



Ella Enchanted

Gail Carson Levine

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ACE #1

At birth, Ella is inadvertently cursed by an imprudent young fairy named Lucinda, who bestows on her the "gift" of obedience. Anything anyone tells her to do, Ella must obey. Another girl might have been cowed by this affliction, but not feisty Ella: "Instead of making me docile, Lucinda's curse made a rebel of me. Or perhaps I was that way naturally." When her beloved mother dies, leaving her in the care of a mostly absent and avaricious father, and later, a loathsome stepmother and two treacherous stepsisters, Ella's life and well-being seem to be in grave peril. But her intelligence and saucy nature keep her in good stead as she sets out on a quest for freedom and self-discovery as she tries to track down Lucinda to undo the curse, fending off ogres, befriending elves, and falling in love with a prince along the way. Yes, there is a pumpkin coach, a glass slipper, and a happily ever after, but this is the most remarkable, delightful, and profound version of Cinderella you'll ever read.

Gail Carson Levine's examination of traditional female roles in fairy tales takes some satisfying twists and deviations from the original. Ella is bound by obedience against her will, and takes matters in her own hands with ambition and verve. Her relationship with the prince is balanced and based on humor and mutual respect; in fact, it is she who ultimately rescues *him*. Ella Enchanted has won many well-deserved awards, including a Newbery Honor.

Ella Enchanted Details

Date : Published May 2nd 2017 by HarperTrophy (first published 1997)

ISBN : 9780064407052

Author : Gail Carson Levine

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From Reader Review Ella Enchanted for online ebook

Catriona (LittleBookOwl) says

Such a cute story, it was a lot of fun!

April (Aprilius Maximus) says

First read of the 2016 Booktube-a-thon! This completed the challenge of reading and watching a book to movie adaptation (which I am about to watch right now).

This was very meh, unfortunately. It contained my most hated trope and for some reason it took me such a long time to get through! I loved the magical world though!

Around the Year in 52 Books Challenge Notes:

- 12. A childhood classic

Chelsea says

This still stands as one of my favorite books. The fantasy elements are clever and not too over the top. Ella is witty and pretty clever herself, not to mention strong and determined and resourceful. Mandy is just your everyday, ordinary, regular old cook/fairy. Char is, appropriately, charming. The stepsisters are deliciously evil. Lucinda is completely batty.

I like that none of the women in the book are doormats. Good or evil, protagonist or minor background character, they have an opinion, they exert at least some control over their own destiny, they are quietly secure in the knowledge of their own power.

The movie was terrible, folks, so don't go by that. (Anne Hathaway, why must you insist in being in movies that ruin my favorite kids books?)

emma says

i posted this pretty-okay-but-mostly-objectifying-childhood crushes review of this extremely-actually-great book. find it here: <https://emmareadstoomuch.wordpress.co...>

Have I mentioned I love middle grade? Because hey, guess what, I absolutely goddamn love middle grade. (I feel like I shouldn't say "goddamn" in a review of a children's book, but also I am still me. I still have my brand to look out for, regardless of target audiences.)

A n y w a y. This book rules.

I have a kind of complicated relationship with the movie. It has a reputation for being among the worst book-

to-film adaptations, and that is, guess what, totally warranted. They're two totally different stories, essentially. But uh...(whispers) I guess that's kind of why/how I like them both?

I GREW UP ON BOTH OF THEM OKAY. THEY'RE BOTH GOOD IF YOU LOOK AT THEM SEPARATELY.

Ahem.

Anyway. I say for the second time.

This book, in case you live under a rock that prevents you from hearing about great middle-grade adventure retellings of fairytales with feisty female protagonists, is a Cinderella retelling wherein Cinderella (just Ella tho) has been cursed with obedience. She has to obey every command given to her.

IT SUCKS.

But it double-sucks because Ella is a lil badass and totally feisty and stubborn and would nevrerrrr listen to anyone if she could help it. Unfortunately she cannot. But she gets into some fun hijinks and verbal battles and whatnot because of it.

There is also Prince Char, who is an absolute BAAAAABE. One thing that no one can argue with in the movie is that the movie-Char is fine as hell. Pro tip: picture this for the rest of the review.

The HAIIIIIIR. Oh my god.

Anyway. (Three times now. Stop counting.)

Char's full name is Charmont, which is just one letter off from Charmant, which is the French word for charming. And he is EXTREMELY SO. A book boyfriend for the ages and the only man who could ever deserve Queen of Feist Ella.

This should be enough to convince you that this book rocks and it is ten years past time for you to read it. Amazing badass female protagonist + dreamy love interest + great well-developed romance that starts as a friendship (which I didn't mention until this point but now you know) + adventurey exciting plot + curse + fairies + ogres + giants + fairytale lands + mythical creatures + elvin artists + Cinderella retelling = perfection.

Okay, to be fair, I didn't include a lot of that information before now. But again: *now you know*.

Bottom line: This book is like throwing a bunch of ingredients for perfection in a pot and hoping they stick. And guess what? THEY DO.

Kat Kennedy says

Ella Enchanted is like a koala. A big, soft, cute koala.

And if you mess with it, it'll use it's big, sharp, not-so-cute claws to tear your face off.

Seriously.

It's just a cute little fairy tale for teenage girls about a silly little world. Accept it for what it is. Leave it at that. Don't delve any further. Don't consider it from a feminine perspective, don't rationalize it from a historical stand-point, don't try to analyze it for hidden metaphors or literary value.

Just read, rinse, repeat and move on.

[image error]http://x92.xanga.com/639b1b4678130299...

You do NOT want a face full of this!

ETA: I have just seen the movie for Ella Enchanted. Trust Disney to f*#\$ everything up! Cary Elwis, what have they done to you!

Brina says

My daughters have watched the Disney movie Ella Enchanted many times and loved it immensely. They are enamored by the Disney princess genre, even princesses who do not fit nicely into the company's traditional definition of princess. Until last week, I had never viewed the film with them, being that I hardly fit the definition of girly girl myself, often opting for whatever sporting event is in season. I enjoyed the concept of a medieval Cinderella who is not necessarily forced to do back breaking work for an evil stepmother but to be obedient to her and whoever else orders her around. Seeing the film version, lead me to this Newberry award winning book by Gail Carson Levine.

At birth, Ella of Prell is gifted by the fairy Lucinda to always be obedient at all costs. Growing up, she once had to eat an entire birthday cake, nearly relinquish a toddler gnome to an ogre, and lose more friends than she ever made, only because someone had ordered her to do so. Unable to tell anyone of her curse, Ella appears deceptive to the world, often times leading her to lead a solitary life.

As in the traditional Cinderella story, Ella's mother dies when she is fifteen years old. At her mother's funeral, she stays out of sight in case someone orders her to do something and she is too sad to be obedient. At this trying time in her life, she meets Prince Char of Kyrria for the first time, and he is instantly smitten with her, leading to a lengthy quest of his over the course of the book to win her hand in marriage. Although not instantly enamored, Ella over time realizes what her curse could do to Char and his kingdom, and seeks out Lucinda to take back this curse once and for all.

Unlike the movie, there is no shopping mall, protest, soundtrack, or evil uncle and his pet snake waiting to take over the kingdom. In Levine's original version we do meet Areida of Ayortha, Mandy the fairy godmother, and Dame Olga and her atrocious daughters Hattie and Olive. In addition to them, we meet a traditional medieval cast of elves, gnomes, ogres, and giants. All these people and other beings play a role in Ella's curse, making for a memorable book for middle grade readers.

As a mother of girls, I enjoyed that the Ella in the book is a heroine for all beings regardless of their place in society. She is assertive and is not subservient to her prince as the traditional Disney Cinderella is. In this modern retelling, Ella alone seeks out to reverse the curse cast upon her by Lucinda, making her a strong heroine character for girls. The movie was fun yet Disneyfied, but Gail Carson Levine's book version of Ella Enchanted is a fun, strong read and worthy of its Newberry, rating a solid 4 stars.

Fafa's Book Corner says

Mini review:

DNF

GR Ultimate Reading Challenge: My, What Big Teeth You Have.

As a child I thoroughly enjoyed Ella Enchanted (the movie)! I decided to give the book a go. Unfortunately it didn't work for me.

I was actually enjoying it in the beginning. Once the step-sisters were introduced the writing style changed dramatically. I'm not exactly sure why this happened. I found myself losing interest in the book.

This was definitely a personal thing. I do still recommend.

Melanie (TBR and Beyond) says

“It is helpful to know the proper way to behave, so one can decide whether or not to be proper.”

You can find this review and all of my other reviews at Novel Descent Thanks for the support!

I feel like this is a confession that I will regret making. I was a fan of the movie *hides* This is my first time reading *Ella Enchanted* and now I understand why everyone hates the film!

Ella Enchanted is what every great middle-grade novel should be. Great adventures, obstacles to over-come, engaging characters and a little magic. This book pulled all of these things well. *Ella Enchanted* is a retelling of the beloved fairy tale *Cinderella*, which is a personal favorite of mine. This is a much more modern adaption of the tale, there is no insta-love here. The book is a very short and fast read - I enjoyed every minute of it. I'd been meaning to read a book by Gail Carson Levine for awhile now and it looks like this was the perfect place to pick to discover her writing. I'm 100% going to be reading more of her work.

I adored the character of Ella. Yes, she had a curse on her where she had to obey whatever anyone said to her. Obviously this could ruin someone's life or get them killed but she rebelled against it as hard as she could. It even caused her pain resisting the requests that were harmful to her. She wasn't the best at keeping her secret about the curse, even if she never directly came out and said it. It was pretty obviously to anyone who was demanding. Still, she tried her hardest to have her own ideas, her own independence and her own life really. She was kind but believable and she could be immature - like every girl her age should be from time to time.

I loved the her love interest Prince Char - he was genuinely interested in everything she had to say and found her to be the most amazing person he had ever met. He was friends with her for a long time first before confessing his feelings and he was 100% dedicated to her. He was basically a sweetheart.

Yes, Ella and Char were a little young to be talking about marriage but we aren't talking about modern times here - they were just at the right age in a different century. They did feel like very young characters but they

were young characters so I appreciated that they didn't try to make them act like they were 25 or something . They talked exactly how you might suspect someone of their age doing so. It was completely endearing and adorable.

Loved all the side characters, even Lucinda was fun to me. I loved that most of the characters evolved through the story and some did not. Great storytelling.

I will quickly address the movie that was based off this book. I saw the movie that stars Anne Hathaway many moons ago and really enjoyed it. It was really cheesy, not that well-done and all-around silly. However, there was something charming about it - maybe because I really liked the lead actors but the movie was comforting and safe to me and I loved that about it. You could just let your brain shut down and watch something mindless. Is this worth a watch if you've grown up on the book? NO, so much NO. Yes, I enjoyed the film and still do. However, I never grew up with the book and after reading it, I now know why fans are so harsh on the film. The film has almost nothing to do with the story. The characters are 100% different - they tried to modernize it and they added in new plots that aren't nearly as good as the ones in the original series. Basically, avoid the film.

Obviously, I highly recommend this to a younger audience or for someone like me, who is young at heart!

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

\$1.99 Kindle sale, Dec. 24, 2017. Charming YA retelling of Cinderella, with some imaginative twists. I enjoyed it thoroughly!

Anne says

? My advice to you: The movie and the book are two very separate and different things. So when you start reading this book, don't compare it with the movie. Don't even think about the movie at all while you're reading this.

Do that, and you'll enjoy this book immensely.

On the day she was born, **Ella of Frell** was given the gift of obedience by the foolish and careless fairy, **Lucinda**. Obedience. It was a gift.

Well, for starters... *Ella, Hold your tongue*

Kiss me.

Erhh...well, that's not such an unpleasant order ****coughs**** but uhh yeah. You get the point. It was the curse of compulsion. One which couldn't be overcome. Delayed, maybe, but even that came with a high price. Physical side effects, very unpleasant side effects. This was a new spin on one of the most recycled fairy tales that's ever been told. This is not a book to be analyzed. It's just a really great story, and to add to that, it was delivered in a wonderful way, with bold, and engaging writing.

JUST ANOTHER CINDERELLA STORY

? An evil step mother

? Butt-ugly deranged and bossy step sisters

? A handsome and wonderful Prince

- ? Maltreatment, sabotage and trickery
- ? A ball
- ? More sabotage and trickery
- ? A pair of glass slippers
- ? And some fairy magic

THE EXTRAS

- ? A magical book for spying on people.
- ? A diverse and magical land of Ogres, Giants, and Elves. Sorry mouse people.
- ? An established relationship between Cinderella and the Prince before the night of the ball. I'm sorry, but I just never understood it. Cinderella spent one night with a guy and bada-boom boom! Love ? Marriage ? Happily ever after? I'm sorry honey

That's why I respect **Ariel**(well, really, the Disney version of Ariel), **Princess Jasmine**, and **Belle** most of all, at least they spent some time with their guys before hitching those rides. Between Ella and Charmont, letters were written, ideas were exchanged, and thoughts were shared. First came friendship, and then came love. All I can say is: How I loved those letters!

? Ella's a girl with a little spunk. A heroine to love, admire, and adore.

Well she never said that. But she never took an order placidly. And of course, she took her revenge - revenge. Ha! How could I not love her? - whenever she could. After all, it's pure logic: *You said get me a drink. You never said don't spit in it.*

? Lots of adventure and action. This book is looking for someone - *people* - to share an adventure with. We join Ella as she embarks on a quest, to find a way to get rid of her curse. Take it from me, it was a wonderful experience.

? Happily ever after. Let's face the truth. A fairy tale won't be as magical without a happily ever after. I won't even lie. I love it! You do too.

Cara says

Now I know why people made such a fuss when the movie came out. I watched the movie first, so I had no idea how utterly wrong everything was. It totally is not like the book. Just slap on the names and the curse and that's where the similarities end. I must say the book is MUCH better than the movie.

The style of the writing was kind of weird for me, but not in a bad way. It's not that it was too fast paced or anything, but I noticed there wasn't a lot of padding or fanfare before events would happen, which I usually expect from fantasy books. The writing style worked in this story since it seemed to fit the main character to a tee.

I absolutely loved the story. It's a great way of showing how the only one who can save you is you, and you have to find the strength within to do it. Sometimes it takes someone else to bring that strength out of you and that's what Char does for Ella unknowingly.

The magic book was a nice touch and added what the other characters were thinking without actually changing the narrator of the story. I couldn't give the book 5 stars because it seemed odd to me how she dealt with her mother's death. It's like after awhile it doesn't seem to matter, which I guess makes sense since the book isn't really about her grieving for her mother. The story is really about how her death makes Ella have

to face her demons by throwing her the different situations she finds herself in. Still, it really isn't that bothersome because of course you see that Ella misses her mother at times.

This is the best version of the Cinderella story I have encountered. All and all a very worth while read.

Emma (Miss Print) says

Feminists often denounce traditional fairy tales because they perpetuate the ideals of a patriarchal society by encouraging girls to behave like proper princesses and wait for charming princes to take charge and save the day. In response to these traditional fairy tales, many authors have tried to reclaim the realm of fairy tales for girls. These retellings feature active protagonists who are not scared of taking charge and do not need princes to save them. One example of this new fairy tale genre is the 1998 children's novel "Ella Enchanted" by Gail Carson Levine, which takes an untraditional approach to retelling the story of Cinderella. The novel addresses several specific feminist issues, specifically negotiating and fighting the burden of obedience, the importance of female friendships and, of course, learning to save yourself.

The story is set in an imaginary, medieval-esque kingdom called Frell. A roaming fairy named Lucinda gives Ella the gift/curse of obedience at Ella's birth. As a result, Ella has to do everything she is told, no matter what harm it might cause to herself or others. (In the novel, the severity of Ella's curse is constantly underscored with passages explaining how little control Ella has over her own life: "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.") As the plot moves forward Ella is compelled to leave home to try and find Lucinda and ask her to lift the curse. Along the way she also falls in love with Prince Char. For varying reasons, depending on the version, Lucinda refuses to lift the curse. Further difficulties arise as Ella continues her quest.

That's the main body of the story. The Cinderella element is relevant mainly to the last quarter of the novel where actual elements from that story (the slipper, the ball) appear in the story, although the evil step-sisters and fairy godmother are present throughout the narrative.

There are several reasons that I love this novel and recommend it to everyone. The first is that it's an imaginative retelling of Cinderella which makes the story exciting for readers familiar with the original version without making it too abstruse for readers who have never heard of Cinderella. Also, the book is full of great role models for girls. All of the female characters are strong, self-aware women--things seen far too rarely in the fairy tale genre. The novel is narrated in Ella's voice. This makes it easy to see how strong Ella is as a character (especially at the end of the novel).

The other great thing about this book is that it all seems authentic, never over the top or under-written. In addition to creating immensely likable main characters, Levine creates a compelling world within the pages of "Ella Enchanted" vivid with details ranging from Elvish and Gnomish languages to customs at a Giant's wedding. The story is an immensely entertaining page-turner that will (even better) leave readers feeling satisfied when they reach the final scene where Levine ties everything together, artfully blending empowerment with a happy-ever-after ending fit for a traditional fairy tale.

Excerpted from a scholarly article I wrote about Ella Enchanted as a book and movie. You can read the full article here: <http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/resear...>

You can find this review and more on my blog Miss Print

Fables&Wren says

WrensReads Review:

This book is so hard for me to review because I love every single thing about it, but hate every single thing about that bloody movie.

Like seriously, who decided to only use the names and the curse and rewrite everything else for the movie? Why did we need a talking snake and an evil uncle and a fan group for the prince? Wasn't evil Hattie enough?

SERIOUSLY THIS STORY IS ABSOLUTELY PRECIOUS AND PERFECT AND THE MOVIE RUINED IT, I CAN NOT STRESS THAT ENOUGH FOR YOU

There is no need for a fan club for the prince. There is no need for an evil uncle trying to take the throne or a big giant talking snake that literally has no purpose but to make you feel like you are watching a live action version of Disney's Robin Hood.

It's even the little things. Like Mandy. She is suppose to be a ruffed-up old lady with crazy white hair and basically Ella's mother. Does this girl look like that?

NO.

Or that the stepmother and stepsisters are suppose to be fat.

But really, I'm upset about the ogres.

So in the perfect-little book, Ella has a knack for languages. Each creature has their own language and she knows bits and pieces of them from the talking birds at the market. Well the ogres have a knack for languages too, but when they speak (in whatever language they want to) you believe anything they say. You will do whatever they want you to do, because they are your best friend and they don't REALLY want to eat you.

I thought the scene in the book with the ogres, which I am not going to spoil, was absolutely fascinating. AND THE MOVIE DIDN'T EVEN -- UGH.

At least the prince was cute, right? That's a second thing they got right.

The first being the Ella has the curse to obey every command ever pointed at her.

Dig in, Ella. Run around, Ella. Cut off your head, Ella. Don't be friends with them, Ella. Be happy, Ella. Only speak in riddles, Ella. Hold your breath, Ella.

That is absolutely nightmarish.

Just take my word for it: If you ever are channel surfing and you see this

Run outside, grab that gasoline you save for when your lawnmower is low, throw it on your TV and light a match. It is absolutely insulting to this little gem.

I love all the retellings that Gail Carson Levine does, and that movie does NO JUSTICE.

I know I didn't really tell you anything about the book except that I liked it. But what else do you need to know besides it is a retelling of Cinderella and the "Cinderella" of the book has a curse to obey all commands ever? Isn't that interesting in itself? It's short and sweet, go read it.

Goodreads | Twitter | Instagram

Madeline says

I never liked Cinderella as a kid. It seemed like whenever she got into trouble, her best plan was to burst into tears and wait for someone to come along and help her. I also wondered, even if she couldn't leave her stepmother's house, could she at least tell the awful woman to go make her own damn breakfast once in a while? As far as little cynical-as-hell Madeline was concerned, Cinderella was a spineless twinkie who was painfully useless.

Obviously, I am not the only girl who had a problem with the fairy tale, and fortunately, Gail Carson Levine decided to do something about it. Her Cinderella (Ella of Frell) is smart, stubborn, and pretty damn feisty. Her only problem is that when she was born, a well-meaning fairy gave her the gift of obedience. Ella has to obey any direct order given to her, no matter what. So, naturally, she sets out to find the fairy, lift the curse, get rid of her stepmother and stepsisters, and maybe even end up with Prince Char. (Char as in Charmont, geddit?) A lovely story, and much better than anything Disney could come up with.

Sara (sarawithoutanH) says

This is a long time favorite of mine. I first read it when I was about 10 and I still love it. The movie adaptation was a travesty I don't like to talk about.
