

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

## Ella Enchanted

by

### Gail Carson Levine

### Book Information

Gail Carson Levine, Ella Enchanted  
Quiz Number: 17769  
HarperCollins Publishers, Inc, 1997  
ISBN 0-06-027510-3; LCCN  
229 Pages  
Book Level: 4.6  
Interest Level: MG

In this novel based on Cinderella, Ella struggles against the childhood curse that forces her to obey any order given.

**Award:** ABC (Assoc. of Booksellers for Children) Choice Aw; ALA Notable/Best Books; Misc./Other; Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature; NCTE Notable Children's Books in the Language Arts; Newbery Honor; SLJ Best Book; State Award; Young Reader's Choice Award/Nominee

**Topics:** Behavior, Obedience; Fairy Tales, Fairy Tales (All); Family Life, Stepfamilies; Fantasy/Imagination, Wishes; Power Lessons AR, Grade 4; Power Lessons Vocabulary, Grades 4-6; Read Now with Power Up Recommended Lists, See All Sides; READNOW - Demco Media Turtleback Books, Demco Media - Read Now Grades 6-8; Recommended Reading, California Recommended Lit., English, 3-5; Recommended Reading, California Recommended Lit., English, 6-8; Recommended Reading, Children's Literature Choice; Recommended Reading, IRA/CBC Choice; Recommended Reading, YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant YA

### Main Characters

Char the son of King Jerrold, he is also called Prince Charmont; he and Ella fall in love with one another

Ella the principal character in the story, a girl who tries to break the curse of obedience placed on her by Lucinda

Hattie the daughter of Dame Olga, who becomes Ella's stepsister after Ella's father and Hattie's mother marry

Lucinda the fairy who bestowed the gift of obedience on Ella

Mandy Ella's fairy godmother who gives Ella a magical book of fairy tales

### Vocabulary

**enamored** in love

**lady-in-waiting** lady who accompanies or serves a queen or princess

**odious** very displeasing; hateful, offensive

**pantomime** to express with gestures

**subterfuge** trick or excuse used to escape something unpleasant

### Synopsis

Ella is given the gift of obedience by Lucinda, a fairy. This gift is actually a curse, since Ella can be ordered to do things harmful to her or others.

After her mother dies, Ella's father feels she should be educated and sends her to finishing school. On the trip there, Hattie realizes that Ella has to obey. When Hattie orders Ella to end her friendship with Areida, Ella decides to leave finishing school before she hurts Areida. She journeys to the giants' wedding in hopes of finding Lucinda. She wants to convince Lucinda to take the curse from her.

On the way to the wedding, Ella is captured by ogres. She tames them by talking Ogrese to them. At the wedding, Father tells Ella he is a ruined man, and she must marry in order for them to be rich again. He plans to marry Ella to the earl until he discovers the earl is not rich enough. He then decides to wed Dame Olga without telling her of his poverty.

After the wedding, Olga discovers that Father is poor and punishes Ella for the deception. Ella becomes a maid to Olga and is left penniless when Olive orders her to give her money.

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

## Ella Enchanted

by

### Gail Carson Levine

When Char asks Ella to marry him, she feels she must refuse. She fears she will be used by his enemies to hurt or even kill him. She convinces the prince to give her up by writing false letters. Learning of the three balls, Ella decides to go to them and just be content in Char's presence. She wears a mask to conceal her identity. When Char discovers her identity, he follows her and orders her to marry him. Ella breaks the curse by using all her will to fight against marrying him. She then is free to marry him and live happily ever after.

### Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

#### Initial Understanding

What might make you think that Ella's father was a bad father?

*He tried to "sell" Ella to the earl. He did not help her after she wrote the letter to him. He was not around when she was little.*

#### Literary Analysis

Ella felt that Lucinda's curse had made a rebel of her. How did Ella show her rebelliousness?

*She found ways to evade orders. She tried to frustrate the orders of Mandy. She did not carry out orders right away.*

#### Inferential Comprehension

Ella ran away from finishing school. What might have happened had she stayed?

*Areida, would have been hurt by her rejection. Hattie would have become more bossy to her. Areida would have become angry when she was rejected.*

#### Constructing Meaning

Ella was a friend to Areida. What qualities in Ella would make a good friend?

*She was loyal. She was able to love. She made people laugh. She was fun-loving.*

### Teachable Skills

**Understanding Characterization** In this book, Ella is cursed with the gift of obedience. She must obey any order. Ella was forced to do things she did not want to do. Through the book, we learn to sympathize with Ella. Hattie, however, is not a sympathetic character. She seems selfish and mean. It might be fun for the students to imagine what would have happened if Hattie had been cursed with the gift of obedience at the end of this story. Have them write a short story about how it would have affected Hattie. Would she have become less selfish? Would Olive have discovered the curse and used it to her advantage? What would Ella have done when she found out about the curse?

**Understanding Hist./Cultural Factors** Ella can speak several languages. On page 42 we see examples of the Gnomish language. On page 44, the Ogresse language is spoken. Some students might find it enjoyable to make up a few phrases of their own language using these two examples as their guide. How would their language sound? Would it sound beautiful or would it sound more like the Ogresse language did? Would it be capitalized as English is or would it have capitalization more like the Ogresse language? From this exercise, the students might get an idea of how difficult it was for the author to include different languages in the book and make them seem authentic.

**Comparing and Contrasting** *Ella Enchanted* has been called a type of Cinderella book. If your students are not familiar with the story of Cinderella, you may want to read it to them. There are similarities between this book and Cinderella. There are also differences. Set a time limit and have the students come up with as many similarities as they can between this book and the story of Cinderella. You might also want to have a contest. Set a time limit and have the students come up with as many differences as they can between this book and the story of Cinderella.

**Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for**  
**Ella Enchanted**  
**by**  
**Gail Carson Levine**

---

**Responding to Literature** In this book, we learn to sympathize with Ella, who has to obey. In order to better understand what it would be like to be under the curse of obedience, have the students imagine that they have to obey for an entire day. Tell them to write a short story about what might happen. What might they be forced to do by their parents? What might their brother or sister order them to do? Would their friends be nice or would they force them to do things, too?