

Bridal Veil

Monica Wright

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This captivating mix of feminist outrage and philosophical soul-searching takes readers on a romantic time-travel adventure.

A fairy tale wedding takes a turn into nineteenth-century America in this time-travel romance that questions the very definition of marriage. Monica Wright's *Bridal Veil* is a simple story with profound meaning, especially in a society that emphasizes transaction over interaction.

A motivated heroine with political ambitions succumbs to family pressure and agrees to marry an aspiring senator to advance her father's goal of winning the White House. Charly Ellington's dad is the Democratic nominee, and as his daughter, she is a strategic pawn on a game board. She does not want to stand behind a man as he advances his career, so she falls through a mirror (literally) and emerges in 1885 to meet her great-great-great-grandmother, Charlotte Foster. An ill-fitting vintage gown is the catalyst.

Filled with deeper messages, Wright's descriptions often imply much more than their superficial meaning: "Charly pulled the dress off the hanger and put it on. Fighting the choking sensation that overwhelmed her every time she fastened the high neck, she swallowed deeply and stood in front of the full-length mirror."

Reminiscent of a familiar scene in *Alice in Wonderland*, Charly steps into the past disoriented and baffled. She learns that her ancestor did not have an idyllic arrangement and struggled with her own conflicts regarding genuine versus staged romance. Then Charly meets Jonas, the new love of her life—a sincere, passionate man who will never join her in the present.

Even in the twenty-first century, a woman may feel as though her dreams of a bright future are snuffed out under the dominance of a husband's career, evident in this introspective disclosure: "Determined to put reality out of her mind as long as she was in these surreal surroundings, she allowed her thoughts to return to Jonas. A silly smile crossed her lips as the image of his carefree smile crossed her mind. She couldn't help herself. It was just so nice to be able to explore a pure romantic interest with no hidden agenda."

Wright holds a master's degree in American history, knowledge that has enhanced her ability to portray her characters with realism.

Theoretically, this story cannot have a good outcome, yet spiritual mysticism has a way of putting a difficult series of events right again, even if the ending is not anticipated. Though some critics may label this novel as yet another Cinderella tale with a heroic rescuer waiting in the wings, the plot does not proceed along a typical path. This empathic book is a captivating mix of feminist outrage and philosophical soul-searching.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (October 16, 2014)

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