

Morsels for the Mind Book Group

Date: April 20, 2015

Book Title: Tell the Wolves I'm Home by Carol Rifka Brunt

Hostess: Nancy Dausman at the Women's City Club

Food Served: Buffet Dinner – Garden Salad, Grilled Chicken Cacciatore, Pasta Primavera Alfredo and Berry/Lemon Napoleons.

Book Synopsis: The story takes place in the late 1980s during the AIDS epidemic. June Elbus is 14 years old and her world changes when her favorite uncle Finn, a famous and reclusive painter, dies of AIDS. After Finn's death, she becomes friends with Toby, her uncle's longtime partner, who her parents and sister blame for Finn's illness. This clandestine friendship sharpens tensions with her 16 year old sister, Greta. Finn has painted a portrait of the two sisters as his last painting, which turns out to have a significant role on June's relationship with her sister and parents. The book is a coming of age story that focuses on jealousy, sibling relationships, learning to trust, establishing loving relationships, and learning to cope with death and loss.

Review: Amazon gave the book a rating of 4.4 out of 5 stars. Most of our group liked the book and discovered it brought back memories of our own teenage years, relationships with family members and how society's treatment of gays and AIDS victims has changed since the 1980s.

Highlights of Discussion: 1) The sibling relationship between June and Greta and how it changes by the end of the book. 2) How Greta might have felt insecure being a 16 year old high school senior, going to New York to be in a Broadway play, and starting college at a young age. 3) The lack of parental supervision of June's accountant parents during tax preparation time, making it easy for June to spend hours alone with Toby away from home. 4) Relationships and experiences we've had with gay friends and acquaintances. 5) "First love" with extended family members, such as an older cousin or an uncle. 6) The meaning of "wolves" in the title: wolves heard howling in the woods; the wolf's head found in the negative space of the painting; and using the title near the end of the book to describe June's feelings.

Attendance: Nancy Dausman, Anne Hill, Laura Lewakowski, Nancy McQuate, Sandy Oato and Nancy Schellenberg

Suggestions/ Business: None at this time.