



Actors Anonymous

By James Franco

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The actors in James Franco's brilliant debut novel include a McDonald's drive-thru operator who spends his shift trying on accents; an ex-child star recalling a massive beachside bacchanal; hospital volunteers and Midwestern transplants; a vampire flick starlet who discovers a cryptic book written by a famous actor gone AWOL; and the ghost of River Phoenix. Then there's Franco himself, who prowls backstage, peering out between the lines—before taking the stage with fascinating meditations on his art, along with nightmarish tales of excess. “Hollywood has always been a private club,” he writes. “I open the gates. I say welcome. I say, *Look inside.*”

Told in a dizzying array of styles—from lyric essays and disarming testimonials to hilariously rambling text messages and ghostly footnotes—and loosely modeled on Alcoholics Anonymous's *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, *Actors Anonymous* is an intense, wild ride into the dark heart of celebrity.

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Actors Anonymous By James Franco Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

After establishing his literary cred with his story collection, *Palo Alto* (2010), actor and director Franco ups the ante in this canny first novel. It purports to be an assemblage of confessional tales told by members of Actors Anonymous, a 12-step support group relying on a higher power, the Great Director. Each mordantly funny and unnerving actor-wannabe struggles to cope with the abyss between dream and reality and the peculiar identity crises intrinsic to performing. Jerry is fiasco-prone. Corey's ambitious mother colluded in his sexual exploitation as a child actor. Sean speaks in fake accents when working at McDonald's, hoping to seem exotic. The ringleader is James Franco, or the Actor, a notorious deflowerer of virgins and a metaconstruct that allows author Franco to gleefully, bawdily, and scathingly dissect the cult of celebrity and the paradoxes of acting, blur the line between autobiography and fiction, and dispense genuinely resonant artistic advice. Though the pastiche of clever narrative modes doesn't always click, Franco is provocatively revelatory in this mask-on, mask-off inquiry into delusion and illusion, hubris and art. —Donna Seaman

Review

"Actors Anonymous is a book for anyone who enjoys delving under the surface of Hollywood...An engaging exploration of the weird and wonderful and a fascinating piece of escapism." —*The Daily Express*

"In *Actors Anonymous*, Franco performs an auto-celebrity roast that is at once mordantly funny, maddening and provocative...a kind of intellectual companion piece to his role in *This is the End*." —**Claudia Puig**, *USA Today*

"Franco deftly switches between these different characters' voices and fearlessly experiments with form throughout the book: one section is a screenplay, while another is made up entirely of footnotes. But what makes this book so powerful is Franco's own confessional voice. Perhaps this is finally a personal introduction to a man ready to be unmasked himself." —*Columbia Magazine*

"Hilarious, shameless, and effective...Franco's democratic marvel of feel-good prose employs a stable of likable narrators—and diverse styles, such as letters, poetry, text messages, journal entries, pure dialogue, and footnotes—from various walks of life, and the beyond...Their meditations on existence as performance art are funny, subversive, enlightening, and philosophical." —**Lisa Shea**, *Elle*

"Compelling...entertaining and insightful...genuinely funny." —**Thomas Flynn**, *The Daily Beast*

"Part aphorism, part instruction manual, part reflection, part short story and, seemingly, part memoir, the narrative is a pastiche of forms and moods. Franco (or his alter ego) presents his ideas through anecdotes and semiplausible fictional incidents, with plenty of inside references to Hollywood actors." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Franco writes with real authority about a certain kind of workaday desperation amid the promise of glamor...Engaging." — *Slate*

"Subversively funny and provocatively honest, is ostensibly about acting but it's really about a society where everyone's reduced to Actors Anonymous the roles they play. The novel's many narrators fight back against these roles in truly original, often hilarious, and deeply affecting ways. So should we all." —**Gary Shteyngart**, author of *Super Sad True Love Story*

"A remarkable, visceral display of the projected voice. Blake's assertion 'The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom' is used, brilliantly, as justification for Franco's life and also its misunderstood public/private undoing. The work gleams with aphoristic truths—'Maybe the search for the real is about playing the most roles and having the most sex.' 'It's the snarky little fuckers that write for South Park or Family Guy and hide behind cartoons that get revered. They are honest, but honest about everyone else, not about themselves.' Franco, by contrast, uses his own body as the staging area for a quite ambitious and seriously self-deconstructive fiction. Real art, as here, is always a performative seduction."—**David Shields, author of *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto***

"Electrifying to see a writer hold nothing back! This shape-shifting narrative extends a reader's sense of what a novel can be, can do. Franco plays with persona in ways that implicate a reader. The defiant humor is hard-won (including the best worst job interview ever), his take on irresponsible people is both eloquent and suitably scorching, the language is enviable: the seduction of a virgin is 'like a bullet through a birthday cake.' Franco's novel lures you in with indelible images, provocative mind games, and characters laid bare, then successfully strands you in a frightening place."—**Amy Hempel**

"James Franco puts on a James Franco mask and borrows formats from AA to create a fiction about the fiction of identity—especially as it pertains to actors and, by logical extension, writers. Is fame (the longing for it, the actuality of it) as entangled in the creative act as alcohol? Is acting (writing) an escape from reality or the only thing that's real for an actor (writer)? The illusion of reality and the reality of fiction hold hands in this novel in much the way that actors (and writers) steal from their lives to enliven their characters. The novel does not merely explore acting, it enacts it. This is a lively, strange, engaging, often funny, sometimes brilliant, and utterly fearless novel."—**Robert Boswell, author of *Tumbledown, The Heyday of the Insensitive Bastards, & The Half-Known World***

"James Franco's addictive voice swings between the irreverently playful and the bracingly gritty in these whimsical yet haunted riffs on celebrity, the drive to work, and the surreal tangle of competing desires that make the creative life so unpredictably intense."—**Dean Bakopoulos, author of *My American Unhappiness***

"Franco doesn't just don and discard the actor's mask: he peeks out from the edges and winks through the eyeholes, rips it away to expose all the other masks below. And always with a shock of recognition: both his and ours."—**Robert Cohen, author of *Inspired Sleep***

"As a work of experimental fiction, Franco's book is one of the most interesting things I've read in a long time, and lot more compelling than many celebrated writers who don't also happen to be actors."

-**ARTINFO**

"He gets you to see that life is messy, unrefined, a blending of countless media all working in a void....What [Actors Anonymous] portrays even more accurately than a troubled postmodern America is a consciousness warped and shaped by the lights of a savage Hollywood."—**The Daily Californian**

"James Franco's 'Actor's Anonymous' is a fascinating, messy creation"—**The Buffalo News**

About the Author

JAMES FRANCO is the talented, ubiquitous, popular, and provocative actor, director, author, and visual artist. His first book, the story collection *Palo Alto*, was published in 2010.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Aaron Mullen:

Have you spare time for any day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Yeah, you can choose the suitable activity intended for spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open or read a book called Actors Anonymous? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have various other opinion?

Richard Holeman:

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Marianne Haglund:

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Allison Larson:

Actors Anonymous can be one of your beginner books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort to set every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing Actors Anonymous however doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource details that maybe you can be one among it. This great information could drawn you into new stage of crucial imagining.

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