



Slab Rat: A Novel

Ted Heller

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In the pitch-perfect tradition of the very best of Nick Hornby, Martin Amis, and Christopher Buckley comes *Slab Rat*, a razor-sharp, highly comic novel of lethal ambition and office politics.

Zachary Arlen Post is an up-and-coming editor at *It* magazine, one of the glossiest jewels in the glittery publishing crown of Versailles Publishing. The son of a well-regarded architect and an eccentric Palm Beach socialite, Zack was educated at an exclusive boarding school and has studied at Colgate, Berkeley, and Liverpool University. He is an excellent golfer and has a talent for translating Plautus from the original Latin.

Or maybe not.

He is really Allen Zachary Post, the son of a garment-center bookkeeper from Queens and a pool-supply salesman from Long Island. But for Zack, his background is too prosaic for a slightly lazy but very ambitious magazine editor who wants to move up at *It*. Even though Zack has concocted a background that is more in keeping with the privileged world he wants to be a part of than the truth, his ascent up the masthead has stalled: Try though he might -- and maybe he's too lazy to try that hard -- he just cannot seem to get promoted.

Enter Mark Larkin, a determined, Harvard-educated hire who understands how the corporate game is played. Mark says the right things, he lunches with the right people, and he pitches the right stories. A snob thriving in a world of snobs, he begins to get noticed, and, to Zack's dismay, is promoted quickly.

Zack realizes that something must be done. Mark Larkin must be destroyed.

To complicate his life further, Zack finds himself involved with two women. One is a cool (or is she just ice cold?) English beauty with a hyphenated last name and vague family connections to Winston Churchill. The other is an eager, sweet-natured intern whose father is the magazine's barracuda corporate counsel. Zack is torn between the style (and hyphen) of one and the good-natured substance of the other.

In *Slab Rat*, Ted Heller uses the magazine industry as a laboratory in which to dissect human nature. He has written a biting, outrageous story of how the rats that battle for dominance amid New York's skyscrapers -- or "slabs" -- survive and triumph, and the price they must pay to win. Full of dark comedy and a ruthless satire of office life (and death), *Slab Rat* is a novel rich with the wicked pleasures of the heart.

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