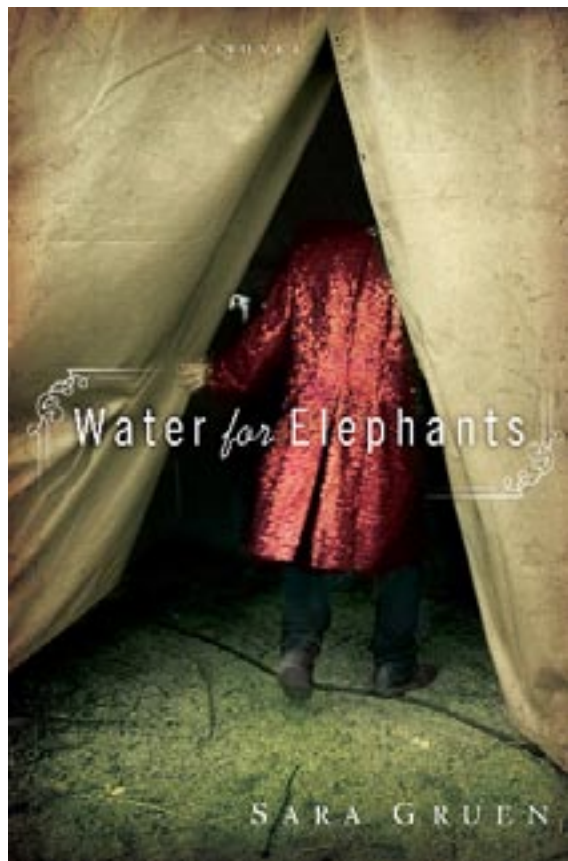


Book Sense

MARKETING CASE STUDY

Water for Elephants
by Sara Gruen
(Algonquin, 2006)



An Independent Booksellers Success Story

November 2006



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*Independent Bookstores
for Independent Minds*

BOOK SENSE MARKETING CASE STUDY

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CONTENTS:

The Challenge	3
The Solution.....	3
The Story.....	3
The Happy Ending	6
<i>Water for Elephants</i> by the Numbers: Fascinating Facts and Figures.....	7
<i>Water for Elephants</i> 2006 Press Coverage Timeline: Print, Online, TV & Radio	9

Publisher, Independents Join Forces to Promote *Water for Elephants*

THE CHALLENGE:

Market a beautifully told story, rife with history and drama, with a somewhat unusual setting: a Depression-era traveling circus. The book also has a somewhat unusual narrator – a nonagenarian who lives in a nursing home – not to mention other uncommon characters, including a mercurial circus boss, midgets, clowns, and an intelligent elephant. This engrossing novel doesn't have a clearly defined audience, such as Baby Boomers, housewives, Generation Xers, or romance-book readers; it will appeal to readers from various age groups, geographies, and literary leanings. How, then, to get this book into the hands of the wild variety of readers who will surely love it?

THE SOLUTION:

Call in the independent booksellers.

THE STORY:

It all began in the winter of 2005, when Craig Popelars, director of marketing at Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, first read *Water for Elephants*. As he turned the book's final page, Popelars had that this-could-be-really-big feeling...so he reached out to the independent bookselling community.

Said Popelars, "This book felt like an opportunity to put a copy in everybody's hands – you couldn't specify just one audience for it." And, he added, "Like *Life of Pi* or *Peace Like a River* or *Plainsong*, it felt like something bigger. It also has that great double-surprise ending...when you feel good at the end of a book, you want to look around and share it."

Although it was the busy holiday season, several booksellers took the time to read the book and called Popelars with positive feedback. And at the ABA Winter Institute, held January 26-27, 2006, a large number of the 400 bookseller-attendees introduced themselves to author Sara Gruen and shared their enthusiasm for the book.

The excitement-levels were rising...and the book's June 2 publication date was still five months away.

THE BUZZ BUILDS

As winter turned to spring, the *Water for Elephants* groundswell intensified. "I felt like I had a staff of 500 people working for me, and the independent booksellers took the job out of my hands," Popelars explained, noting that he received numerous requests for additional galley proofs because bookselling staff were getting tired of sharing their dog-eared, much-read copies. Ultimately, Algonquin did three printings of the galley, for a total of 3,500 copies.

The independent booksellers' enthusiasm boosted the book's print run and author-tour schedule, too. "[Our marketing efforts] were being amplified because of what booksellers were doing," Popelars said.

In response to booksellers' delighted demand for *Water for Elephants*, Algonquin's print run increased from 20,000 to 50,000, and the modest five-city author tour scheduled for Gruen turned into a 30-city adventure. Popelars said, "The booksellers were helping us create our marketing plan."

Pre-publication press coverage intensified as well:

- *Publishers Weekly* wrote about *Water for Elephants* once in March, and twice in April (Algonquin also took out a full-page ad with booksellers' quotes).

- Also in April, an interview with Gruen was featured in the Book Sense section of *Bookselling This Week* – not least because *Water for Elephants* received more Book Sense Picks votes in a three-month time period than any other title.

At the end of the month, *The Wall Street Journal's* Bob Hughes called Popelars to request a copy of the book. “[Hughes] said he kept hearing about *Water for Elephants* from independent bookseller endorsements, including one from Vivian Jennings at Rainy Day Books in Fairway, Kansas,” Popelars explained.

In May, the press coverage took off often as a result of the efforts of the Algonquin publicity department and its press release touting the enthusiasm of independent booksellers and Book Sense toward *Water for Elephants*. Outlets that covered *Water for Elephants* that month included:

- *Time Out Chicago*
- BookReporter.com
- Ingram's *Handseller*
- *Wall Street Journal*
- On May 31, *USA Today* did a multi-part story on the book
- Also on May 31, NPR's “Talk of the Nation” included it on their summer reading list

At Book Expo America in late May, the book was big: booksellers toted away 2,000 finished copies of *Water for Elephants* and Algonquin hosted two signings for Gruen. “BEA sealed the deal,” Popelars said. “It was the most successful BEA we've ever been to.”

On May 25, *Water for Elephants* hit the Book Sense Extended Bestseller List, debuting in the number 16 spot. By June 1, it had risen to number 12...and on June 8, it leapt to number 3.

On June 15, it reached the number 2 spot, where it held for three more weeks. On July 13, *Water for Elephants* triumphed in the No. 1 spot on the Book Sense Bestseller List. It's been holding steady at the top ever since, including several weeks at #1.

BOOKSELLERS MENTIONED IN NATIONAL PRESS

In his write-up for *The Wall Street Journal*, Bob Hughes noted the increased print run for *Water for Elephants*, and said, “Stores are behind this title in a big way: It will be the No. 1 June pick by Book Sense, a list put together by an affiliation of independent booksellers.”

USA Today mentioned the Book Sense list as well, plus the higher print run and tour schedule. Writer Jacqueline Blais also quoted Kate Larson from Book Passage, Corte Madera, California, in a comment that epitomizes independent booksellers' dedication to handselling: “I sold it to a gentleman who was going on a trip and wanted a guaranteed good read.”

NPR's “Talk of the Nation” joined in, too: in late May, *Water for Elephants* was featured on the Summer Reading List program, where it was noted that the book was an independent bookseller favorite.

The Author Tour – and Even More Press

Water for Elephants was released to the general public on June 2, the same day the book was featured on NPR's “Morning Edition” in the Good Books for Summer Loafing segment.

- *Entertainment Weekly* ran a review on that date, too.
- On June 4, the book was reviewed in the *New York Times*.

On June 5, Gruen embarked on her nationwide tour. Several days later, another wave of coverage was published, with praise for the book:

- *The Denver Post*
- *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*
- *Ottawa Citizen*
- *Deseret Morning News*

Then came the CBS “Early Show”: on June 13, fellow Book Sense author John Searles (who is also book editor for *Cosmopolitan*) recommended his summer reading selections. He introduced *Water for Elephants* by noting “This is the No. 1 Book Sense Pick for June.”

The next day, an article in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, “‘Elephants’ Makes Big Splash,” noted the increased press run and author tour that resulted from bookseller buzz: “The book’s first press run was slated for 15,000 copies, but interest from booksellers caused Workman Publishing’s Algonquin Books to increase the order to 50,000...and the author’s five-city regional tour has morphed into a 32-city nationwide jaunt....”

The article also included a quote from Workman Publishing/Algonquin Books publisher Peter Workman, who told the *Tribune*, “In the 23-year history of the house, I’ve never witnessed this kind of excitement for a book.” Betsy Burton, owner of Salt Lake City bookstore The King’s English, was quoted as well.

On June 15, *Water for Elephants* hit the *New York Times* Bestseller List at number 15 (it climbed as high as the number 7 spot, on August 20, 2006). And on June 29, the book broke *USA Today*’s Top 150, debuting at number 121; it reached the number 81 spot on August 3, and resided at number 98 as of August 10.

As July arrived and the nation celebrated Independence Day, the fireworks for *Water for Elephants* continued. Local/regional newspapers that have run reviews or features about the book include:

- *The Seattle Sun-Times*
- *Chicago Tribune*
- *Philadelphia Inquirer*
- *Santa Cruz Sentinel*

Additional national media have covered the book as well:

- *BookPage*
- *Paste*
- *Time*
- *People*
- ABC News
- another piece in the *New York Times*

In fact, in its July 2 “Inside the List” piece (in the Book Review section), the *New York Times* said, “Gruen’s book is not selling particularly well at chain stores, but it’s an indie darling.... Independent booksellers have been cheering Gruen’s novel for months...and it was the No. 1 Book Sense Pick last month.”

Across the country, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* recognized bookseller-efforts, too, in a July 6 article, “Author Sara Gruen Finds Poetic Justice in Personal Misfortune.” The article stated, “Gruen’s well-reviewed third novel is proving to be one of this summer’s sleeper hits, largely as a result of the strong endorsement of independent booksellers who championed it as the No. 1 pick for June on their national Book Sense list of recommended new books.”

In the next several days, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Centre Daily Times*, and *Portland Mercury* followed suit.

The *Sun-Times* said, “[Gruen] was only supposed to make local appearances for *Water* when suddenly the buzz among booksellers and the gush of major reviewers had her editors scrambling to send her on the road for two months.”

Pennsylvania’s *Centre Daily Times* said, “The novel has landed on several recommended summer-reading lists and is getting good placement from bookstore chains. Avin Domnitz, CEO of the American Booksellers Association – a group representing independently owned bookstores – compared the prepublication interest to the excitement generated by books that became bestsellers, such as *The Kite Runner* and *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.”

And the *Portland Mercury* noted: “*Water for Elephants* seems poised to blow up something major. From the press release: ‘It has generated more bookseller endorsements than any other book in the history of the Book Sense program.’ Considering that Book Sense is a simply a loose federation of independent booksellers who usually have their fingers on the pulse of what’s decent, that’s a pretty major endorsement.”

CHAINS JOIN THE CHORUS

As *Water for Elephants* continued to earn excellent reviews and garner press mentions, chain booksellers became highly interested in the book: “It started with the independents, and the buzz got loud enough that the chains and everyone else couldn’t ignore it. We’ve had good readings at chains, and they’ve put the book in promotions including B&N’s Great Beach Reads and the Borders Original Voices program.”

He added, “Costco got on board recently, too – they were distributing *Water for Elephants* to their top ‘literary’ locations, and then decided to do a full rollout. In fact, Costco ordered 15,000 additional copies of the book.”

The last week in July, he added, “BarnesandNoble.com sent an email to their entire customer base that promoted *Water for Elephants*. It was their No. 1 selling book during that week.”

It’s worthy of note, too, that independent booksellers have taken the initiative to tell the public and the press about *Water for Elephants*. For example, three representatives of Vermont independent bookstores were guests on Vermont Public Radio’s Summer Picks show, where all three named *Water for Elephants* as a summer-read favorite. In addition, Rhona Brimley of Florida bookstore The Bookmark recommended the book on NPR’s “Morning Edition.”

THE HAPPY ENDING:

The intensive collaboration between independent booksellers and Algonquin yielded outstanding results for a title that otherwise might have been overlooked by a potential readership lost in the sea of books published each season.

- The independent booksellers’ ability to recognize titles that would most benefit from handselling – whether fiction or nonfiction, adult or children’s, from a publisher large or small – contributed to their support for *Water for Elephants*, a book that didn’t have the built-in advantages of a well-known name or an easy-to-categorize subject matter.
- As with *The Lovely Bones*, *The Kite Runner*, and *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, among others, the strength of *Water for Elephants*’ story inspired advocacy and outreach from independent booksellers in the form of one-to-one handselling, calls to *The Wall Street Journal*, recommendations on NPR, and more.
- *Water for Elephants* garnered press mentions nationwide and in Canada, and the book graces shelves in independent bookstores as well as chain and warehouse outlets.
- The AP ran not only a feature on *Water* but included it in their 2006 Summer reading round-up and ran a separate review of the book, that has run in over 75 newspapers.
- Algonquin Books has gone back for a 14th print run as of November 10, 2006, for a total of 225,000 copies in print to date.

Handselling and passionate word-of-mouth recommendations from independent booksellers gave *Water for Elephants* its legs – and it’s still making strides, eight months after the ABA Winter Institute, where the initial buzz began.

“We know what put this book on the map,” Popelars said, “and we can’t take it for granted.”

Water for Elephants by the Numbers

+++ FASCINATING FACTS & FIGURES +++

A NUMERICAL OVERVIEW

- 100s** galleys sent to ABA Winter Institute attendees
- 3,400** galleys printed altogether
- 2,000** copies given away at BEA
- 35** cities on author tour
- 9** print runs
- 154,000** copies in print
- 1** on June Book Sense Picks list
- 1** on Book Sense National Bestseller List
- 9** on *New York Times* Bestseller List
- 3** on *San Francisco Chronicle* Bestseller List
- 15** media outlets mentioned independent booksellers in their *WFE* coverage

TV TRIFECTA

Water for Elephants was featured on all three major network morning shows:

1. NBC – “Today”
2. CBS – “The Early Show”
3. ABC – “Good Morning America”

BESTSELLER BONANZA

Since its first appearance on the Book Sense Bestseller List in May, *Water for Elephants* has been appearing on bestseller lists across the country:

- Book Sense Bestseller List - #1
- New York Times - #9
- Wall Street Journal - #13
- San Francisco Chronicle - #3
- Denver Post - #3
- Cincinnati Enquirer - #2
- Publishers Weekly - #9
- USA Today Top 150 - #81

INDEPENDENTS IN THE PRESS

The following media outlets have specifically mentioned independent bookstores, Book Sense, the ABA, and/or the Winter Institute in their *Water for Elephants* coverage:

- *New York Times*
- *Publishers Weekly*
- *The Wall Street Journal*
- *USA Today*
- NPR
- *Salt Lake Tribune*
- *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*
- *Chicago Sun-Times*
- *Chicago Tribune*
- *Cleveland Plain Dealer*
- *Centre Daily Times*
- *Portland Mercury*
- ABC
- NBC
- CBS

ELEPHANTS IN THE SUMMERTIME

Water for Elephants has been selected for summer reading lists far and wide. These media outlets have named it a hot summer read:

- *Wall Street Journal*
- NPR – “Morning Edition”
- NPR – “Talk of the Nation”
- NBC – “Today”
- CBS – “The Early Show”
- ABC – “Good Morning America”
- *People*
- *Parade*
- *Bradenton Herald*
- *Centreville Times*
- *Evansville Courier and Press*
- *Fairfield Citizen-News*
- *Independent Weekly*

A PRINT STAMPEDE

Independent booksellers’ enthusiasm – and the subsequent media and consumer interest— has resulted in numerous print runs for Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill. The details:

- The 1st print run was going to be 20,000, but handselling-inspired demand bumped it up to 50,000
- The press is on its 9th print run and counting, with 154,000 copies in print as of August 9
- Each printing was in the 10,000 – 15,000 copy range (vs. the more typical 3,500 – 7,000)
- WFE was the No. 1 selling hardcover at Ingram the week of July 10, and it’s still going strong
- Costco ordered an additional 15,000 copies the week of July 17 for distribution to all stores (vs. solely their “literary” stores, as initially planned)

Water for Elephants

2006 Press Coverage Timeline

+++ PRINT, ONLINE, TV & RADIO +++

JANUARY

The buzz begins at the ABA Winter Institute, held January 26-27

FEBRUARY

Book Sense Picks votes for Water for Elephants have been pouring in – ultimately, the book will have garnered the most votes in the shortest period of time (voting was January-March) in the history of the list

MARCH

Publishers Weekly runs an early summer-reading article featuring Water For Elephants

March 6 – *Publishers Weekly* – “Indie Surprises for Summer” <http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6312814.html?text=sara+gruen>

Key quotes: “The Algonquin staff was so certain that booksellers would love the book, they brought Gruen to the ABA Winter Institute.”

“Since the house mailed 1,500 galleys, dozens of booksellers have contacted Algonquin to praise the book, which is written from the perspective of a 92-year-old man looking back on his life. ‘It’s amazing that someone so young could describe what it would be like to be an old man,’ said Vivian Tackett, book and sidelines buyer at Brace Books & More in Ponca City, Okla. ‘I couldn’t put it down.’”

APRIL

On April 25, a Wall Street Journal reporter asked Popelars to overnight him a copy of Water for Elephants because of independent booksellers’ recommendations

April 20 – *Bookselling This Week* – “Everything’s Coming Up ‘Rosie’ for New Algonquin Title” <http://news.bookweb.org/features/4377.html>

April 24 – *PW* – “Building a Buzz for Elephants”

<http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6327172.html?text=water+for+elephants>

Key quotes: “A vigorous marketing campaign aimed at independent booksellers is paying off for Algonquin, whose forthcoming novel *Water for Elephants* has sparked pre-pub buzz that some are comparing to the anticipation generated by *Cold Mountain* and *The Lovely Bones*.”

“While the chains are also getting behind the novel—Borders picked *Elephants* for its Original Voices Program and the book will be part of Barnes & Noble’s Great Summer Reads Program—Algonquin credits independent booksellers for building the initial anticipation.”

MAY

Book Expo America was held May 19-21...and WFE hit the Book Sense Bestseller List May 25 at number 16

May – *BookReporter.com* – “Author Talk” (essay by Gruen) and “Water for Elephants” (review)

<http://www.bookreporter.com/authors/au-gruen-sara.asp#talk0605>

<http://www.bookreporter.com/reviews2/1565124995.asp>

May 4 – *Ingram Advance Handseller* – feature on *Water for Elephants*

<http://www.ingrambook.com/MRKNG/Handseller/0406/book1.html>

May 12 – *Wall Street Journal* – “Terror on the Beach”

This story about summer reads included this quote: “THE BUZZ: Stores are behind this title in a big way: It will be the No. 1 June pick by Book Sense, a list put together by an affiliation of independent booksellers. The publisher has increased its first printing from an initial 15,000 copies to more than 50,000. Ms. Gruen, a former technical writer with two previous novels under her belt, weaves circus lore seamlessly into the plot.”

May 21 – *PW* – “Fiction at the Forefront”

<http://www.publishersweekly.com/index.asp?layout=searchResults&sort=date&text=water%20for%20elephants>

Key quote: “Spurred by a big galley giveaway at the ABA’s Winter Institute, and mentions in the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* summer reading roundups, the book has hit the Book Sense extended bestseller list before reaching all stores. ‘It’s the biggest buzz we’ve ever had in our 23-year history,’ says Algonquin’s Michael Taeckens, noting that the book sold out its 50,000-copy first printing and has returned to press for another 10,000.”

May 22 – *MSNBC.com*

May 25-June 1 Issue – *Time Out Chicago* – “High Wire Act”

http://www.timeout.com/chicago/Details.do?page=1&xyurl=xy://TOCWebArticles2/65/books/high_wire_act.xml

May 28 – *Washington Post*

May 29 – NPR Talk of the Nation – “Talk of the Nation Summer Reading List”

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5435740>

May 31 – *USA Today* – “Step Right Up for Gruen’s ‘Water for Elephants’”

http://www.usatoday.com/life/books/news/2006-05-31-water-for-elephants_x.htm

Key quotes: “Booksellers are hoping *Water for Elephants* (Algonquin, \$23.95) by Sara Gruen will be the next *The Lovely Bones* or *The Kite Runner*.”

“Meg Smith, spokeswoman for the 1,700-member American Booksellers Association, says that ‘enthusiasm has been extraordinary.’ The novel is the No. 1 Book Sense Pick for June, a monthly list of 20 titles recommended by independent booksellers.”

“Publisher Algonquin has increased the print run from 15,000 to 70,000 books and bumped Gruen’s book tour from five events to 30, from Monday through July 28.”

“‘The buzz has spread like wildfire,’ says Algonquin’s Michael Taeckens, who sent out ‘tons of galleys’ to independents.

“At Book Passage in Corte Madera, Calif., Kate Larson is an evangelist: ‘I just sold it to a gentleman who was going on a trip and wanted a guaranteed good read.’ The novel presents ‘a slice of America worth a visit,’ Larson says. ‘I didn’t know anything about traveling circuses — or care about them. It captures a moment in time that’s extraordinary.’”

JUNE

Water for Elephants was published June 2...it’s the No. 1 Book Sense Pick... Gruen’s author tour began on June 5...and on June 15, WFE debuted on the New York Times Bestseller List at number 15

June 2 – NPR Morning Edition – “Good Books for Summer Loafing”

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5535347>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5444914>

June 2 – *Entertainment Weekly* – review

http://www.ew.com/ew/article/review/book/0,6115,1200013_5||15580||0_0_00.html

June 4 – *Chicago Tribune* – “Sara Gruen’s New Novel Takes Readers Inside a Strange and Compelling World”

June 4 – *NYTimes* review – “Trunk Show”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/04/books/review/04judd.html?ex=1153281600&en=889ef4be2eb87397&ei=5070>

June 8 – *San Francisco Chronicle* – “Author Takes Trip Into a Travelling Circus Lite”

June 11 – *Denver Post* – “Story Takes Us Along for Circus Ride”

http://www.denverpost.com/reviews/ci_3915356

June 13 – CBS Early Show – “Surefire Summer Reading”

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/06/13/earlyshow/leisure/books/main1706985.shtml>

Book Sense 76/Book Sense Picks author John Searles, who is also books editor for *Cosmopolitan*, introduced the book on-air by saying, “It’s a No. 1 Book Sense Pick!”

June 14 – *Salt Lake Tribune* – “‘Elephants’ Makes Big Splash”

http://www.sltrib.com/arts/ci_3976763

Key quotes: “The book’s first press run was slated for 15,000 copies, but interest from booksellers caused Workman Publishing’s Algonquin Books to increase the order to 50,000. One month after publication, the book has claimed the 15th spot on *The New York Times*’ bestseller list, and the author’s five-city regional tour has morphed into a 32-city nationwide jaunt, said Aimee Rodriguez, Algonquin publicist. ‘In the 23-year-history of the house I’ve never witnessed this kind of excitement for a book,’ added publisher Peter Workman.”

“‘The book’s so strong on narrative drive, it’s pure storytelling,’ is how Salt Lake City bookseller Betsy Burton explains its appeal. Gruen will be in town Wednesday for a reading at The King’s English, Burton’s store.”

June 17 – *Newsday* – “A Traveling World of Illusion”

<http://www.newsday.com/features/booksmags/ny-vert4781507jun18.0.7737984.story?coll=ny-bookreview-headlines>

June 18 – *Parade* – “Parade Picks”/ “Sizzling Summer Read”

http://www.parade.com/articles/editions/2006/edition_06-18-2006/Parade_Picks

June 18 – *Bradenton Herald* – “Author Sara Gruen Takes a Trip into Traveling Circus Life”

<http://www.bradenton.com/mlid/bradenton/entertainment/14837392.htm>

June 21 – *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* – “Literary ‘Rock Stars’ Amp Up the Bumbershoot Author Lineup”

http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/books/274784_bumberlit22.html

Key quote: “Another literary innovation this year are several pairings of writers on stage, including Palahniuk and graphic artist Charles Burns, Gaitskill and George Saunders, Larson and Sara Gruen, author of one of this summer’s surprise hits, *Water for Elephants*.”

June 25 – *Ottawa Citizen* – “Runaway with the Circus”

<http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/arts/story.html?id=9f8f6227-61ad-4483-a007-3c9a6c7ab3b8&k=5513>

June 25 – *Ottawa Citizen* – “Sleeping with an Elephant”

<http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/arts/story.html?id=8f0fd2a-a61a-465a-b752-9afe9d9e83e9&k=42296>

June 25 – *Deseret Morning News* – “Writer Transports Herself, Readers...”

<http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,640189301,00.html>

June 25 – *Deseret Morning News* – “Circus Life Flows with ‘Water’”

<http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,640189259,00.html>

June 28 – AVClub.com (owned by *The Onion*) – “Water for Elephants”

<http://www.avclub.com/content/node/49937>

June 28 – *The Independent Weekly* – “Beach Reads: Fun Stories & Chilling Tales for the Days Ahead”

<http://www.indyweek.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A33500>

JULY

On July 10, *Water for Elephants* reaches the No. 1 spot on the Book Sense Bestseller List...on July 13, the book was number 13 on the Wall Street Journal Bestseller List

July – AOL Book Club Pick

July issue – *BookPage* – “Under the Big Top”
http://www.bookpage.com/0607bp/sara_gruen.html

July 2 – *New York Times* Inside the List – “Elephant Walk”
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/02/books/review/02tbr.html?ex=1153281600&en=21157994fccc27a&ei=5070>

Key quotes: “Gruen’s book is not selling particularly well at chain stores, but it’s an indie darling — if this list reflected independent stores alone, *Water for Elephants* would be at No. 3.”

“Independent booksellers have been cheering Gruen’s novel for months, comparing it to surprise bestsellers like *The Kite Runner* and *The Lovely Bones*, and it was the No. 1 Book Sense Pick last month. (Book Sense is a list of recommended titles from independent booksellers.)”

July 2 – *Santa Cruz Sentinel* – “A Boy Dreams of Running Away with the Circus”
<http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/archive/2006/July/02/style/stories/04style.htm>

July 3 – ABC News “WSJ’s Summer Reading List”
<http://www.abcnews.go.com/GMA/Summer/story?id=2147781> (#1 fiction pick)

July 5 – *Fairfield Citizen-News* – “Catch Up on Your Summer Reading...”
http://www.fairfieldcitizen-news.com/living/ci_4015467
Fairfield-area librarians said *WFE* has garnered “lots of...good reviews from patrons.”

July 6 – *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* – “Author Sara Gruen Finds Poetic Justice...”
http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/books/276714_gruen07.html
Key quote: “Gruen’s well-reviewed third novel is proving to be one of this summer’s sleeper hits, largely as a result of the strong endorsement of independent booksellers who championed it as the No. 1 pick for June on their national Book Sense list of recommended new books.”

July 7 – *Christian Science Monitor* – “Summer Reading for Indoors or Out”
<http://www.christiansciencemonitor.com/2006/0707/plls01-bogn.html>

July 9 – *Chicago Tribune* – “From the Precincts”
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/features/booksmags/chi-0607080270jul09,1,1702783.story?coll=chi-leisurebooks-hed>

July 9 – *Chicago Sun-Times* – “The Great Escape”
<http://www.suntimes.com/output/books/cst-books-reed09.html>
Key quote: “This is an admittedly heady time for Gruen. She didn’t go on tour for her first two books and was only supposed to make local appearances for *Water* when suddenly the buzz among booksellers and the gush of major reviewers had her editors scrambling to send her on the road for two months.”

July 9 – OregonLive.com – “Adventures Speaks the Quirky Language of Depression-Era Circus”
<http://www.oregonlive.com/O/artsandbooks/index.ssf?/base/entertainment/1152132935213090.xml&coll=7>

July 9 – *Centre Daily Times (PA)* – “Animal Lover & Author Finally Tops Off...”
<http://www.centredaily.com/mld/centredaily/living/14992331.htm>
Key quote: “The novel has landed on several recommended summer-reading lists and is getting good placement from bookstore chains. Avin Domnitz, the CEO of the American Booksellers Association – a group representing independently owned bookstores – compared the prepublication interest to the excitement generated by books that became best-sellers,

such as *The Kite Runner* and *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.”

July 11 – *Paste* – “Water for Elephants”

http://www.pastemagazine.com/action/article?article_id=3068

July 13 – *Portland Mercury* – “Readings Listings”

<http://www.portlandmercury.com/portland/Content?oid=45398&category=22195>

Key quotes: “Yet another circus-themed novel, *Water for Elephants* seems poised to blow up something major. From the press release: ‘It has generated more bookseller endorsements than any other book in the history of the Book Sense program.’

Considering that Book Sense is simply a loose federation of independent booksellers who usually have their fingers on the pulse of what’s decent, that’s a pretty major endorsement.”

July 15 – *Charlotte Observer* – “Author Sara Gruen in Charlotte”

<http://www.charlotte.com/mld/charlotte/entertainment/books/15049252.htm>

July 16 – *Time* – “6 Guilt-Free Pleasures to Read at the Beach”

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1214957,00.html>

July 16 – *Philadelphia Inquirer* – “Coarse Voice Delivers Touching Tale of Circus Veterinarian”

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/entertainment/books/15038393.htm>

July 18 – *Miami Herald* – “Photographs Inspire a Fictional Circus”

<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/entertainment/books/15055357.htm>

July 18 – *My West Texas* – “‘Animal Lady’ Peoples Her Novels with Non-Human Characters”

http://www.mywesttexas.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=16933974&BRD=2288&PAG=461&dept_id=475591&rfi=6

July 19 – *USA Today* – “It’s July, and There’s Still No Hot Beach Book”

http://www.usatoday.com/life/books/news/2006-07-19-keepers-daughter_x.htm

Key quotes: “And the novel that critics and booksellers predicted would be the big book of summer — Sara Gruen’s *Water for Elephants*, about a veterinary student who joins a second-rate circus during the Depression — has gone through seven printings; 130,000 copies are in print.”

“Craig Popelars of Algonquin, which published *Water for Elephants*, gives credit to the good words from booksellers for the book’s success.”

July 21 – *Cleveland Plain Dealer* – “Entertainment on the Tens”

<http://www.cleveland.com/entertainment/plaindealer/index.ssf/base/friday/1153471250195450.xml&coll=2>

Key quote: “Sara Gruen, the darling of independent booksellers this year, will sign and discuss her crowd-pleasing novel *Water for Elephants*...”

July 23 – *The Journal-Star* – “Novelist Sara Gruen Takes a Trip Into Traveling Circus Life” http://www.journalstar.com/articles/2006/07/28/sunday_am/doc44bec36157e53200939358.txt

July 23 – *The Kansas City Star* – “Under the Big Top”

<http://www.kansascity.com/mld/kansascity/entertainment/15085684.htm>

July 29 – *The Brooks Bulletin* – “Book Review: Water for Elephants”

<http://www.brooksbulletin.com/news/entertainment.asp?itemid=54988>

July 29 – *Jam! Showbiz* – “Water for Elephants Brings Circus to Life”

<http://jam.canoe.ca/Books/Reviews/2006/07/29/1709239-ap.html>

July 30 – *Los Angeles Press-Telegram* – “Behind the Big Top”

http://www.presstelegram.com/entertainment/ci_4112185

July 30 – *Indianapolis Star* – “Novel Captures Gritty Circus Life”
<http://www.indystar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060730/OPINION03/607300353/-1/ZONES04>

July 30 – *South Bend Tribune* – “Life Outside Big Top”
<http://www.southbendtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060730/Lives04/607300552/-1/LIVES/CAT=Lives04>

July 31 – *The New Yorker* – Review

AUGUST

WFE continues in the No. 1 spot on the Book Sense Bestseller List... remains on the New York Times Bestseller List, at number 9...and on August 6, debuts on the San Francisco Chronicle Bestseller List at number 3.

August 1 – *The Cambridge Times* – “New Books at the Cambridge Libraries and Galleries” http://www.cambridgetimes.ca/cam/news/news_631242.html

August 3 – *The Ledger Independent* – “A Story About the Circus”
<http://www.maysville-online.com/articles/2006/08/03/lifestyles/744bone.txt>

August 3 – *The Lexington Herald Leader* – “‘Water’ Made Me Love It – I Didn’t Want To Do it”
<http://www.kentucky.com/mld/heraldleader/living/people/15168744.htm>

August 6 – *Akron Beacon Journal* – “Circus Tale Compelling”
<http://www.ohio.com/mld/beaconjournal/living/15205375.htm>

August 6 – *The Chronicle Herald* – “Life with the Circus Grim, Brutal”
<http://thechronicleherald.ca/Books/520442.html>

August 6 – *Evansville Courier & Press* – “Summer Reading List Has Time for a Few More”
<http://www.courierpress.com/news/2006/aug/06/summer-reading-list-has-time-for-a-few-more/>

August 10 – *Lexington Herald-Leader* – “Writer as Tenacious as Her Novel”
<http://www.kentucky.com/mld/heraldleader/living/people/15222330.htm>

August 27 – *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* – “Big Top Fantasy Delivers the Lessons of Real Life”