

# **Ella Enchanted Study Guide**

**Ella Enchanted by Gail Carson Levine**

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# Plot Summary

When Ella is born, a fairy gives her the gift of obedience. As a result, Ella is always under the power of everyone who tells her what to do, no matter what strange commands she receives.

The fairy Lucinda means well when she gives Ella the gift of always being obedient. Ella's mother, Lady Eleanor, sees what a problem the gift can be, and tells Ella to never tell anyone about the spell. Any time someone casually tells Ella to do something, she absolutely must obey, even if it is something very silly or even harmful to Ella. Ella loves laughing and playing with her mother and their cook, Mandy. One day, Lady Eleanor gets sick and dies. At her funeral, Ella is very distraught, and she runs out to the graveyard to cry alone. Afterward, she happens to run into Prince Charmont, who says that he is sorry about her mother's death. At the dinner following the funeral, Ella meets Dame Olga and her two horrid daughters, Hattie and Olive.

Mandy reveals to Ella that she is Ella's fairy godmother. She cannot undo the spell on Ella, but she does what she can to look after Ella. Ella's father, Sir Peter, tells her that he has decided to send her to finishing school with Hattie and Olive. On the way to the school, Hattie figures out that Ella has to do whatever she is told. At school, Hattie makes Ella run errands for her, and plays mean tricks on her. When Ella hears that Lucinda might be attending the wedding of a giant, Ella runs away from school and tries to go to the wedding. She is stopped by a group of ogres, but she charms them with their own words, making them go to sleep. Prince Charmont and his knights find them like this, and thank Ella for taming the ogres for them.

Ella's father loses all his money in a business deal and marries Dame Olga for her money. When she finds out that he is poor, Dame Olga is furious, and takes it out on Ella by making her a servant in their house. Ella and Char still write letters to one another, and Char asks Ella to marry him. She thinks that she should not, because with her obedience, she could be used as a weapon against Char and the whole kingdom. Nonetheless, when he holds a masked ball to pick a wife, Ella goes with a mask on. Hattie plucks the mask off Ella's face, and Ella runs out of the ball, losing one of her glass slippers. When the prince comes and finds her at home, he puts the slipper on her foot, and orders her to marry him. Ella rallies all her strength, and refuses to marry him, breaking the spell. Now that she is free, Ella explains everything, and marries Prince Char. They live happily ever after.



# Chapters 1-3

## Chapters 1-3 Summary

When Ella is born, the fairy Lucinda decides to give her the magical gift of obedience so that she will always be a good little girl. This gift backfires into a curse, since Ella is forced to obey even the most casual order, no matter who tells her what to do.

The day baby Eleanor, called Ella, is born, Lucinda the eccentric fairy is there waiting to give a birth gift to the child. When she notices how much Ella cries, Lucinda decides that the child will be happier if she has an obedient disposition, and besides, little girls are supposed to obey their elders. Lucinda pronounces that Ella will always be obedient, and tells her to stop crying. The baby stops crying. Lady Eleanor, the mother, and Mandy, the cook, are horrified, but Lucinda refuses to undo her gift. They realize that they cannot undo the magic someone else has cast, although they think that perhaps someday Ella may find a way to break it.

When Ella is a child, Eleanor and Mandy quickly discover that they must be very careful what they say to her. If Ella is told to eat, she will keep eating until she is told to stop, no matter how sick she gets. Not only that, but Lucinda's gift does little to make Ella submissive. Instead, if she does not want to obey a direct order, she will only do what she is specifically ordered to do, while sabotaging her own orders. Ella can try to resist for a few minutes, but every second that she resists, she feels sicker and sicker, until it feels like she will go crazy if she does not obey. Ella tells another little girl about her curse, and the playmate thinks it is great fun. She cannot believe that she can get willful Ella to lose races to her, and always defer to her in their games. This lasts until Ella punches the little girl. Ella's mother gives her a direct order to never tell anyone of the curse. Ella's father is around so seldom that he never has a chance to notice how obedient his daughter is. Ella knows that she has a fairy godmother somewhere, but Lady Eleanor will not tell her who it is, or where she is.

One day, Ella and Lady Eleanor both get sick together, but Ella soon recovers. Eleanor, however, slips into an imaginary fairyland, and then dies. Ella can barely function at her mother's funeral, and bursts into wailing in front of everyone when the coffin lid creaks shut. Ella's father tells her to go away and come back when she can be quiet again, and she gladly runs away from the funeral. She cries for a while under a willow tree, but once she is quiet, she is compelled to go back to the funeral. Ella realizes that someone is standing nearby, and worries that they have heard her crying. When she emerges, Ella realizes that it is Prince Charmont, who is only a little older than she. The Prince says that he is sad that Lady Eleanor is dead, because she would always make him laugh at boring state functions. He asks Ella to call him Char for short.

Ella goes back to the funeral, and her father tells her to change into something clean for the dinner. In her usual contrary way, Ella puts on a bright green dress, inappropriate for a funeral. Her father introduces her to a woman named Dame Olga, and leaves Dame



Olga's daughters to comfort Ella. Hattie and Olive are just as fat as their mother, and just as rude. The first thing they point out is the spectacle Ella made at the funeral. Although they pretend to have no appetite, Ella cannot believe the amount of food the two girls put away.

## Chapters 1-3 Analysis

In these chapters, the main characters are all introduced. It is apparent that this story is a retelling of the classic tale of "Cinderella," from the less-conventional medium of a novel. Although Levine does take some liberties with the main plot, it is important to realize that "Cinderella" is a very old story, with versions from many different lands. There are quite a few plot variations, most of which are stranger than the ones in "Ella Enchanted." Most people think of only the Walt Disney animated movie version of "Cinderella," but it is one of the more recent versions to come on to the scene. This book borrows liberally from plot details introduced by Disney, such as a fairy godmother, while leaving out some of the gorier details from older versions, such as cutting of parts of one's feet in order to fit into a tiny shoe. No one knows who first made up the story of "Cinderella," but it has had many authors and has undergone many changes along the way. This version is unusual in that the story is usually not told from Cinderella's perspective, and usually Cinderella is obedient because she wants to be.



# Chapters 4-6

## Chapters 4-6 Summary

Ella begs Mandy to tell her who Ella's fairy godmother is. Mandy says that she herself is, and when Ella does not believe her, Mandy magically cleans up a bowl Ella has dropped on the floor. Mandy confesses that she has been godmother to the family for generations. Ella asks Mandy why she keeps it a secret that she is a fairy, and Mandy explains that people are frightened of fairy magic, and also that people would always be asking her for magical favors. Mandy respects the complicated ethics of changing reality, so she limits her spells to little ones, just cooking and looking after the family. Mandy has nothing but contempt for Lucinda, the only fairy who does not hide her identity. Lucinda always gives gifts thoughtlessly, so they are always terrible. Mandy explains to Ella that Ella has a little bit of fairy blood in her, so she is the last mortal in the kingdom who is a Friend of the Fairies. The only evidence of Ella's fairy blood is her tiny feet.

Sir Peter, Ella's father, sends for her. He says that he wants to get to know her, and she responds defiantly. Sir Peter asks Ella what she thinks of Dame Olga's daughters, and she replies that she does not like them much. Sir Peter laughs and agrees with her, and then suggests that she could go to finishing school with Hattie and Olive. Ella is horrified, and suggests that she get a governess instead. The next evening at dinner, Sir Peter brings up the finishing school again. He has noticed how clumsy Ella is, and decided that the finishing school may be able to make a lady of her. Ella protests and says that she will not go, but when she sees the rage in her father's eyes, she is afraid of him and agrees. That night, while she is crying in bed, Mandy comes and brings her Lady Eleanor's necklace, and also a book of fairy tales.

The next morning, Ella gets up early so that she can say goodbye to her home before she must go to school. She goes to the King's menagerie, which is near her family's estate. As Ella is looking at the exotic animals like dragons and centaurs, Prince Charmont shows up and gives her an apple. Ella makes him laugh by imitating a centaur taking an apple. They look at some talking birds that speak exotic languages like Gnomic and Elfian, and Char is very impressed by Ella's skill at picking up the magical languages.

As they pass an ogre's cage, they walk carefully, because ogres are known for their wily persuasiveness. Ogres can instantly guess someone's deepest secrets, and even lull a person into climbing into the ogre's cooking pot. Ella and Char notice that a baby gnome is crawling way too close to the ogre's cage, and Char picks up the baby just in time. He hands the child to Ella for comforting. The ogre takes one look at Ella and starts laughing. It does not bother to speak persuasively, but simply tells Ella to come to him, and bring the child. Ella decides that this is the time for her to break the curse, since her own life and another's depend on it. She tries to stand firm, but finds herself walking closer and closer to the ogre.



## Chapters 4-6 Analysis

The interactions between Ella and Sir Peter say a lot about their personalities. One of the first gestures Sir Peter makes is to show Ella a beautiful candle-holder. He offers it to her as if it is a gift, but then makes a comment about how much he can sell it for. This shows that money is a higher priority for Sir Peter, than giving his daughter a gift. Sir Peter is a merchant, and admits freely that he is a cruel, selfish man, who cares about money and power. He sees Ella not as a family member to be loved, but as an asset to use as he wants. Ella is defiant as usual, and Sir Peter sees something of his own obstinate spirit in her. This makes him laugh at first, but he is not looking for someone to make him laugh.

Ella asks Mandy why Lady Eleanor would marry such a man. Mandy answers that Sir Peter did not show his true nature until after they were married. He was very poor, and Eleanor was wealthy, and so Sir Peter acted very kind to her as he was courting her. Even back then, Mandy was suspicious, because Sir Peter did not like Mandy. It turns out that Mandy was right, and indeed, while Eleanor is alive, she does seem to be afraid of her husband. For instance, when Ella and Lady Eleanor both get sick, they lie together in Eleanor's bed. Ella knows that if Sir Peter were home, she would never be allowed in her parents' bedroom.



# Chapters 7-9

## Chapters 7-9 Summary

As Ella approaches the ogre, Prince Char orders her to stop. Afterward, he asks her why she obeyed the ogre, and Ella lies and says that there was something irresistible in the ogre's eyes. Char is worried, thinking that this means that the ogres now have a new way to bend people to their will. Ella and Char take the baby gnome to his family, who are overjoyed that their child is all right. The child's grandmother thanks them, and then expresses surprise that Ella could convince the child to go with her, since she is human. Ella explains that she simply repeated the parrot's greeting in Gnomic. The old gnome woman says that Ella will one day save many people. She foresees that Ella will be closely associated with three others, who are not to be trusted.

Dame Olga's carriage shows up at Ella's house to take the girls to finishing school. Dame Olga comments that Ella does not have enough luggage for a proper young lady, and then announces that she will not be riding along with the girls. Ella says a tearful goodbye to Mandy, and gets in the carriage. Right away, she starts arguing with Hattie and Olive. Hattie notices that Ella has something under the neckline of her dress, and insists that Ella show it to her. Ella shows her the necklace that Lady Eleanor wore in her wedding, and Hattie asks to try it on. As much as Ella does not want to, she put the necklace first on Hattie, and then on Olive, who requests it. Hattie quickly realizes that Ella will do whatever she is told, and tells Ella to give her the necklace, as a token of their friendship. Then Olive also wants a gift, so Ella gives her a coin.

When Hattie and Olive fall asleep, Ella takes a look at her new book of fairy tales, and discovers that it is a magic book! While some pages have stories, others have animated maps, and still others show what various people are doing at that moment. Hattie asks to see the book, and Ella thinks how she will kill Hattie if Hattie takes the book from her. Fortunately, by the time Hattie sees it, the book has turned into a dull textbook. Soon the coachmen sound the alarm because a group of ogres is bearing down on the coach. Since the ogres have such persuasive voices, the coachman actually slows down for them, until someone gets the idea of drowning out the noise of the ogres' voices. Everyone starts screaming, and Olive's screams are so loud and piercing that they leave the ogres behind.

On the journey, Hattie tortures Ella. She quickly decides that Ella should be her lady-in-waiting, and makes Ella act like her servant. She also keeps Ella from eating for three days straight. When the girls arrive at the finishing school, Ella introduces herself right away, lest Hattie announce that this is her personal maid. The girls sit down for a sewing lesson, but the Sewing Mistress does not realize that Ella does not even know how to thread a needle. A nice girl named Areida helps Ella with her sewing, and is delighted that Ella speaks a little bit of her native language of Ayorthaian. When the Sewing Mistress sees that Ella has made only three awkward stitches in an hour, she is angry and sends Ella to bed without supper. Ella defiantly says that she is not hungry, just as





her stomach growls loudly. The Sewing Mistress says that in that case, she can go without breakfast too.

## Chapters 7-9 Analysis

The old gnome woman foreshadows some important fate for Ella, something more important than just cleaning and trying on shoes, as traditional Cinderellas do. Mandy has told Ella that once in a while, gnomes can see the future, although it is a rare ability. Ella hopes that the gnome can tell her how she can break the curse, but the gnome can only see general things in the future. She recognizes that there is something special about Ella, probably because she can sense that Ella has fairy blood. She foresees that someday Ella will save the lives of many, especially the gnomes. Such important life-or-death matters like fighting ogres throw a striking contrast to the uselessness of the skills learned at finishing school. Although Ella demonstrates her quick mind and love of learning on the very first day of school, she is ridiculed and punished for not knowing how to embroider.



# Chapters 10-12

## Chapters 10-12 Summary

Ella is shown to her room, which she will share with four other girls. Fortunately, one of them is Areida, who sneaks Ella a roll from dinner. Areida is unpopular because she is foreign, and because she is poor, the daughter of an innkeeper. When Ella defends Areida to their roommates, Ella also becomes an outcast. At first, finishing school is very difficult for Ella, because she is more like a small elephant than a graceful lady.

However, since she has no choice but to obey the advice of her teachers, she surprises them all by quickly picking up all the subjects. This is nerve-wracking for her, since these accomplishments do not come easily. Instead, she must constantly remind herself of all the many orders she must follow. Even though she is obedient, the teachers soon get annoyed at her rebellious attitude.

Hattie delights in making Ella do various errands and housework. She has Ella sneak food from the kitchen for her, and rub her stinky feet, and pick her a bouquet. Ella secretly puts a plant in the bouquet that can make anyone who smells it answer truthfully. When Hattie smells the flower, Ella quickly asks her why she always torments Ella, and what she is afraid of. Hattie answers that nothing will stop her ordering Ella around, unless Ella stops obeying. She hates Ella because she is jealous of Ella's looks and bravery, and because Ella does not admire her. Hattie gives a long list of things that she is afraid of, and admits that her greatest desire is to be queen. The flower's spell wears off, and Ella is disappointed, since she has not learned how to defeat Hattie. However, Ella does regularly put spiders and mice into Hattie's bed, since she knows Hattie is afraid of them.

Ella's one consolation at finishing school is her friendship with Areida. One day, Hattie asks why Ella associates with the girl, and Ella answers that Areida has more class than Hattie does. To get even, Hattie orders Ella to end her friendship with Areida. Ella can hardly believe that Hattie can be so cruel. She stays up late looking at her magic book, wanting to put off the time when she will have to be cold to Areida, with no explanation. Tonight, the book displays letters that various people have written. Ella learns in a letter from Dame Olga to Hattie and Olive that there is something strange about Hattie's hair. Ella realizes that Hattie and Dame Olga must wear wigs, which explains why they have such great hair. Dame Olga also mentions her intent to soon visit Sir Peter again.

Ella also reads a letter her father has written, in which he mentions that he will soon attend a giant's wedding. Sir Peter says that he is looking forward to the event, and that he hopes there will be fairies there, since fairies often show up at weddings and births. He is hoping for the chance to trade for some real fairy-made items. Ella remembers that there were two fairies present at her own birth. She wonders if Lucinda will be at the giant's wedding, and imagines that she can beg Lucinda to release her from the curse. Ella realizes that no one has told her she has to stay at finishing school, and that if she runs away, she will not have to be unfriendly to Areida. Ella packs the bare



minimum to take with her, and sneaks into Hattie's room. While Hattie sleeps, Ella pulls the wig off Hattie's head and takes it with her as a trophy.

## Chapters 10-12 Analysis

Various characters are scheming to make power plays against one another. Hattie has a distinct advantage over Ella, but Ella is much more intelligent. When Hattie orders Ella to end her friendship with Areida, it is a stroke of genius and shows that she is capable of at least a little bit of planning. However, Ella has had years to practice thwarting the will of those who order her around. Hattie's motives are shallow and limited to the sort of ambition a finishing school encourages: be pretty, be admired, become queen. By taking her wig, Ella neatly puts an obstacle in the way of everything Hattie hopes to accomplish. Dame Olga is also scheming, in her own way. It is clear that she wants the money of the newly eligible Sir Peter. Sir Peter, on the other hand, values Dame Olga's title, and requires little coercion to play right into Dame Olga's hands, as long as he can hold on to his money.

There is quite a contrast between Ella's attitude toward magical things and Sir Peter's. Sir Peter values magical items and people only because they are so valuable in trade. He does not respect the magical races, but uses offensive racial slurs against them instead, calling the elves "greenies." Ella respects magical folk, and holds them in higher esteem. This makes sense, since she has fairy blood in her. Because of Ella's respect for magic, she is able to use it to help her, instead of merely trying to turn a profit, like Sir Peter does.



# Chapters 13-15

## Chapters 13-15 Summary

In the morning, Ella trades Hattie's wig for some bread, and the baker gives her instructions for how to get to the country of the giants. Ella travels happily, finally free to do whatever she wants, especially be unladylike. After traveling for several days and running out of bread, Ella begins to despair that she will ever get to the giants' country, much less in time for the wedding. She comes to the forest of the elves, and impresses them by speaking in Elfian. The elves remember Sir Peter, who recently visited them to trade, but they remark that Ella is clearly nothing like her father. The elves are kind hosts. They give Ella dinner and have her stay the night. In the morning, the elves load up a pony with food for Ella and also show her some finely-crafted pieces of art. These pieces are exactly what Sir Peter was hoping to trade for, and Ella is enchanted by the lifelike sculptures. The elves give her one of them, saying that she shows far more appreciation than Sir Peter.

After a day of traveling, Ella wakes up in the morning, surrounded by ogres. She realizes that they have eaten her pony, and they plan to eat her soon too. When the ogres have all agreed on who gets to eat which of Ella's body parts, they are about to devour her. Ella tries speaking the ogres' own language, imitating their persuasive patterns of speech, and she lulls the ogres to sleep. Ella looks up and sees a group of knights, including Prince Char. The knights tie up the ogres, while Ella speaks soothingly to them. The knights all have wax stuck in their ears so they will not fall under the ogres' spell. Everyone is very impressed that Ella can tame ogres.

Ella admits that she has run away from finishing school, and makes Char laugh with her stories of being proper. Since she is trying to get to the wedding, Char assigns a knight to escort her there. The other knights send word to the King, and guard the captive ogres. Char asks when Ella will again be in the area, and says that he will be back soon.

## Chapters 13-15 Analysis

Ella finally gets a taste of what it is like to tell others what to do, instead of always obeying. It is interesting that the ogres usually have the power to bend everyone to their will, and then Ella of all people gains control over them. She learns that there are many different kinds of coercion. Ella is used to being magically forced to obey the orders of others. She usually finds a way to obey but still avoiding doing what the person really wanted her to do. When Sir Peter insists that Ella go to finishing school, he does not give a direct order, and so Ella learns that sometimes fear is a sufficient motivator. She now understands the wily ways of the ogres, who get people to obey them by making the people believe that they want to do whatever the ogres suggest. Ella is able to sympathize with the ogres, since she herself has been coerced so many times, but she



also understands that the ogres would turn on her as soon as they might get the chance. After tying up and gagging the ogres, it makes Ella feel good to explain to them that she is a person, not a food object.

Even though Ella has trouble interacting correctly with people in the stilted atmosphere of the finishing school, her fairy lineage makes it easy for her to interact with magical folk. The gnomes think she is noble, and the elves find her to be much purer of heart than Sir Peter. Even the ogres fall for Ella's persuasive speech.



# Chapters 16-18

## Chapters 16-18 Summary

As Ella travels with Sir Stephan, the knight assigned to take care of her, he talks at length about how much he likes Prince Char. Char is kind, hard-working, and a fast learner, and Sir Stephan is happy to serve him. Finally, they arrive in giant country. They get there just in time for the wedding. Ella sneaks around, avoiding her father, and looking for fairies. She knows that fairies are identifiable by their tiny feet. During the ceremony, Ella identifies three guests with tiny feet, and guesses that the fantastically beautiful one is Lucinda. After the ceremony, Lucinda goes and greets the bride and groom, and after she disappears in a puff of smoke, the newlyweds clutch one another desperately.

Lucinda reappears with the other two fairies, and Ella sidles up to them, hoping to talk with her, without making her angry. The other fairies are criticizing Lucinda for disappearing and reappearing in public, and Lucinda tells them that she has just given a wonderful gift to the giant couple. The two can never leave one another's presence again, so Lucinda thinks that they will have a very happy marriage. The other fairies point out that this will drive the couple crazy, and that they will grow to hate the companion who never goes away, even for an instant. Lucinda sees Ella staring at her, and asks why. One of the fairies says that Ella is probably the recipient of one of Lucinda's gifts, there to beg Lucinda to take it back. He says that it was unfair for Lucinda to turn the last one into a squirrel. Now that Ella sees just how crazy Lucinda is, she is afraid, and pretends that she is only staring because Lucinda is so beautiful. Ella explains that she is too naturally docile, and wants Lucinda to give her the ability to say "no" to people. Lucinda tells her that this is a wonderful quality to have, and that she should be happy to have it.

Ella ecstatically goes off to find her father, and tells him that she has run away from finishing school. Now, she feels great joy any time she obeys an order, so she actually asks others what they want her to do. Sir Peter is quite surprised at the change in his daughter. On the way home, he tells her that he has lost their entire fortune in a shady business deal. Now that Ella is a lady, Sir Peter plans to marry her off to a rich man. Ella is overjoyed at the prospect, and does not even care whom she marries, as long as she can obey.

When Ella tells Mandy about the change in Lucinda's curse, Mandy is disgusted. Sir Peter orders special elvish mushrooms as a delicacy to serve when a suitor comes to see Ella. Mandy discovers that the mushrooms contain a love spell, and easily deduces that Sir Peter intends to drug Ella and the suitor into getting betrothed. Mandy switches out the mushrooms for regular mushrooms. Sir Peter catches her at this, and tells her to make sure she serves the elvish mushrooms when the suitor comes.



## Chapters 16-18 Analysis

The giants' wedding is a moving experience for Ella. First, after all the guests have assembled outdoors, the bride and groom appear, wearing white trousers and smocks. They carry a shovel and a bag of seeds, and they symbolically plant a row of corn together, to represent working together and planting the seeds of a new life. They pantomime the acts of a married life, pretending to sleep and age. They pull small children out of the audience, to symbolize their future children, and keep pulling larger and larger children out of the audience. Finally, after even grandchildren have joined the show, the couple lies down on the ground together, symbolizing their death. Ella envies them, having their entire life set out before them. She wonders if a ceremony like that will keep away the unpleasant things of life. Apparently it will not, since Lucinda curses the couple with her gift. One of the fairies comments that from now on, all giants will elope, just to keep Lucinda away.



# Chapters 19-21

## Chapters 19-21 Summary

Ella's suitor is Edmund, an aging earl. Ella tries to imagine being married to such an old man. They sit down to eat with Sir Peter, but neither man will eat the mushrooms that Mandy serves. Ella does, and she quickly feels the effects of the mushrooms. She feels an affection for Sir Peter that she has never had, and thinks that Edmund is a wonderful, handsome man. He is certainly much kinder than Sir Peter, and in fact, he and Ella get along well. She admits openly that she is in love with him, and in fact, that night Edward asks Sir Peter if he can marry Ella. The next morning, when the effects of the mushrooms have worn off, Mandy orders Ella not to feel happy about obeying others, but just to feel however she feels. Instantly, the happiness that Ella has felt since meeting Lucinda evaporates, and she once again remembers how much she hates having to do what everyone says.

Ella receives a note from her father, saying that although she flirted beautifully, she is not going to marry Edmund after all. Edmund turns out to have much less money than Sir Peter originally thought. Instead, Sir Peter is going to marry Dame Olga. He cautions Ella not to mention their new poverty until after the wedding. He insists on holding the wedding at the old castle, rather than in his house, as Olga suggests. He does not want her to notice that he is selling all his valuables, one by one. Ella and Mandy hide a few of Lady Eleanor's gowns, so that Sir Peter will not sell them. Ella avoids being around Sir Peter and Dame Olga, because the sickly-sweet way they talk to one another disgusts Ella.

When the day of the wedding arrives, Ella does her best to avoid Hattie and Olive. She notices that Lucinda has come to the wedding, so Ella also avoids being seen, not wanting Lucinda to recognize her. At the end of the ceremony, Lucinda stands up and announces that she has the best gift ever for the new couple. She bestows everlasting love on them, so that they will love one another as long as they both live. At first Sir Peter seems angry, but he is quickly overwhelmed by love for his bride. Ella sneaks upstairs, and hides in an empty room.

Ella is surprised by Prince Char, who follows her upstairs. No one else knows that he is at the wedding, and he says that he came to see Ella, to make sure she got back all right. Char says that he has heard that there is a secret passage somewhere in the castle, and so the two of them start searching the castle. After many empty rooms, they find a garden shed, with a trunk full of gardening tools. Under the tools is a tiny pair of slippers, which seem to be made of glass, but when Ella drops one, it does not break. Char tells her to try them on, and when they fit perfectly, Ella and Char dance together in the garden shed until the music ends. Then, once the party is over, they take turns sliding down the long banister of the huge spiral staircase. Ella's family walks in just in time to see her fly off the banister, straight into the Prince's arms.





## Chapters 19-21 Analysis

Up to this point, the story has not really followed the traditional "Cinderella" plotline. Finally, there are a stepmother and stepsisters, and more importantly, a pair of glass slippers. It seems likely that these are fairy-made, especially since an earlier set of fairies claimed to be shoemakers of very tiny shoes. This would explain why the slippers do not break, when Ella is not just dancing, but running around and playing in them. So far, there have been several references to objects made by the magical races, and usually the objects have some qualities that seem physically impossible for humans to create. For instance, the candle holder that Sir Peter shows to Ella has a porcelain clothesline, with tiny porcelain laundry. These foreign goods seem magical to the humans who buy them, because the humans do not understand how the objects were made. This is interesting in a fairy tale, because if this took place in real life, the exotic foreign objects might merely use unfamiliar technology. To someone who does not understand it, technology appears to be magic. When technology becomes more widespread, there is less need to use magic. For example, everyone in the story assumes that ogres use magic to persuade others to do their will. Ella realizes that it is just the ogre language, combined with very soothing tones, that is so persuasive. At first, she is the only one who can tell the ogres what to do, but soon others learn this skill too. Just as technology makes "magic" available to many people, instead of just one, so also many people learn to control the ogres.



# Chapters 22-24

## Chapters 22-24 Summary

Ella, Sir Peter, Dame Olga, and the stepsisters cram themselves into the coach to go home after the wedding. Dame Olga asks Sir Peter just how rich they are now, and Sir Peter admits that he is financially ruined. Olga falls apart in tears, but her new, magical love for Sir Peter will not allow her to hate him for deceiving her during their courtship. However, she immediately turns on Ella, saying that she will not have this pauper living like one of the ladies of the house. She says that Ella must earn her keep, and live in the servants' quarters. Sir Peter says that he will not let her make Ella a servant in her own home. However, he does not stop his bride from grabbing Ella's purse and taking the filigree comb she finds inside. Sir Peter does not stay long to enjoy his marriage. Although he cannot help loving Olga, she is really annoying. When he leaves Ella a goodbye note, he says that he is going to trade far away, and that he will not be back for a long time.

Once Sir Peter can no longer protect Ella, Hattie reveals to Dame Olga and Olive that Ella will do anything they tell her to do. They think this is wonderful, of course. When the servants give word that Prince Char is on his way, Hattie orders Ella to her room, and Ella is helpless to resist. Char stays several hours talking with Hattie, but finally leaves. He comes back the next day, to say goodbye because he is leaving for a year in Ayortha. Ella is again in her room, but when Char is leaving, he sees her in her window. He thinks that she is deliberately avoiding him. Ella sends him a letter through Mandy, telling him that she was confined to her room, but not revealing why she could not come out. The two start writing letters to each other often.

Right away, Dame Olga has Ella's things moved to the worst room in the servants' quarters, practically a closet, with no fireplace even. Mandy asks to have Ella as a scullery maid, and since Dame Olga loves Mandy's cooking, she agrees. Not only does Ella help cook and serve the food, but she also scrubs floors, tells endless stories to Olive, and prepares Hattie for parties. When the stepfamily hosts parties, Ella has to tend the fire in front of the guests, in her filthy, threadbare dress. Once in a while, Ella sneaks into the library to hide, since her stepmother and stepsisters would never think to enter the library. In desperation, Ella writes to Sir Peter, begging him to come back.

In Char's letters, he always closes by asking Ella if she is old enough to marry yet. She always gives a silly answer, not knowing if he is joking or serious. They write about all kinds of things, and tell all sorts of soul secrets, but Ella never mentions her curse. She also never admits that she is living as a servant, because Char would want to know why she would agree to something like that. One day, six months after Char has left, Ella receives a letter in which he tells her he is tired of playing games with her. He has told her so much, and she always hints around without revealing anything. Char asks flat-out if Ella will marry him, and confesses that he has been in love with her since the day they ran into one another at her mother's funeral.



## Chapters 22-24 Analysis

The story is finally beginning to really follow the traditional plotline of "Cinderella." This romance with Prince Charmont makes a lot more sense than the typical love at first sight, where the prince decides on a wife after one evening of dancing. Ella and Char have had a chance to get to know one another, both through their conversations, and their letters. Char desperately needs someone to make him laugh, because he is always surrounded by courtiers who just say what they think he wants to hear. Ella is the only one who speaks frankly to him, or who dares to make jokes in his presence. Ella loves making people laugh, and the prince has never even suspected that she is under a curse, because he is so used to people obeying him. Char is preparing to be the sort of king who cares about his people, and wants to help them, not hold himself above them. This is similar to the way that Ella loves her servants like family members.



# Chapters 25-27

## Chapters 25-27 Summary

At first, Ella is overjoyed to read the prince's words. It has never occurred to her that one way to get away from her stepfamily, and have people stop telling her what to do, is to marry Char and become queen someday. After she thinks about it some more, though, she realizes that it could have terrible consequences. If anyone should find out about her curse, and they would, she could be used as a tool by Char's enemies. She could betray the kingdom, or even be forced to kill Char! Ella weeps in the fireplace, and Mandy decides to give Lucinda a piece of her mind. She tells Ella to hide behind a curtain, and then summons Lucinda. She dares Lucinda to try out some of the gifts that she bestows on others, to see if they really are good gifts. Lucinda finally agrees to spend three months living as a squirrel, and then three months being obedient.

Ella looks forward to the day when Lucinda will come to her senses and revoke the curse. It is only this, and the thought of being with Char, that get her through the days of drudgery, catering to Hattie and Olive's whims. Finally, Lucinda shows up, sad and droopy, no longer beautiful from fairy glamor. She has seen how terrible it is to be a squirrel, or to always have to obey. When Lucinda says that she wishes that she could take all her gifts back, Ella reveals herself, and begs Lucinda to take back the gift of obedience. Unfortunately, Lucinda has sworn off big magic, having seen its effects, so she will not do it. After Ella begs Lucinda to no avail, Ella runs up to her room, crying. She writes a letter in Hattie's handwriting, filled with misspellings, informing Char that Ella has eloped with an old, rich man. "Hattie" tells Char that Ella was only playing him like a fool, and that Ella would always read his letters out loud so everyone could laugh at them. Ella also encloses a note in her own handwriting, in which she tells Char how her ancient husband will certainly die soon, leaving her with his money. Ella receives a letter from Sir Peter, saying that he is going to stay away much longer than planned, even though he knows about Ella's situation. He writes that as soon as he can, he will marry Ella off to some rich old man, so that she can leave Dame Olga and her daughters. Ella laughs to think that Sir Peter is going to make her lie to Char come true.

When Prince Charmont comes back to Kyrria, there are to be three royal balls, and the prince will choose his wife at the final ball. Hattie and Olive are very excited about the balls, and talk of nothing else. They make Ella work hard preparing them. At first, Ella is angry that she cannot go to the balls, but then she realizes that no one has forbidden her, and it is to be a masked ball. She decides to go, just for the chance to see Char. Mandy helps her alter the prettiest of her mother's dresses so that they fit the modern fashions. After getting Hattie ready to go all day, Ella finally gets the chance to take a bath. She uses all of Hattie's nicest toiletries, and Mandy makes the bath into a healing experience, so that it washes away a year of drudgery, misery, and filth. Ella puts on her gown and the glass slippers, and is about to leave, when she sees that it is sleeting. Mandy says that she can just go to the next ball, but instead Ella summons Lucinda. She tells Lucinda her situation, and Lucinda makes her a carriage out of a pumpkin, and



horses and coachmen out of mice. Lucinda also makes Ella a beautiful tiara and necklace. Because she is worried about using big magic, Lucinda deems that the spell will only last until midnight.

Ella goes to the ball, and watches Char from afar. When she sees the receiving line end, she cannot resist, so she goes up to him and disguises her voice, and says that her name is Lela. Char does not recognize her, but he likes talking and dancing with her. Ella slips away when she sees that it is getting late. The next night, the prince sees "Lela" again in the crowd, and asks her to dance. He sings her a verse of a farewell poem that is a sort of love song. Ella realizes what time it is, and she rushes out of the ball.

## Chapters 25-27 Analysis

The Ayorthaian farewell song that Prince Char sings to Ella sounds a lot like a code. It is as though Char is secretly asking "Lela" if she is really Ella, and if she remembers him. Perhaps he is suspicious that all is not as it seems. Char runs into Areida in Ayortha, and tells her of the news of Ella's marriage. He comments that Ella should be happy, because she is rich now, and Areida answers that she knows Ella does not care about money. Areida talks about how kind Ella is, and Char is confused, trying to reconcile what Areida says with what he thinks that Ella has done to him. Ella does her best to throw him off, by claiming that she does not slide down banisters because she is afraid of heights. She is only able to deceive Char because she wears a mask, and because she is so good at doing impressions and impersonations.



# Chapters 28-29-Epilogue

## Chapters 28-29-Epilogue Summary

On the night of the final ball, Mandy presents Ella with a pretty tiara and necklace that she bought at the market, so that they will not disappear at midnight. When Ella shows up at the ball, the prince is waiting for her. They dance, and also stroll around talking. The prince does not ask why she wears the mask, because he assumes she has some deformity. Char confides in Ella that he has decided never to marry. The prince presents "Lela" to his parents, who smile approvingly at their son's choice. They do not comment on the rudeness of "Lela" leaving her mask on in the presence of the King and Queen. Ella and Char go in for another dance, and while they are dancing, Hattie sneaks up behind Ella and snatches off her mask. Ella tries to cover her face, and then runs away. Hattie holds Char back from catching Ella. As Ella runs out, she loses one of her shoes.

Ella rushes home, and then puts her housemaid's dress back on, smearing soot on her face. She covers her hair with a filthy piece of linen. She is terrified that now she has again put the country of Kyrria in danger, by putting herself in a position to become queen. Soon Ella hears a commotion, and a maid summons her, saying that the prince and his men are there, and that they want to see everyone in the household. Ella tries to hide behind another servant, but the prince easily recognizes her. When Hattie insists that this is Cinderella, their scullery maid, Char pulls out Ella's slipper. He says that this slipper will fit only Ella, regardless of her station in life. First Hattie and Olive try to squeeze their feet into the shoe, and then Char insists that Ella try it on. Of course, it fits perfectly. Prince Char orders Ella to marry him, but Ella is terrified of what will happen if she does. She fights back the words, and with a supreme effort, she refuses to marry him. Then she starts screaming that she will not marry him, and he cannot make her. When the stepsisters order her to her room, Ella refuses, and then she realizes that the curse is broken. By refusing to marry Char, she has freed herself, and so now she can safely marry him after all.

Ella and Char have a happy marriage, with much sliding down banisters. Hattie uses her new position to her best advantage, and Sir Peter uses his royal connections to further his career as a merchant. When Char has to travel, Ella always goes with him, making him laugh, and learning all the foreign languages. They live happily ever after.

## Chapters 28-29-Epilogue Analysis

This is the climax of the book. This is where the action reaches a high point, and it can go one way or another for the ending. Ella seems so close to getting what she wants, but she knows that the curse will always stand in her way, just as it always has. She can only overcome the curse finally by seeking deep within herself, and finding the power and fortitude to refuse, no matter how strong was the magic compelling her. When she tries to break the curse in earlier chapters, she has just the fortitude of the moment, and



she is not strong enough to resist. She can only resist a direct order when all of Kyrria, and the man she loves, are in danger. This symbolically represents finding resources inside oneself to overcome obstacles, even if it is very hard. Ella is a resourceful, willful person, so when the kingdom is in danger, she finds the strength to overcome fairy magic. This is much like the way she earlier used her obedience to learn all the subjects at finishing school, even though some of the subjects were very hard for her to learn.

The only reason Ella lives happily ever after is because she knows how to enjoy life, whatever her material circumstances. She is not happy because she is married to a prince; she is happy because she is married to her friend. She never gives up her silly games, like sliding down banisters. Rather than punish her stepmother and stepsisters for their atrocious treatment of her, Ella simply does not invite them to her wedding. She forgives them, not wanting to hold on to a grudge. Most of all, she is happy to be able to say "no" to people, and she delights in everyday decisions, because she is free to make them.



# Characters

## Ella

Ella's real name is Eleanor, and she is the daughter of Lady Eleanor and Sir Peter. Ella finds out that she is one of the last people in the kingdom with fairy blood, which she inherited through her mother. Ella loves to laugh and play jokes, and climb trees and slide down banisters. She does great imitations of people and animals, and she is quick to learn foreign languages. The day Ella is born, the fairy Lucinda gives her the gift of constant obedience, thinking that this will make her docile and sweet. Instead, Ella is rebellious and stubborn, angry at being forced to submit to the will of others. In order to preserve her freedom, Ella finds ways of technically obeying, while doing something else to thwart the will of the person who commands her. Ella loves reading fairy tales, and making up her own. She does not care about class or money, but happily associates with servants, princes, elves and giants. After a lifetime of struggling against her magic spell of obedience, Ella finally finds the strength within herself to break her spell when she knows that the whole kingdom and the man she loves are at risk.

## Lucinda

Lucinda is one of Ella's fairy godmothers, who is present at Ella's birth. Lucinda feels bad for Ella when the baby cries a lot, so she gives her the gift of obedience, thinking that this will make the child sweet and easy to manage. Although Lady Eleanor and Mandy immediately ask her to take it back, Lucinda is unwilling to listen. She loves giving magical gifts at special occasions, and she always believes her gifts are wonderful, no matter what others say. She does not really think through the consequences of the spells she casts on people. Of all the fairies left in the land, Lucinda is the only one who advertises that she is a fairy. She uses magic to enhance her appearance so that she is beautiful and smells like lilacs, and likes to appear and disappear in a puff of smoke. Lucinda has quite a turnaround when Mandy dares her to try out her own gifts for a few months. Like so many unfortunate mortals, Lucinda turns herself into a squirrel for three months, and then tries three months of perfect obedience, as a human child. When she sees how terrible her gifts have been, Lucinda is filled with remorse, and vows never again to do "big magic." This does not, however, keep her from turning a giant pumpkin into a carriage, and turning mice into horses and coachmen.

## Prince Charmont

Prince Charmont likes to be called Char. He is in line for the throne, and he loves Ella because she is the only one who can make him laugh.





## **Lady Eleanor**

Lady Eleanor is Ella's mother, and she dies when Ella is a young teenager. She teaches Ella to laugh and to slide down banisters.

## **Sir Peter**

Sir Peter is Ella's father, and he only cares about money. He sees Ella only as an asset for increasing his fortune, by marrying her off to someone rich.

## **Dame Olga**

Dame Olga is Ella's stepmother. She marries Sir Peter for his money and is very disappointed when she finds out he has lost all his money.

## **Hattie**

Hattie is Ella's manipulative stepsister, who desires above all else to be queen. She figures out that Ella will do whatever she says and uses this to torment Ella.

## **Olive**

Olive is Hattie's younger sister. She is quite stupid and is greedy for stories, white cake, and coins.

## **Mandy**

Mandy is the old cook in Ella's household, and she turns out to be Ella's fairy godmother. She uses her magic to cook wonderful food.

## **Areida**

Areida is Ella's friend at finishing school. She is an outcast because she is foreign and poor.

## **Apple**

Apple is the centaur colt that Char gives to Ella as a pet.



## **Sir Stephan**

Sir Stephan is the knight who sees Ella safely to the giants' wedding.

## **Edmund**

Edmund is an old earl who Sir Peter tries to set up to marry Ella. When Sir Peter finds out that Edmund has lost most of his money, he refuses Edmund's suit.



## Objects/Places

### Lady Eleanor's Necklace

Lady Eleanor wore a beautiful necklace in her wedding, which belonged to her mother before her. Hattie forces Ella to give her the necklace.

### Ella's Manor

When Ella is a child, she lives in a big house with her parents. She and her mother love to slide down the long banister.

### Finishing School in Jenn

Ella's father sends her to finishing school with Hattie and Olive, so that she can become less clumsy. At the school, they teach her to sing, dance, and sew.

### The Castle

Sir Peter and Dame Olga get married at the old castle, which has a huge spiral staircase. Ella finds a pair of glass slippers in a shed there.

### Ayortha

Ayortha is a nearby country. It is customary for princes of Kyrria to spend a year in the court of Ayortha.

### Kyrria

Kyrria is the kingdom where Ella lives. King Jerrold is their leader.

### Ella's Glass Slippers

Ella finds the slippers in a garden shed, and although they are glass, they do not break when she drops them. They are very tiny, like her feet.

### The Royal Palace

The three balls are held at the palace, where the prince and his family live. This is very close to where Ella lives.



## **Dame Olga's House**

When Ella moves into Dame Olga's House, she is quickly put into the worst room in the servants' quarters. While she lives there, she is a slave in her own home.

## **Ella's Fairy Book**

Mandy gives Ella a magical book of fairy tales that changes every time she looks in it. Through the book, Ella can see what is going on in the world around her, and read letters and diary entries that other people write.

## **The Elves' Forest**

Ella visits the elves on her way to the giant's wedding, and they give her a beautiful figurine of a wolf, as a gift.



# Themes

## Magic Can Backfire

Although "small magic" takes the place of technology in the story, "big magic" can cause problems. The main problem with so-called "big magic" is that it can have far-reaching effects, which are hard to predict. Lucinda casually inflicts her will and her whims on others, interfering in their lives, while congratulating herself on giving such wonderful gifts. Right away, Ella says that, "Instead of making me docile, Lucinda's curse made a rebel of me. Or perhaps I was that way naturally." (Chap. 1, p. 5) Even after Ella explains how terrible it is to always have to obey, Lucinda still thinks that it is a good gift. She gives a pair of newlywed giants the gift of togetherness, meaning that they can never leave one another's presence again. She thinks this will strengthen their relationship, but others know better. Other fairies warn Lucinda that the couple will grow to hate one another within a month. Since they can never leave one another's sight, they will never be able to get a break from the things that annoy them about each other. After receiving Lucinda's wedding gift, the giant couple weeps.

Lucinda is not the only one whose magic does not always go as planned. The ogres use a sort of magic to make their language as persuasive as possible, so that anyone who hears it will obey. Ella learns their language and uses it against them, lulling the ogres to sleep in the ogre language, telling them that they are far too full to eat her, since they have just eaten such a huge meal. Once it is revealed that the secret is in the language itself, other people learn the ogre language and use it against the ogres. Ella's father imports some magical elvish mushrooms that are designed to make her fall in love with her suitor, an aging but kind earl. Although Ella does flirt with the earl, and he asks for her hand in marriage, Sir Peter finds out that the earl has recently lost most of his fortune in a fire, and will not allow the marriage.

## Overcoming Obstacles and Growing From Them

Ella's fairy curse is a great obstacle in her life. When she is a child, she discovers quickly that she can be made to eat past the point of getting sick, and made to defer to her playmates in games. Later in life, she must do what she can to hide her curse from others, since anyone who finds out about it has total power over her. Instead of having a docile spirit, Ella comes up with all kinds of ways to technically obey, while still doing what she wants. Later, Ella is tormented at school by the snotty girls who care about clothing and status. Instead of feeling bad, she befriends Areida, a girl who is persecuted because she is poor, and from another country. Ella learns Areida's language from her. When Ella must work as a servant, she learns how to cook, and she also understands the effort that servants go to. Through her hard work, she grows as a person, so that she realizes that she must give up Prince Char for his own protection. She says, "In that moment I found a power beyond any I'd had before, a will and a determination I would never have needed if not for Lucinda, a fortitude I hadn't been



able to find for a lesser cause." (Chap. 29, p. 226) Finally, Ella has the strength of will to defy the curse that has dictated her entire life. As a result of bowing to the will of others for so many years, Ella relishes her new freedom of choice. She does not take free will for granted, but consciously takes delight in making decisions. Lucinda also grows wiser when she takes a turn living as a squirrel and living with perfect obedience. Afterward, Lucinda understands the consequences of her actions, and she vows to be more careful from now on, not wanting to destroy any more lives.

## **The Pure of Heart Will Live Happily Ever After**

Like many fairy tales, "Ella Enchanted" has the message that good deeds will be rewarded and that the pure of heart will find happiness in the end, even if they face great trials first. All of the good people are rewarded in the end, especially Ella and Char. Char deserves happiness because he will be a kind and fair king, who puts the welfare of his citizens before his own. Char is so considerate that he stops to help a fruit vendor pick up fruit that is spilled in the road, rather than trampling it with his horse. Ella also is a good girl. Although she can be very mischievous to those who harm her, Ella works hard without complaining very much, and she puts the good of others before her own. When Ella is still rich, she cares about servants and outcasts, seeing them as people too. Ella truly shows that she is pure of heart when she renounces Char, fooling him into thinking that she has married someone else. Although she desperately wants to marry Char, she knows that he would come to harm from it, so she would rather give him up, and see him married to someone else. Mandy is also pure of heart, and she gets to be in charge of all the cooks in the palace kitchens. Ella ends the book, "And so, with laughter and love, we lived happily ever after." (Epilogue, p. 232)

Not all the characters are pure of heart. The others also get what they deserve, to some extent. Dame Olga continues living much as before, but desperately in love with an absent husband. Sir Peter, who is selfish and heartless, gets to feel the pain of being separated from his love, but avoids his wife at all costs, because she is so obnoxious. Hattie, who has always desired admiration and power, never does marry, but does what she can to take advantage of her royal connections. Olive, who really only wants to eat cake and hear stories, ends up happily married to a man who gives her money and drones on endlessly, happy to have an audience.



# Style

## Point of View

"Ella Enchanted" is told by Ella herself, from a first-person viewpoint. Ella, as the narrator, sometimes seems to know what is coming in the future, but in general she indicates that she does not know what the future holds. For instance, when Ella leaves the forest of the elves, she comments to the reader that she should arrive in the land of the giants within a few days, if she is lucky. Then she comments that she has no luck, leaving the reader wondering what will happen in the next chapter, since the chapter ends with that sentence. In fact, when Ella wakes up, she is surrounded by ogres, but she still ends up making it to the wedding, indicating that she is in fact lucky. It seems that for the most part, the narrator knows no more than the reader, or than any character in the story. Ella has a unique viewpoint because she is one of the few people who knows about her curse. Since she is physically unable to tell anyone about her curse, this shows that the reader is outside the story, and not to be considered another person that Ella is sharing her story with. By the Epilogue, Ella can describe her grandchildren, so it seems that the last part, at least, is meant to be written at the end of Ella's life.

Ella's point of view is greatly expanded by her magic fairy book. This book can show her other people's recent diary entries, letters people have written, maps of people's progress in traveling, and illustrations of what certain people are doing at that moment. This makes it possible for the narrative to include events and details that are far removed from the main action. This really helps the story move along, since it consists only of what Ella observes, and since she is often shut away as a captive for long periods of time. The magic book plays some of the role that a telephone or the Internet would play in a more modern story.

## Setting

"Ella Enchanted" takes place in the imaginary country of Kyrria, located between the borders of Prell and Ayortha. Kyrria is a fairy-tale kingdom, primarily populated by mortal humans. Kyrria seems to be located in Western Europe, simply based on cultural references. There are still some fairies left in the realm, but they generally try to conceal their fairy nature and just mix with the humans. There are also regions of giants, elves, ogres, and gnomes. Ella's house is located close to the Royal Palace of Kyrria, and she likes to go to the menagerie to see dragons, centaurs, and parrots that speak foreign languages. Ella's father is from Prell. Kyrria has very good relations with Ayortha, and to encourage this goodwill, it is the custom for princes of either country to spend a year at the court of the other country, to learn diplomacy, and to learn the ways of their neighbors.



The time period for this story could take place any time in the medieval and Renaissance era, since it does not take place in a real country. Kyrria has the feel of a medieval country that is looking to the future, and trying to leave behind old-fashioned concepts like magic. Of course, their attempts to avoid magic are partly due to the irresponsible use of magic, and partly based on bigotry toward the magical races. In creating the country of Kyrria, Gail Carson Levine has taken cultural elements from Europe, Tolkien's Middle Earth, and modern America. As a result, the tale features old-fashioned European situations, often solved by using a modern idea.

## Language and Meaning

Although the narrator for the story is a teenage girl, it is apparent that the book was intended for younger audiences, and so the reading is pretty easy. Sentences are short, descriptions are clear, and if there is anything that does not seem to make sense at first, it will soon be explained in simple terms. This makes the story flow effortlessly, and goes well with the format of a fairy tale, since such tales are often told in one sitting, for entertainment. Although Ella presents some positive messages about growing as a person and facing obstacles, this story is mostly just a pleasant read.

The choice of words gives the story a tone that is a sort of combination of historical Renaissance era, with fantastical imagination and mythology. Ella refers to details of dress like doublets and hose, but she also buys a piece of cheese to roast with a dragon's flame. There are also many imaginary foreign languages in the book, for all the magical races, which is a technique started by J.R.R. Tolkien. Ella loves learning these languages, and this gains her friends, as well as saving her skin when she learns the persuasive speech of the ogres. Having multiple foreign languages, which most of the characters speak badly with a strong accent, also makes Ella's world more real to the reader.

## Structure

"Ella Enchanted" is divided into 29 chapters and an Epilogue. In Chapter 1, Ella introduces herself and her family, and explains about the curse she has always lived with. This chapter covers probably the first fourteen years of her life. In Chapters 2 and 3, Ella's life changes when her mother dies, and she meets her future stepmother and stepsisters. In Chapters 4 through 9, Ella is forced to journey to finishing school, and on the way, Hattie discovers Ella's curse. In Chapters 10 through 12, Ella learns to be a lady at finishing school. Chapters 13 through 18 follow Ella as she runs away from school, and confronts Lucinda at the wedding, asking Lucinda to take away the curse. In Chapters 19 through 21, Ella discovers that her father is to marry Dame Olga, and enjoys spending time with the Prince at her father's wedding. In Chapters 22 through 25, Ella works as a slave in her stepmother's house, and discovers that Lucinda will never lift her curse. In Chapters 26 through 28, Ella finally gets to go to the ball, and has a wonderful time with the Prince. Chapter 29 is the climax of the book, when Ella runs away from the ball, leaving behind a glass slipper. More importantly, she finally breaks





her curse by drawing on the power of her own will. In the Epilogue, Ella quickly explains the entire rest of her life, up to grandchildren. Although the story does a pretty good job of presenting the fairy tale, most of the book takes place before the tale really starts around Chapter 20.



## Quotes

"People only like the idea of fairies. When they bump up against a particular, real-as-corn fairy, there's always trouble." Chap. 4, p. 24

"They are always awful, but some people are delighted to have a present from a fairy, even if it makes them miserable." Chap. 4, p. 25

"Hattie didn't know about Lucinda and the curse, but she understood I always had to follow her orders." Chap. 8, p. 54

"Hattie's orders were chiefly chores. I think she lacked the imagination to devise more interesting commands." Chap. 11, p. 77

"On the edge of Jenn, I gave a baker the first sale of the day, two currant muffins and two loaves of traveler's bread in exchange for Hattie's wig, which he declared the finest he'd ever seen." Chap. 13, p. 88

"I almost laughed and broke the spell. Who was giving orders now?" Chap. 14, p. 102

". . . it is helpful to know the proper way to behave, so one can decide whether or not to be proper." Chap. 15, pp. 107-108

"I closed the book, weeping a little. I wasn't confined to a lamp, but I too was not free." Chap. 16, p. 115

"I knew I was happy only because I'd been ordered to be, but the happiness was absolute." Chap. 18, p. 128

"And I shall have to sell you, in a manner of speaking. You must marry so that we can be rich again." Chap. 18, p. 129

"He put his hand on my waist, and my heart began to pound, a rougher rhythm than the music." Chap. 21, p. 153

"As soon as Father's carriage disappeared from view, Mum Olga swallowed her tears and directed a manservant to transfer my belongings to a room in the servants' wing." Chap. 23, p. 165

"Then I thought of the bride I'd make, in a threadbare, sooty gown that stank of cooking fat and yesterday's dinner." Chap. 24, p. 177

"And I, seated with the few other visitors, add my weak voice to theirs, humming when I can't guess the words and wishing my hands were held too." Chap. 24, p. 176

"At midnight, your coach will become a pumpkin again, and the animals will regain their original shape until your next ball." Chap. 26, p. 204



"They're each scheming to make the prince propose marriage on the spot." Chap. 27, p. 206

"Nothing is small magic in a moment like this." Chap. 29, p. 221

"I was the cause of his joy and would be the cause of his destruction: a secret delivered to his enemies, a letter written in my own hand, a covert signal given by me, poison in his glass, a dagger in his ribs, a fall from a parapet." Chap. 29, p. 224



## Topics for Discussion

Why do you think the story of "Cinderella" is so popular? What does this say about the cultures that have produced this story?

Compare Hattie's character to Olive. How are the sisters similar? How are they different?

What is the role of magical creatures in the story? What difference would it make if they were all commonplace animals?

What are some of the indications that Ella has fairy blood in her?

Why do so many of the fairies conceal their identity? Why does Mandy avoid "big magic"?

How is Ella different from all the courtiers that Prince Char knows? Why does he prefer her company?

What are the various ways that people try to force their will on others? Do you think this is ever justified?

Do you think Lucinda's gifts are a blessing or a curse? Are there any ways that they could be both?