



Action!: A Novel

Robert Cort

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What do you do when your oldest friend, Steve McQueen, pulls out his Smith & Wesson and blows your defenseless dining-room chair to smithereens? Or when your hottest client, sex goddess Romy Schneider, demands you leave your wife for her? Those are just a couple of the dilemmas faced by AJ Jastrow, the fictional protagonist of **Action!**, Robert Cort's page-turning saga about a legendary Hollywood family.

When we first meet AJ in 1948, a few weeks shy of his thirteenth birthday, he ranks as minor Hollywood royalty—Dad is the movie industry's most prominent attorney, Mom is a retired actress whose uncle is Adolph Zukor, founder of Paramount. But this year will prove to be the end of the movie industry's Golden Age and the beginning of exile for the Jastrow family.

When AJ returns to Tinseltown after a decade's absence, he realizes that fulfilling his father's legacy of creating a movie empire will prove a life's work. Along the way, AJ's soldiers-in-arms include the Machiavellian producer Ray Stark, who teaches him how to win at Monopoly and studio politics; Wall Street genius Charlie Bluhdorn, who coaxes AJ to fly under the radar on a secret mission; AJ's wife, Stephanie, who reminds him that a conscience isn't a luxury; and his daughter and protégée, Jessica, who refuses to leave his side despite irresistible temptation.

His enemies are formidable: studio president Paul Herzog, who seeks to destroy the son as he did the father; the wily agent Mike Ovitz, who intuits the weaknesses of any rival; AJ's mother, Hollywood's wealthiest woman, who cannot abide disloyalty; and AJ's son, Ricky, an actor of uncommon ability, who holds a devastating grudge against his dad.

By blending and transforming fact into fiction, by introducing real characters to fictional ones, Robert Cort gives the reader an inside account of Hollywood's path (and drift) from the end of World War II to the present. And utilizing his insider's knowledge, gained as one of the town's premier producers, he provides an intimate chronicle of how movies are really made, how producers work, and how the industry has evolved, often at the cost of its collective soul. Provocative and vastly entertaining, **Action!** is popular fiction at its best, a story that is both enlightening and great fun to read.

From the Hardcover edition.

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