



HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY.

Alumni Book Club 10-Year Anniversary Brunch

\$20 per person, please RSVP by 3/11/11

Sunday, March 20, 2011 (new date)

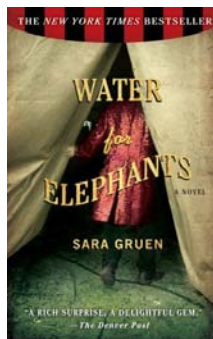
Alumni House

10 AM

This month's selection is

Water for Elephants

by Sarah Gruen



Jacob Jankowski says: "I am ninety. Or ninety-three. One or the other." At the beginning of *Water for Elephants*, he is living out his days in a nursing home, hating every second of it. His life wasn't always like this, however, because Jacob ran away and joined the circus when he was twenty-one. It wasn't a romantic, carefree decision, to be sure. His parents were killed in an auto accident one week before he was to sit for his veterinary medicine exams at Cornell. He buried his parents, learned that they left him nothing because they had mortgaged everything to pay his tuition, returned to school, went to the exams, and didn't write a single word. He walked out without completing the test and wound up on a circus train. The circus he joins, in Depression-era America, is second-rate at best. With Ringling Brothers as the standard, Benzini Brothers is far down the scale and pales by comparison.

Water for Elephants is the story of Jacob's life with this circus. Sara Gruen spares no detail in chronicling the squalid, filthy, brutish circumstances in which he finds himself. The animals are mangy, underfed or fed rotten food, and abused. Jacob, once it becomes known that he has veterinary skills, is put in charge of the "menagerie" and all its ills. Uncle Al, the circus impresario, is a self-serving, venal creep who slaps people around because he can. August, the animal trainer, is a certified paranoid schizophrenic whose occasional flights into madness and brutality often have Jacob as their object. Jacob is the only person in the book who has a handle on a moral compass and as his reward he spends most of the novel beaten, broken, concussed, bleeding, swollen and hungover. He is the self-appointed Protector of the Downtrodden, and... he falls in love with Marlena, crazy August's wife. Not his best idea. Source: Amazon.com Review

RSVP to Brunch by March 11, 2011 by calling Sandy at 516.463.5282

Save the Date – Sunday, May 1, 2011

Cutting for Stone by Abraham Verghese

To join the Alumni Book Club or for more information, please contact the Alumni Affairs Office at (516) 463-6636 or
Sandra.J.Lombino@Hofstra.edu