



Sue's Book Shelf

By Sue Littauer



This month's recommendations would be excellent suggestions for Book Clubs.

The Bridal Chair; Gloria Goldreich

An exquisite, haunting exploration of the complex mind of Marc Chagall through the eyes of his daughter. 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.



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 his family targets, yet his devotion to his art blinds him to their danger.

I especially enjoyed reading this work of historical fiction which explores the complex mind of Marc Chagall and the symbolism in his paintings. Additionally, the complicated relationship between Marc Chagall and his daughter Ida offered not only an insider's view into their personal dynamics but a backdrop of discovery into the intricate efforts masterminded not only by Ida Chagall but by American journalist Varian Fry to rescue artists during the Holocaust.

Another book that might interest readers of *The Bridal Chair* is *The Marriage of Opposites* by Alice Hoffman which explores the life of a Jewish artist Camille Pissarro. And this fall, the CJE Book Club will gain insight into the artist Gustav Klimt when we read *Stolen Beauty* by Laurie Lico Albanese.

All Who Go Do Not Return, Shulem Deen

All Who Go Do Not Return is a moving and revealing exploration of Hasidic life, and one man's struggles with faith, family, and community. As a member of the Skverers, one of the most insular Hasidic sects in the US, Shulem Deen knows little about the outside world - only that it is to be shunned. His marriage at eighteen is arranged and several children soon follow. His first transgression - turning on the radio - is small, but his curiosity leads him to the library, and later the Internet. Soon he begins a feverish inquiry into the tenets of his religious beliefs, until, several years later, his faith unravels entirely. In *All Who Go Do Not Return*, Deen bravely traces his harrowing loss of faith, while offering an illuminating look at a highly secretive world. (Amazon)

All Who Go Do Not Return, a 2017 CJE Book Club selection, was the basis for a thought provoking and stimulating discussion. This insider's look at an insular world educates readers regardless of religious affiliation about a little known community's beliefs, customs, and culture. As the author wrestles with the painful actions that will impact not only himself but his family and community as well, the reader is left to sort through his own feelings and beliefs. I highly recommend this memoir which was enthusiastically endorsed by the members of our book club.

If you are interested in reading related books on this subject, I suggest *I Am Forbidden* by Anouk Markovitz, *Cut Me Loose* by Leah Vincent, *The Book of Separation* by Tova Mirvis, and *Disobedience* by Naomi Alderman. ☆

Please join us for our next Book Club meeting on Wednesday, August 15, when we will be discussing the highly engrossing book *Waking Lions* by Ayelet Gunder-Goshen. For more information, please contact me at sueb.littauer@jewish-charlotte.org.

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- AV-rated Attorney by Martindale-Hubbell

brianbernhardt@mwlawnc.com | 704-360-8699 | www.mwlawnc.com