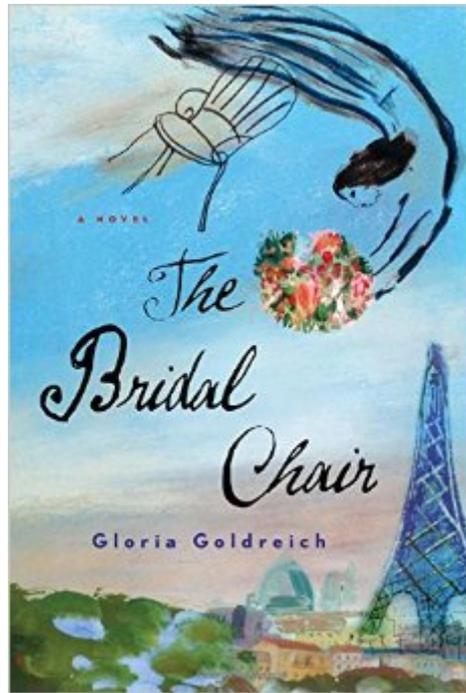


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# The Bridal Chair: A Novel



## Synopsis

"In prose as painterly and evocative as Chagall's own dazzling brushstrokes, Gloria Goldreich finely evokes one of the most significant masters of modern art through the discerning eyes of [his] loyally protective daughter." •Cynthia Ozick, award-winning author of *Foreign Bodies* Beautiful Ida Chagall, the only daughter of Marc Chagall, is blossoming in the Paris art world beyond her father's controlling gaze. But her newfound independence is short-lived. In Nazi-occupied Paris, Chagall's status as a Jewish artist has made them all targets, yet his devotion to his art blinds him to their danger. When Ida falls in love and Chagall angrily paints an empty wedding chair (*The Bridal Chair*) in response, she faces an impossible choice: Does she fight to forge her own path outside her father's shadow, or abandon her ambitions to save Chagall from his enemies and himself? Brimming with historic personalities from Europe, America and Israel, *The Bridal Chair* is a stunning portrait of love, fortitude, and the sharp divide between art and real life. "Only Gloria Goldreich could write a novel so grounded in historical truths yet so exuberantly imaginative. *The Bridal Chair* is Goldreich at her best, with a mesmerizing plot, elegant images, and a remarkable heroine who...will remain with you long after the last page." •Francine Klagsburn, *Jewish Week* columnist and acclaimed author of *Voices of Wisdom*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gloria Goldreich does her research well into the hidden story of Marc Chagall's life and art, his only daughter, Ida. The thread running through his obsessive self-involved artistic success was the heroic devotion of the women who literally nurtured him. Goldreich deftly interposes his ever

evolving artistic development throughout Ida's compulsive forty year obsessive involvement with his career, to the exclusion of her own happiness. Great story-telling; great introduction to Chagall's life and work. What's missing is a "Postscript" with credits to source-material helping the reader separate fact from fiction with an index inviting further reading.

Ida is Marc Chagall's beautiful and faithful daughter. As she gets older though, she is torn between her duty to her father and living her own life. At times I really enjoyed the story. Ida is a powerful female figure, who has a distinct personality that makes her memorable to the reader. The one problem is that I found the portrayal of Marc to be very frustrating to read at times. I don't know much about him, but the story makes him seem extremely pathetic. I'm sure he liked having women around him, but the book makes it seem like he was completely dominated at all times by the women in his life. Especially as his work is so powerful, he had to have some of that authority in his own life. Just because the daughter is strong doesn't mean the father can't be as well. Lastly, the book lasted a bit too long. I felt the time during WW2 was way too short, as that part of the story is the moment of crisis in the book. After that was resolved, it felt like the story should have ended fairly soon, which was not the case at all.

The author has made a moving and surprisingly engaging story of a small family; Marc Chagall, his wife, Bella, and their daughter, Ida. It's surprising that it's so engaging because none of the three is a hugely sympathetic character. It's possible to be a very great artist without being a narcissist, but narcissism is his single most dominant trait, followed by dependence upon other people to take care of him and self-pity. Bella is more sympathetic but finally awfully detached from everything but her conviction that she is married to a great artist; she seems to have no interests, no real friends, and no occupation. Ida, once she realizes the limits to her parents' love, devotes herself to removing every burden from her parents, making it possible for her mother to seclude herself from the world and for her father to paint and to wonder at his splendid talent, which doesn't seem quite so splendid to me as it does to him. Goldreich raises a number of interesting issues but lets readers make their own minds up about them. Is it just fine for an adult daughter with rather large breasts to pose in the nude for her father regularly? Is it right for people to sacrifice their own happiness in order to accommodate an artist? Is the moral center of the novel Ida's first, neglected husband, and if not, who is? It's a shame that the book can't be fully illustrated so that readers can look at Marc's works as Goldreich describes their creation and consider their own reactions to it. I came away feeling that I understood Marc Chagall's work much better, which is a fine accomplishment for a

novelist writing biofiction. I also came away feeling very glad I wasn't caught up in the Chagall family circle.

I enjoyed reading *The Bridal Chair*. I gained insight into the life of Chagall and his daughter Ida. I have always liked Chagall's work and I never knew anything about him. This book is historical fiction, but provides a very good profile of the Chagall family. I highly recommend *The Bridal Chair*.

I loved reading this account of Chagall's life through the eyes of his devoted daughter Ida. I learned a lot about history and what influences inspired and affected this great artist. We read this book for my book club and are having the discussion tomorrow. Everyone in the group gave me very positive feedback. If you like art and you like Chagall, this is a must read.

I enjoyed reading *The Bridal Chair* by Gloria Goldreich. Our book club had a good discussion about the life and times of Marc Chagall and his daughter, Ida, who is the storyteller. The WWII fleeing to safety of the Jewish Europeans and the artistic work of Marc Chagall were interesting parts of the novel. I found it dry during the many preparations for Chagall's works to be shown at different galleries around Europe and elsewhere. The subtle foreshadowing and interesting romantic encounters made for an interesting read. I rated it 7 out of 10 at our book club discussion.

The story was captivating from the first page. It took you through decades of the life of Marc Chagall and his family. It was interesting and kept you eager to turn to the next page! Wonderful read by a wonderful author!!

Kept you reading. Since it is historical fiction you just don't know what parts are fiction. ....picture the artist painting his nude teenage daughter , it is disturbing....but was that part of the fiction? We'll never know. Characters were all psychologically damaged but a very good read.

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