



GAIL CARSON LEVINE

"I wrote as a kid, but I never wanted to be a writer particularly. I had been drawing and painting for years and loved that. And I meditate, and one time when I was meditating, I started thinking, "Gee Gail, you love stories-- you read all the time. How come you never tell yourself a story?"

Gail Carson Levine grew up in New York City and has been writing all her life. Her first book for children, *ELLA ENCHANTED*, was a 1998 Newbery Honor Book. She is also the author of three other Princess Tales books: *THE FAIRY'S MISTAKE*, *THE PRINCESS TEST*, and *PRINCESS SONORA AND THE LONG SLEEP*. Today Gail, her husband David, and their Airedale Jake, live in a two-hundred-year-old farmhouse in Brewster, New York.

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Ella Enchanted

By Gail Carson Levine

About this Book:

The 1998 Newbery Honor Book, *Ella Enchanted*, is the funny and charming story of a girl who receives a most unfortunate "gift" of complete obedience. At her birth, Ella of Frell was given the gift of obedience by a fairy. Ella soon realizes that this gift is little better than a curse, though, for how can she truly be herself when at any moment she must obey any order given to her, whether it is to hop on one foot, or cut off her hand, or betray her kingdom. But spunky Ella does not tamely accept her fate: "Instead of making me docile, Lucinda's curse made a rebel of me. Or perhaps I was that way naturally." Battling hungry ogres, wicked stepsisters, and foolish fairies along the way, fifteen-year-old Ella embarks on a quest to break the curse - once and for all.

Discussion Questions:

1. When she started writing this novel, Gail Carson Levine wanted to base her story on Cinderella but didn't want Ella to be a "goody two-shoes." So Levine created the obedience "gift," which forces Ella to be good. Identify additional differences and similarities between Ella Enchanted and the classic fairytale Cinderella.
2. What kind of relationship does Ella have with her father? How is Ella's relationship with her father different from the relationship she had with her mother? Do you think Ella takes more after her mother or her father? Explain why.
3. What is the difference between small and big magic? Give some examples of both. Why is Mandy so reluctant to cast big magic? Why does she rarely tell people that she is a fairy?
4. What does it mean that Ella is in a line of women who are "Friends of Fairies" (page 25)? Are there instances in the story when Ella demonstrates her "fairy blood" and performs some magic of her own?
5. Why do you think Ella is finally able to break her curse of obedience when she initially refuses to marry Char?
6. Do you think Lucinda finally learns the damaging effects of big magic by the end of the novel? Why or why not?
7. How does Ella's knack for learning languages help her in social situations? What effect does she have when she speaks or attempts to speak to others in their native tongue?

Resources referenced:

kidsreads.com, teenreads.com, bookrags.com, teachingbooks.com, multcolib.org, barnesandnoble.com,
And MPL Staff.