

## 2000

**Levine, Gail Carson. *Ella Enchanted*. Harper Collins, 1997.**

### **SUMMARY:**

When Ella was born, a well meaning but misguided fairy cast a spell on her saying, "My gift is obedience. Ella will always be obedient." As a result, Ella has no choice but to go through life doing everything she's told. After Ella's mother dies, her father sends her to finishing school with Dame Olga's two odious daughters, Hattie and Olive. When Hattie discovers Ella will do anything she tells her, Ella's life is made so miserable that she decides her only option is to run away from school. On her return home, she discovers that her father, Sir Peter, has decided to marry Dame Olga. Ella's servitude and her blossoming relationship with Char, the prince, make her wish even harder for an end to her curse. Her fairy godmother, Mandy, is there for comfort, but can offer little help. It is only when Char says, "Marry me" and Ella resists because she knows the danger her curse could place him in, that she is finally able to break the curse.

### **QUESTIONS:**

What do you think Lucinda had in mind when she cast her spell on Ella?

Why is it so important that no one find out about Ella's curse?

What kind of relationship does Ella have with her father?

Ella realizes that her curse could put Prince Charmant in danger. Why?

How does Ella escape the curse? Why is she able to, when she's never been able to before?

Ella and Mandy talk about how ending a storm could be dangerous. What are some examples of "big magic" that could cause problems? Describe the magic and what problems it might cause.

### **JOURNAL STARTER:**

As a fairy godmother, I give this baby the gift of .....

### **ACTIVITIES:**

Research life in the middle ages.

Read and discuss different versions of the Cinderella story.

Learn songs from Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* or from Disney's movie version.

Make up a fantasy language or develop a fantasy kingdom.

**INTEREST LEVELS:** Grades 5-8.

## **BOOKTALK:**

Don't you hate being told what to do? Well, you couldn't possibly hate it as much as Ella does. You see, a fairy put a spell on her that makes her do whatever she's told. It doesn't matter who tells her, or what they tell her to do-she HAS to do it! It's not just a pain in the neck, it could be a matter of life or death. "If someone told me to hop on one foot for a day and a half, I'd have to do it. And hopping on one foot wasn't the worst order I could be given. If you commanded me to cut off my own head, I'd have to do it." Ella wishes she could get out from under her spell. Her fairy godmother can't even take it away. She knows there's a way to break it, but she doesn't know how. It's up to Ella to figure out the answer in *Ella Enchanted* by Gail Carson Levine.

## **READ-ALIKES:**

Levine, Gail Carson. *The Fairy's Mistake*. Harper Collins 1999.  
Levine, Gail Carson. *The Princess Test*. Harper Collins 1999.  
Cushman, Karen. *Catherine Called Birdy*. Clarion Books 1994.  
Cushman, Karen. *The Midwife's Apprentice*. Clarion Book. 1994.  
Fleischman, Sid. *The Whipping Boy*. Greenwillow Books 1986.  
Kaye, M.M. *The Ordinary Princess*. Pocket 1980.  
McKinley, Robin. *Beauty*. Harper and Row 1978.  
McKinley, Robin. *Blue Sword*. Greenwillow Books.1982  
McKinley, Robin. *The Hero & The Crown*. Greenwillow Books 1984.  
McKinley, Robin. *The Door in the Hedge*. Greenwillow Books 1981.  
Morris, Gerald. *The Squire's Tale*. Houghton Mifflin. 1998.  
Napoli, Donna Jo. *Zel*. Dutton Children's Books 1996.  
Yolen, Jane. *Sleeping Ugly*. Coward McCann 1981.

## **RELATED WEB SITES:**

**HarperCollins.com:** <http://www.harperchildrens.com/hch/author/author/levine>

**Reading Group Guide:**

<http://www.harperchildrens.com/webcontent/guides/pdf/0064407055.pdf>

**BookBrowse Reading Guide:** <http://tinyurl.com/3soqx8>

**Scholastic Discussion Guide:** <http://tinyurl.com/4ab7h8>

## **OTHER RECOGNITION:**

Newbery Honor Book, 1998

Winner of a Children's Choice Award in each of the following states:

Alabama, 1999; Arizona, 1999; California, 2000; Indiana, 2000; Iowa, 2000; Maine, 1999; Maryland, 2000; Vermont, 1999.

**MOVIE TIE-IN:** *Ella Enchanted*. Miramax, 2004

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0327679>