



## Sliver

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A successful career woman living in Sliver, a glittering Manhattan high-rise, discovers that someone is watching her every move. By the author of *Rosemary's Baby*. Reprint. Movie tie-in.

## Sliver Details

Date : Published December 1st 1991 by Bantam (first published 1991)

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Author : Ira Levin

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## From Reader Review Sliver for online ebook

### Callum McLaughlin says

This is another great book from Ira Levin. It's a bit of a slow build at first, working to establish a creeping, seedy atmosphere befitting of the unsavoury subject matter. The plot takes some unexpected turns along the way, keeping you on your toes, before culminating in a breathless climax. There's an excellent sting in the tale right at the end, and some brilliantly sinister poetic justice, that make this a very satisfying read.

Given that we're now in the age of social media and reality TV, the book's themes of technology posing a threat to our privacy, and the addictive nature of voyeurism, have aged incredibly well. If anything, it's more relevant now than when it was first released, and is all the more unsettling for it.

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### Bill says

Sliver is the 2nd book by Ira Levin that I've read the past year or so, the first being Rosemary's Baby. I preferred the latter. Having said that, Sliver is an interesting thriller, even if somewhat limp.

The sliver in the title is an apartment building in New York City. It's a rental building and shaped like a, wait for it, a sliver. Kay Norris, a publisher, is a new arrival. As the story progresses, we meet other people in the building, including a mysterious person who is watching the happenings via television cameras in each apartment.

As we explore the building and its history, we find there is a mysterious owner, a past of lethal accidents. The building is called the 'Horror High-rise'. Kay begins to get suspicious about her new boy-friend and the story develops rapidly to a tense outcome. (I won't spoil it for you)

I did like the story. I just wished it had more to it. I liked Levin's writing style, very sparse and direct. But he was almost too matter-of-fact, too vague about what the watcher was watching and built everything a bit too quickly. However, if you want to sit down and read a nice quick thriller with a neat premise, especially in these days of computer hacking, you might enjoy this. (3 stars)

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### Sonia Gomes says

Ira Levin, almost always has a twist at the end of his books. The twist however in addition to being unexpected is sometimes scary as in the case of 'Rosemary's Baby' and 'Those Boys from Brazil'

In 'Sliver' Ira Levin delves deep inside the human psyche. He asks us the question, what would you have done faced with the delicious opportunity of 'looking into your neighbours lives without they being aware of it'. And my answer is a resounding 'yes' I too would have been glued to the cameras taking in every detail.

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### Bert says

This was enjoyably ridiculous but not as trashy or pervy as i'd hoped.

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### **Mon says**

Ira comes THRU with the drama and suspense

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### **Mommacat says**

I don't think Ira Levin wrote a bad book. I read this back when it was new and still remember bits and pieces of it. I do know that it was the first of it's kind and that's always a plus.

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### **Brian says**

\* In spite of the echoes of Rosemary's Baby (a building with an infamous history) and The Boys From Brazil (in his climax), Sliver lives up to neither of these earlier novels, mostly because it isn't as grand as the others, there's no big prize dangling at the end for the bad guy. He's got what he wants; it's just a matter of keeping it. Since our heroine isn't too thrilled with that idea, the whole thing degenerates into a routine thriller that ends with one of those implausibilities that you have to figure must have been born of some news story Levin once read. The alternative is that Levin simply made it up in order to dish out his own brand of Greek fatalism. I know that's all rather vague, but I don't want to spoil anything. In any case, I didn't buy it for a second.

\* None of which is to say that the book isn't suspenseful. The book is about a guy who watches the tenants of a tall apartment building using hidden cameras. We learn this on Page 1. Not having anything else up his sleeve, Levin realizes he's got to make that interesting in itself. And he does. Not the way Woolrich (or Hitchcock) did in Rear Window, though. No, he puts that idea in reverse. Instead of a voyeur who witnesses a murder, we get a woman who, after being watched, discovers the voyeur himself is a murderer. Levin then gives the idea another twist, and we're off to the races. It's all very well done. It's just that Levin really has nowhere to go with it, except toward that silly climax.

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### **Alyssa says**

CATS ARE THE BEST

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### **John says**

This was a humdrum story that couldn't maintain my interest, and I threw in the towel after a hundred pages. The writing was so sparse that, a couple of times, I could hardly make sense of what was happening or what the characters were talking about. If ever I've read a book malnourished from lack of words, this is it. Even yet, despite its stripped-down quality, it still manages to be a slow, dull read.

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## Carol says

### 4.5 Stars

**OMG**, I absolutely cannot believe the ending of this Ira Levin **thriller**. He never ceases to amaze me, and I don't think it's supposed to be funny, but I can't help it.....HAHAHAHAHAHA.....Go Girl! It sure isn't often we have a heroine such as this.....

Anyway, welcome to 1300 Madison Avenue, a 21 story apartment building on Manhattan's East Side better known as **Horror High-Rise** or **High-Rise Horror** where there's a history of bizarre accidents that end in death **and** a shocking secret present within its walls.

**SLIVER** is described as a "sinuous erotic thriller" not so much erotica really, just a bit, but there is indeed a psychotic **pervert** that will eventually show his face. You will also find the term 'smooching' (*no kidding*) and mention of the old tv show Kukla, Fran and Ollie that put a smile on my face that only the older generation of readers will recognize, and then there's the **Apropos Ironic Ending** that totally satisfied this reader!

Am sad to say I only have two plays left to read, and then no more of this **GREAT** author.

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## Ivy says

Kurz, seltsam, gut!

Kay zieht in die 1300 Madison Avenue. Auch das "Horror-Hochhaus genannt". Es ist relativ neu, dafür gab es schon vier seltsame Todesfälle ...

Der Schreibstil ist speziell und man muss sich daran gewöhnen. Abgehackt, viele Perspektivwechsel, oft werden Szenen nur kurz dargestellt, dann wieder werden Details und Kleinigkeiten immer wieder hervorgehoben.

Ich fand das aber schon bei "die Frauen von Stepford" interessant.

Auch das Buch an sich ist speziell. Es fängt belanglos an, steigert sich langsam, die Stimmung wird immer beklemmender. Spannend ist es aber nicht.

Auf jeden Fall lesenswert. Und das Ende ist wahnsinnig gut.

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## Arun Divakar says

Is it just me or was this the most unexciting book that I have read in recent times. I confess to the fact that an exciting book like Rosemary's Baby by the same author piqued my interest enough to choose this book.

A hight rise building and the spooky goings on around it make up the crux of the tale. Centres mostly around a single career woman who comes into the building and falls in love with the wrong guy at the wrong place. It is at times so cliched that you can see the climax from miles off.

Nuff said... I dont know what else to cook up for a review

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### **Becky says**

This is going to be a spoiler-filled ranty ragefest, so if you are interested in reading this book, and don't want me to save you from yourself, then you should stop reading this review now. Because I'm about to give away the ending, and nobody likes that kind of spoiler.

You've been warned.

Dear Sliver,

10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1...

Goddammit.

ANIMALS. ARE. NOT. HUMAN.

THEY. ARE. ANIMALS.

Did I seriously just read a book- ostensibly written by the same man who wrote both the fucking amazing Rosemary's Baby and the almost as amazing Stepford Wives- which relies on deus ex machina in cat form to save the day and foil the killer? Did I read that? Because I feel like I fucking read that. I feel like (and anyone feel free to chime in here if Felice somehow was NOT a cat the whole time and I was just suffering from exhaustion or stress or some sort of temporary psychosis while reading this) the man that I thought wrote awesome, brilliant thrillers went full-on What-In-The-Everloving-Fuck??.

Dear Ira Levin, Dean Koontz, R.L. Stine, and any other motherfucking authors who write ridiculous hero pet resolutions into their stories:

Stop.

Just stop it. Unless you can do it in such a way that the animal acts like the animal that it actually is and not COMPLETELY AGAINST ITS NATURE or LIKE A HUMAN, just don't. It's fucking stupid and it makes my eye twitch and it makes you look like a hack.

Example of how it would WORK to have a cat as your hero: The scared cat darts between the killer's feet as he's chasing his victim down the stairs, resulting in his falling and being either seriously injured or killed.

Example of how it does NOT work: The killer and his victim fight, and the killer loses his gun to the victim, then he runs away and pretends to jump out the window. The victim comes to see, and the killer then pushes her out the window (don't worry, she totally finger-tip catches herself on the ledge, miraculously, on the way out). The cat then investigates the fingers gripping the sill, realizes they are her human's, and gets pissed

because apparently she can logically figure out the chain of events and what they mean. So she then, while the killer tells her to get lost (repeatedly), proceeds to launch an attack on the killer from the very windowsill that he just pushed her owner out of, and she literally claws his eyes out.

I never thought that I would be calling Ira Levin a hack, but I'm not taking it back. This book was such utter fucking stupidity, and then to have that shit-pie topped off with a fly-covered turd that is this ridiculous resolution just adds insult to injury.

I usually bitch about authors fucking up with dog characters, because they are more popularly used (at least from what I've seen) as heroes. I think that dogs are seen as loyal and protective, man's best friend, etc. So it's not so much of a stretch to think that a dog might go above and beyond to protect its owner. Except when it feels like the author has only seen dogs in movies like "Homeward Bound" or "AirBud" or something, in which dogs are unrealistically portrayed as basically being furry, four-legged people.

But then there are cats. We have all seen cute cat videos on the internet, where they are personified and anthropomorphized, and awww, how cute! But those cats are living in their own world, a world in which the hierarchy of existence is:

- 1) Cat
- 2) Food
- 3) Sleep
- 4) Bugs, birds, mice, and other chaseable objects which can be eaten
- 5) Bugs, birds, mice, and other chaseable objects which should just be tortured and killed for fun, but not eaten; toys
- 6) Food
- 7) The human slave

Cats are not concerned with your human shit. They don't give a shit if you are having a bad day and would just like a cuddle. They cuddle because THEY want to cuddle. Or they are cold. You can give them the best food, the most toys, the most attention, the most love, and they may still disdain to even flick an ear in your direction if you call the name you think they are called. If they choose to grace you with their presence, it's because they want your attention, not necessarily because they like you. Humans that live with cats know this. Cats do their own thing, and don't concern themselves with humans unless the human is taking too long making with the food or something.

So, cats don't know when you are in danger, and likely wouldn't care if they did, despite some claims that cats have knowingly tried to kill their owners on the stairs. This wasn't intentional or malicious attempted murder, it was just that they were scent-marking you to remind you that they will need food again in the future, so DON'T FUCKING FORGET.

Otherwise, they are perfectly oblivious to whether you may die... as long as you die inside so that they could feast on your corpse in the resulting food shortage emergency your death has caused for them.

They also generally avoid situations that they perceive as dangerous to them, including loud noises, things bigger than them that move unpredictably, like children, or two full size humans fighting. They would run and hide to avoid being trampled, and would only come out when the coast is absolutely clear.

So, Felice, our furry heroine, would have been hiding from the fight. And even if she was just out of the way and watching shit develop, she would not know that her human going out the window would be bad - she's never been allowed to experience window danger. She just knows it's off-limits. She wouldn't know that the

human's man-person standing by the window would be the REASON for the human food bringer to have gone out the off-limits window, and even if she DID somehow know that (because who knows what cats really *know*), she's not going to attack the man, which might result in her being injured when he defends himself. She had no reason to fear or mistrust the man at all - YES he held her hostage and petted her with a razorblade, but it's not like she was hurt or even knew that she was in danger. She is a CAT.

End of story.

Sure, we all read stories about hero pets that have killed the snake in the baby's room, or which have alerted humans to smoke in the house when there's a fire, or whatever... but I think we can be pretty certain that this is the cat acting out of instinct for its own safety rather than any concern for the humans in the situation.

There are even rarer stories of cats having compassion for others, like the nurse cat... but that's not the norm. The norm is more like this:

Coincidentally, that also describes how I felt about this book. In case my subtlety was lost on you.

OK. So enough about the animals-acting-like-humans thing. Let's chat about the rest of this shitfactory.

This book was 190 pages long, in the edition I read. It should have been pared down to, say, a short story. The amount of needless fucking detail drivel in this book made my eyes bleed. Yes, please, tell me more about where Kay shops for furniture THAT WILL NEVER ARRIVE DURING THE COURSE OF THE MOTHERFUCKING BOOK, but we need to have shopped for because otherwise there would never be a OH-SO-TENSE game of "Who left me an answering machine message??" in which the answer is "the furniture store".

Please, let's discuss drapes. They will be important when it's poetically described how they flutter after Kay is pushed through them to her (hopeful) death.

I'm begging, make sure to mention several mind-melting times that Kay's friend Roxie painted the art on her wall, because hey, did anyone ever mention how many cultured and successful people Kay is surrounded by who have NO FUCKING PURPOSE IN THE BOOK AT ALL?

I WISH there had been more detail about the neighborhood, because the 20 or 30 pages spent on it just didn't quite meet my needs. I KNOW that the story is about the INSIDE of the building, and the inhabitants, but if I don't know the layout of the grocery store across the street, and what they stock, I just won't be able to sleep at night.

All that detail, and I still had no idea who these people were. They made no sense to me. They acted in illogical and bizarre ways, and I spent almost the entire book with a perplexed expression on my face because WHY THE FUCK ARE THEY DOING THAT??

I can understand the sociopathic or psychopathic behaviors. The watching and the killing. Fine. I accept those things, because they are central to the story, and they don't really NEED explanation. We all people-watch to some extent, on public transportation, on the street, in restaurants, or other public places where other people might also be... just some take it a bit further than others and watch people in private.

But why did he reveal himself? Because she MIGHT figure it out? Why did she stay with him? Because she

loved him? After a few weeks? COME ON.

I've been with my boyfriend for 12 years. If I found out that he'd been watching my neighbors' private moments, that he'd bugged their phones so they could spy on their conversations and put cameras in their bathrooms to watch their every move, that would be a deal-breaker for me. A dozen years of love, my best friend, and I'd fucking drop his ass like a hot potato and then place an anonymous call to the authorities. There are just some things that are not fucking acceptable.

And the fact that Kay went along with it, that she was coming around to accepting it, because "they don't KNOW" and apparently that means that it's not wrong, baffles me and pisses me off. Was the sex THAT good, Kay? For you to become a monster? Nah, it was probably his money.

Speaking of their, uhh, "romance".

"Oh *baby*" this, and "*honey*" that. Him saying "I love you," with her replying "I love *you*, *Pete*" or sometimes, nauseatingly, "I love *you*, *baby*." The book's emphasis. Because it's a competition?

The rest of their relationship was alternating through a few phrases "They smiled at each other" or "they hugged" or "they kissed." Or they had shower sex, which, unfortunately, resulted in this being printed in a book and now existing for all of fucking time:

*She hung up [the phone].*

*Sat reading.*

*Scratched her neck.*

*Took a shower.*

*Saw movement beyond the steamy glass. The door opened and he came in naked, smiling.*

*"Surprise," he said, hugging her in the downpour, wincing at its heat, dancing against her--*  
*"Owwweee..."*

*She caught her breath. "I could do without Psycho," she said.*

*"I'm sorry." He hugged her tighter, kissing her cheek. "I took a couple of peeks at you. When I saw you go in, I thought, 'Jeez, I can actually go up and get in with her.' I couldn't resist."*

*She said, "I knew you were watching me...."*

*"I knew you knew," he said. Smiled. "It was sort of a turn-on...." She looked away; he took her jaw and turned her face to him, looked at her. "I wasn't lying, honey," he said. "Really. I took her out twice and that was it. If it had been a big thing I would have told you. I don't blame you for wondering; look how much I've lied to you before. But it's the truth. I swear." He kissed her, hugging her.*

*She tongued with him in the downpour.*

## SHE TONGUED WITH HIM IN THE DOWNPOUR.

Wait wait wait... let's back up a second, and just add a little context to this scene, shall we? She has recently found out that her boyfriend of several weeks has lied to her about everything but his name. He's a millionaire, not a freelance computer guy; owner of the building she has recently moved into, not just a tenant; etc. She has found out more recently that on top of just owning the building, he's had it custom rigged with high-tech cameras and microphones, and has bugged every phone line in the building, and that he watches everyone, including her, in their most private moments. She has accepted all of these things, and

now is even watching with him.

On top of these things, there have been several, shall we say, 'suspicious deaths' in the building, and she's beginning to wonder if they couldn't be connected... And then someone just casually mentions that Mr. Perfecto Boyfriend used to date one of the girls who died suspiciously. She questions him about it on the phone, he says he barely knew her, took her out on a couple dates, nothing happened, nothing to tell. She says she needs to think about things, please don't watch her... and then that scene.

The problem (well ONE of them. I mean, did you READ that passage?? It was published in a BOOK! A book featuring an EDITOR as the main character. My brain, it hurts. I think it's melting.) ... Anyway, the problem is that these characters suck. They're so fucking thin that I can see light through them. I don't know what is going through Kay's mind when she's standing there TONGUING WITH HIM IN THE DOWNPOUR, even though this book alternates perspectives and TELLS us what they are thinking constantly.

She doesn't yet suspect him of murder. She hasn't yet found that she's right to suspect. She's both too accepting and trusting, and too smart to accept and trust what she does. She makes no damn sense. None of it makes any damn sense.

They killed trees for this shit.

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### **Mary says**

Kay Norris, a successful single lady of thirty-nine, moves into the posh Upper East Side district of Carnegie Hill in Manhattan. The building she moves into is a slender, silvery high rise full of exclusive apartments. The building's landlord is personable, if slightly obsessive, but very solicitous of his tenants' various comforts. Only after she moves in does Kay discover that the tabloids have nicknamed her building "The Horror High Rise". Four unexplained deaths have occurred during the building's construction, and a fifth one is about to happen...

I really enjoyed reading *Silver* by Ira Levin. It was a very intriguing story and I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who likes horror. I think that I saw at least part of the movie that was made in 1993, and starred Sharon Stone and William Baldwin. In my opinion, the book was much better than the movie. I give *Sliver* by Ira Levin an A+!

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### **Claire (Book Blog Bird) says**

Eh. This wasn't great. Not totally appalling, but not great.

So - background. I've read most of Ira Levin's books (*Rosemary's Baby*, *A Kiss Before Dying*, *Stepford Wives*, *The Boys From Brazil*) and have really enjoyed them. He's a master of saying a lot without using many words, of building tension through innocuous events and of writing strong female characters who live in situations where female strength isn't encouraged.

So, yeah. I'm a bit of a fan.

Sadly, I was not a fan of Sliver.

The premise is that a hotshot publishing executive moves into a sliver (very thin) apartment block in New York that is, unbeknownst to her, fitted out with hundreds of video cameras that record the movements of all its inhabitants.

I found it really hard to like the protagonist - she was super whiney and I really didn't like the romantic relationship she enters into. The guy she hooks up with openly tells her he's attracted to her because she looks like his mother and she thinks that this is A-OK. Like, not a problem that you have a boner for your mum, Oedipus, let's jump into bed and declare our undying instalove for each other. So bizarre.

Unfortunately, where Levin's other books use a minimum of words to express a whole lot of feelings, plot and tension, this book does the complete opposite. I didn't need to know about Kay going furniture shopping - it had no relevance to the plot. A whole lot of the side-characters could have been cut out - they added nothing. In fact, I think this whole book could have been carved down to a long-ish short story.

Actually, I think Levin's editor might have asked him to think about paring down the word count at some point, because he does this really weird thing that I've never seen in any of his other books - he misses out a whole bunch of pronouns. Like this:

She hung up [the phone].

Sat reading.

Scratched her neck.

Took a shower.

Saw movement beyond the steamy glass.

This happens a lot in the book, and it really irritated me.

The reason Sliver is a two-star rather than a one-star is because (a) the premise was pretty cool and (b) I'm in a good mood today.

If you want a creepy read, go for (in this order):

Stepford Wives

Rosemary's Baby

A Kiss Before Dying

The Boys From Brazil.

Don't bother with Sliver. It's really not representative of Levin's work.

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