



Water For Elephants

by Sara Gruen

1. To what extent do the chapters concerning the elderly Jacob enhance the chapters recounting the young Jacob's experiences with the Benzini Brothers circus?
2. How does the novel's epigraph, the quote from Dr. Seuss's *Horton Hatches the Egg*, apply to the novel?
3. Who did you, upon reading the prologue, think murdered August?
4. Is August best described as charming and gracious-or something darker?
5. What is it about Marlena's sixth sense with horses that attracts Jacob and August differently?
6. How does the novel balance reality and illusion in the world of the circus?
7. What can we learn from Jacob's reflections about aging and personal identity?
8. How do Uncle Al's business practices reflect the ethics of the Depression era-or today?
9. Why do distressing memories persist, as Jacob claims?
10. What role does Rosie the elephant play in the story-and in Jacob's transformation?
11. What is the 'terrible thing' Jacob recognizes in August after seeing his treatment of Rosie?
12. How did you react to the redlighting of Walter, Camel, and others?
13. How did the ending meet or defy your expectations about Jacob's future?
14. What biblical parallels do you see in Jacob's journey?
15. What does the novel say about faithfulness, loyalty, and starting over?