

What makes sammy
run?



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

What Makes Sammy Run? by Budd Schulberg portrays the life of Sammy Glick - a young and ambitious copy boy who rises to fame as a screenwriter in Hollywood. The name of the novel is significant in itself, for it underlines an age-old question: What makes an individual run? Is it the craving for success? Written in 1941 when the world was relatively quieter in terms of competitive edges, the novel seeks to find an answer to this question. The author does not temper the unethical means Sammy, the protagonist of the novel, resorts to in his run. (Schulberg, p. 3)

Budd Schulberg completely exposes his main character's inability to care for others, especially his friends and associates whom he needed during the days of his struggle. Sammy is shown as a person who can go to any extent to fulfill his ambition of attaining the pinnacle of success in Hollywood. He does not mind backstabbing others, even his girlfriend, to reach his long cherished goal, and in the process, make himself a victim of self-inflicted loneliness and frustration. This book report is going to present a brief summary of the novel before examining Sammy's relationship with the narrator Al Manheim.

It is also going to make a comparative character analysis of the two, thereby tracing changes in their relation if there is any. The report will also focus emphatically on the end of the novel to investigate Sammy's situation. Summary What Makes Sammy Run? begins with Al Manheim's recollection of how he met a teenage Sammy, full of vigor and energy, when the boy was working under him as a copy boy to deliver newspapers. Immediately after he comes to know Sammy personally, he develops a strange attachment for

him, partially out of his curiosity to explore the boy's nature and partially out of his own business interests.

However, Sammy regards Al as his best friend and mentor. The story of Sammy's rise and eventual fall begins when one day he impersonates Manheim and rewrites one of his newspaper columns to impress the managing editor. Thus, Sammy manages to gain a column of his own. Later on, he steals a piece of writing by an aspirant named Julian Blumberg who wishes to make a career in screenwriting profession in Hollywood. This event turns the fortune for Sammy as he is credited for original screenplay of the movie *Girl Steals Boy* when it hits the theater.

The next few years witnesses Sammy climbing the ladder of success and popularity in the most prized seat of stardom in the world. As fate would have it, he hires Blumberg as his ghost writer for a minimal payment. Meanwhile, Manheim comes to know that Catherine 'Kit' Sargent, one of the most promising novelists and screenwriters, has developed a crush for Sammy. Although Manheim is emotionally attached to this lady, he is openly told by her that she prefers Sammy to him. In the process tracing Sammy's frenzied run for success and recognition, Manheim also observes the power game and corruption that run rampant behind the scene at Hollywood.

This is evident from the fact that Sidney Fineman, one of the revered producers around, gets victimized by Sammy, loses his job and dies, apparently of a broken heart. Moreover, Sammy goes about his mindless business of securing his career and personal life in the indignant manner imaginable when he decides to dump his girlfriend to marry Laurette, the daughter of a wealthy Wall Street banker Harrington. This marriage proves to

be a disaster for Sammy as Laurette sees it no better than a business affair. Eventually Sammy finds his heart empty – as empty as the big mansion he owes, and orders for getting him a prostitute.

Sammy's relationship with Manheim – Comparison between Two Characters
As mentioned earlier, Sammy and Manheim share a relationship of friendship and mentorship. However, reversal of roles and values is one of the major themes in the novel as the mutual dependency between Sammy and Manheim changes in the course of it. It is Sammy who is employed under Manheim in the beginning, but later on Manheim finds himself writing screenplays for Sammy. Again, Manheim is of moderate disposition in comparison with Sammy's aggressive demeanor.

He is portrayed as an observer whereas Sammy is the go-getter in modern corporate terminology. Sammy in the End The ending of What Makes Sammy Run? renders an incisive thrust to the very conscience of its readers. Schulberg gives his protagonist the life he truly deserves after fiddling around with other people's careers and emotions. So it can be said that the author, with somewhat ironic affection, puts a brake to Sammy Glick's running wheels of fortune by making him suffer for his actions. References Schulberg, Budd. (1993). What Makes Sammy Run?. New York: Vintage.