague by leaking information that he has gained through trusted conversations, he chooses personal gain over loyalty and trust. This situation highlights a common ethical breach in competitive fields; individuals often find themselves grappling with the choice between progressing in their careers or adhering to a code of ethics that fosters trust and collaboration.

Sammy's interactions with those around him further reveal the moral ambiguity of his ambition. He not only steps on others to ascend the



corporate ladder but does so with a grand sense of entitlement and justification. This raises a significant ethical question: Does the end justify the means? Sammy believes that success—regardless of how it is achieved—is worth any sacrifice, even if that means undermining friends and colleagues. Effectively, he sees people as pawns in his ambitious game, viewing their demise not as a moral failing but as a necessary step toward his own success.

Consider the famous case of Matt Lauer, whose career in journalism was marked by significant achievements but also marred by ethical transgressions and betrayal of trust. Just as Lauer's ambition seemingly overshadowed the ethical implications of his behavior, Sammy operates similarly, navigating the murky waters of right and wrong to his advantage. The revelations about Lauer serve as a modern-day parallel to Sammy's rise, illustrating how unchecked ambition can lead to questionable decisions that defy ethical standards.

Moreover, Sammy's ambition ignites a fierce competitive spirit that blinds him to the emotional costs of his actions. Relationships in his life are transactional; when he befriends others, it is with the ulterior motive of leveraging their connections for his own benefit. This transactional approach to relationships exposes the ethical dilemma of authenticity versus opportunism, forcing readers to reflect on the nature of their own



connections in a competitive world. Is it acceptable to prioritize personal success over genuine relationships, or does that compromise one's integrity and humanity?

The societal implications of Sammy's rise also cannot be ignored. His journey reflects a broader theme within American culture that glorifies ambition and success, often sidelining the means through which they are achieved. The narrative prompts readers to consider the consequences of a culture that rewards selfishness and cunning over collaboration and ethical behavior. In doing so, Schulberg critiques not just Sammy's individual choices, but also the societal norms that enable and encourage such behavior, thus inviting us to question what values we uphold in our own pursuit of success.

In summary, Chapter 4 of "What Makes Sammy Run?" encapsulates a compelling examination of the ethical dilemmas that accompany unbridled ambition. Sammy Glick serves as a cautionary figure, illustrating the potential moral pitfalls of a lifestyle steeped in relentless desire for success. As readers, we are left to ponder the balance between ambition and ethics—considering how far we are willing to go in pursuit of our dreams and at what cost to our integrity and relationships.



5. Chapter 5: The Inevitable Fall: What Happens When Sammy's Methods Catch Up With Him

In Budd Schulberg's critique of ambition and ruthlessness, Chapter 5 elucidates the inevitable consequences of Sammy Glick's unscrupulous methods. As we trace Sammy's relentless climb in the world of journalism, we begin to see that the very traits that aided his ascent—his cunning, manipulation, and utter disregard for ethics—eventually lead him to an unavoidable reckoning.

As Sammy Glick becomes more successful, his behaviors start to reflect the intense pressures and betrayals that come with unchecked ambition. His rise is marked by an array of opportunistic actions—sabotaging colleagues, spinning tales to elevate his status, and ingratiating himself with powerful figures, often at the expense of those around him. These methods serve him well initially, allowing him to secure prestigious assignments and establish a reputation. However, Schulberg carefully crafts the narrative to foreshadow that Sammy's strategies are unsustainable.

One of the pivotal moments in Sammy's downfall occurs when he stretches the truth beyond its limits, leading to a scandal that threatens not only his career but his life. The very public he manipulated with lies and fabrications begins to turn against him, fueled by the backlash from peers he has



betrayed. This turn of events is not merely a consequence of one unethical choice; rather, it is the culmination of a series of compromised ideals and moral ambiguities that Sammy has willingly embraced throughout his journey.

Each betrayal chips away at Sammy's thin veneer of success, illustrating a crucial theme in Schulberg's narrative: the idea that one cannot build a lasting empire on quicksand. As the investigative spotlight intensifies, we see how Sammy's isolation grows. Once surrounded by admirers and a network of allies, he finds himself increasingly alone, betrayed by those he believed were loyal. The pressure begins to mount as his once charming and charismatic persona starts to fray under scrutiny. This is vividly captured in scenes where former friends and colleagues express their disdain for Sammy, leaving him to grapple with the fallout of his actions.

Moreover, Schulberg uses Sammy's downfall to reflect on the broader implications of ambition that disregards ethics. The reader is compelled to consider what happens when the pursuit of success overrides basic human decency. Not only does this question resonate on a personal level, but it also prompts a societal reflection on the culture of the times—a powerful commentary on the 1940s American society that often rewards the ruthless while punishing the honorable. For example, in real-life settings, there are instances of corporate leaders whose unethical practices lead to scandals that



decimate their careers. Similar to Sammy, such individuals often find themselves at the mercy of public opinion and the principles they forsook on their rise to the top.

As Sammy grapples with the inevitable consequences of his ambition, we witness a transformation stemming from a once bright star in the journalistic world to a tarnished figure facing his reckoning. Ultimately, Schulberg masterfully delivers a cautionary tale that not only highlights the risks associated with unbridled ambition and ruthlessness but also emphasizes the fundamental truth that both success and failure are deeply intertwined with one's moral choices. Sammy Glick's story serves as a poignant reminder that while ambition can fuel greatness, it must be tempered with integrity lest one's fall become as public and unforgiving as their rise.

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