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Cover to Cover: Depression era novel an uplifting classic

Posted by [admin](#) on Wednesday, July 6, 2011 · [Leave a Comment](#)

By: Kelly Malambri / Columnist

Stepping into a world of magical, freakish and unknown wonders is something University students encounter everyday. Between learning new things and meeting strange and wonderful characters, it is an experience everyone can relate to.

These events, coupled with the tragedies of everyday life, are parallel to those created by the imaginative mind of Sara Gruen in "*Water for Elephants*." The dangerous and ultimately uplifting novel, "*Water for Elephants*" is the perfect book for the college student.

Using extreme hyperboles and romantic metaphors, the novel sweeps readers into the world of the circus during the Great Depression in the United States. The adventure begins when Jacob Jankowski's parents pass away and he walks out on his veterinary finals at Cornell and ends up working for the Benzini Brothers' Greatest Show on Earth, a world in which chaos and tragedy are a regular occurrence.

Jacob goes on to fight constant battles throughout the book, as any student can relate to on a daily basis. He battles for what he believes in, even after getting shot down over and over. He battles for friendship and he fights for love. He battles fear and depression. In his eventual triumph Jacob will inspire readers of this realistic fiction story to reach for exactly what is right for them.

During the Great Depression in the circus world, it was not uncommon for circus workers to be



thrown out of a moving car in their sleep when their bosses no longer had the means to feed them. The characters struggle finding work, money and sometimes even food, like many do in our own time of recession.

After all the chaos, the Benzini Brothers' Greatest Show on Earth comes crashing down, Jacob returns to school and finishes his finals. This time, instead of carrying the great burden of his parents' death, Jacob carries along with him a wife, a child, an elephant and eleven horses. After witnessing a world in which all differences are accepted and everyone can share some sort of grief, Jacob's story begins again as he ventures off into another new world.

The novel is a trying tale of redemption, one that any college student can relate to well. With her beautiful diction and magical yet real tone, Gruen is sure to sweep you away in her breathtaking and incredibly relatable masterpiece.

"Cover to Cover" is a biweekly book review column.



Filed under [Opinion](#) · Tagged with ["Water for Elephants"](#), [Cover to Cover](#), [Kelly Malambri](#), [Sara Gruen](#)



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