

SLIDERS:

"SEMI-COLIN"  
by David Gerrold

**TEASER:**

The sliders are being chased by the "Inquisition" — the police force of a theocratic world. Just as they jump to the next world, Colin is shot by one of their pursuers. He falls through to the next world, severely injured.

**ACT ONE:**

Maggie and Rembrandt go looking for medical help. Quinn stays with Colin and tries to comfort him — allowing for a quick bit of exposition about the religious fanatics on the world they left.

Maggie and Rembrandt have found a doctor. He says Colin's spinal cord is *scorched* by some kind of energy weapon. He can't help. He warns against taking Colin to the colony of believers for a cure — that would put their immortal souls at risk.

They take Colin to the colony. The colonists/believers are beatific and saintly in nature, wanting only to make a difference and contribute to others, but in a peaceful way.

The believers offer Colin "the glow," a mysterious liquid that literally glows. It is a fluid composed of nanotechnological engines that will heal and repair the damaged parts of the body and will do so through a connection with God. It takes two or three exposures to the glow to complete the connection — and the healing.

The sliders have a brief discussion among themselves, is this "God business" real or is it memorex? They have no way of knowing and Colin will never walk again unless he takes the chance. So Colin drinks "the glow." He jokes that he will "say hi to God" for them.

**ACT TWO:**

At first it looks like Colin may die. The damage to his body is too severe and the effects of the glow are severe. But then the other colonists unite around Colin and "pour their energy into him." Colin begins healing.

When Colin awakes, he is changed. He is spiritually a believer. He has the same beatific glow, as if God's hand is on his shoulder, and his perceptions of people have shifted. The change in him is both beautiful and wondrous, but also disconcerting to the others.

The Sliders quiz Colin about what he is experiencing, in an attempt to figure out if it is real or not. Rembrandt suspects that it may be real — and if it isn't real, then it's still a very powerful access to something.

Colin asks them to drink the glow and be united with God. There is a beautiful world here. He explains that when they are glowing, they share access to each other's minds. (Like networked computers.) There is much that they can all learn about the nature of the universe, and there is much mental power they can apply to the questions relating to sliding.

The others resist the invitation. The clock is ticking. Colin is healing/healed. It's time to jump. Colin doesn't want to jump — it will cut him off from the linkage to the glow. And he wants to get closer to God. Without the linkage, the glow in his blood will die and he'll lose his access. The sliders exchange a glance. Perfect. They grab Colin and take him through by force.

### **ACT THREE:**

A new world. Seemingly a safe-haven. A place for them to recuperate.

Colin collapses from the jump — the shock of being separated from the rest of the colony has knocked him unconscious. The others tend him and worry about his recovery. Do they risk taking him to a doctor? No. Because the glow is in his blood. They can't take him anywhere until he is cured of the glow.

Colin awakes. He seems normal. He says he is normal. The others are cautiously optimistic. They begin to discuss their next moves — Colin brings them iced-tea or lemonade. It's such a normal act — until Quinn notices the way that the liquid sparkles in the glass — and knocks the glass out of Maggie's hand before she can drink. Colin is not cured.

Colin runs from the house (or hotel?). The sliders find Colin's hidden lab. He has been manufacturing glow of his own. His blood, mixed with water and some nutrients, exists in a set of thermos jars. One of the thermos's is missing. Colin is going to spread the glow through this world! They've got to find him.

### **ACT FOUR:**

Maggie, Quinn, Rembrandt follow Colin's trail. They encounter people who've been "transformed." They are believers now. They've had their first drink of the glow and they are beatific — and pitying of the sliders' fear of transformation.

The believers will not only *not* tell the sliders where Colin is. They will not let the believers leave. Colin arrives at the makeshift gathering place where the new believers are starting their new colony. He is accompanied by even more "converts." He has returned to make more glow. More glow will be needed to convert the sliders anyway....

We see how the glow is manufactured. Colin's blood glows now, as it is mixed with nutrients. He fills a chalice and drinks from it himself. And now, he is transfixed in a glow of his own; he is (apparently) in direct communication with God. But we only see his side of the conversation — and it is the "last temptation" conversation. "Why me?" Through Colin's side of the conversation we see him come to the realization that *this* is not God's plan. Not yet.

But the rest of the reinvented colony of believers is ready to force the sliders to drink — Colin stops them. No, this is not the way. People must not be dragged to God, they must come of their own free will. The experience of God (or whatever the linkage represents) is not a goal, but an avenue. The real job remains a function of individual responsibility. The speech works. Colin's presence shines through. The believers fall back. The sliders are free.

And they jump again....