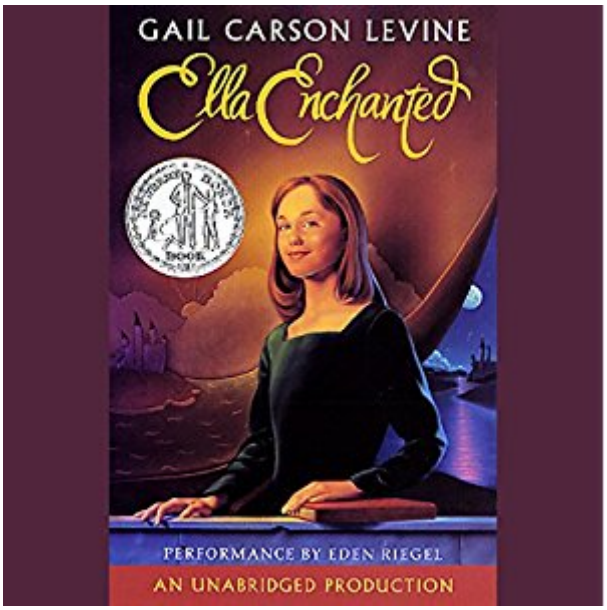
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Synopsis

That fool of a fairy Lucinda did not intend to lay a curse on me. She meant to bestow a gift. When I cried inconsolably through my first hour of life, my tears were her inspiration. Shaking her head sympathetically at Mother, the fairy touched my nose. My gift is obedience. Ella will always be obedient. Now stop crying, child. I stopped. So begins this richly entertaining story of Ella of Frell, who wants nothing more than to be free of Lucinda’s gift and feel that she belongs to herself. For how can she truly belong to herself if she knows that at any time, anyone can order her to hop on one foot, cut off her hand, or betray her kingdom -- and she’ll have to obey? Against a bold tapestry of princes, ogres, giants, wicked stepsisters, and fairy godmothers, Ella’s spirited account of her quest to break the curse is a funny, poignant, and enchanting tale about an unforgettable heroine who is determined to be herself. Eden Riegel provided the voice of Young Miriam in the animated feature film Prince of Egypt, and has appeared in the film Into the Woods. Her television credits include recurring roles on New York Undercover, As the World Turns and Guiding Light. On Broadway, she was one of the original cast members of Les Miserables and performed in The Will Rogers Follies. When Gail Carson Levine was growing up, her favorite book was Peter Pan by James M. Barrie, and she thought Wendy was an idiot for wanting to leave Neverland. Gail has been reading fairy tales all her life, but she didn’t start writing them until she was grown up. Her eleven books for children include Newbery Honor-winning Ella Enchanted, available on audio from Listening Library, and the picture book Betsy Who Cried Wolf. She lives with her husband, David, and their Airedale terrier, Baxter, in a two-hundred-year-old farmhouse in New York’s Hudson Valley. --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I must say that overall I was quaintly pleased with this bittersweet fairy tale. A fairy put a spell on Ella at birth, making her obey any command given to her. The book follows Ella through the ups and downs of her life after the death of her mother and her quest to break her awful curse. The story starts out original and unpredictable, however it gradually comes to resemble another well-known fairy tale until at the very end it is entirely revealed to be that certain traditional fairy tale (not to give anything away for those who haven’t read it yet - I will say that you can figure it out by looking at the names of the characters and take into account the involvment of fairies or fairy godmothers - or just read the publisher’s description of it here on). While I liked the character-driven story (in fact, some of my favorite parts were its dialogue and especially the interactions between Ella and Prince Char), I was a little disappointed that by the end it was that particular traditional storyline. Even though Ella is much more fleshed out with such a realistic personality as compared to the classic story heroine, part of me wishes this book could have been completely original and never tied into the traditional story at all. I feel that it could have had so much more potential and originality if the last 20 or so pages hadn’t, essentially, been a cop-out. Its strengths definitely lie within its characters and its weakness lies in the ending. Overall a very good book and I can personally accept the ending in order to enjoy the rest of the book.

I’ve loved this book since I was 11. It’s clearly a children’s/young adult book, but it’s still enjoyable to me 15 years later. It’s a really clever re-telling of the Cinderella story. It creates a fantasy world that not only includes fairy godmothers - per the original - but other magical creatures with their own languages and cultures. I read a few of the low ratings on this novel and am surprised to find that many people found it boring. I don’t know what they were expecting, but I find the tale much more interesting than Disney’s Cinderella - for example, in this version we see a relationship between Ella and the prince much sooner than the ball. I also read a review which stated that Ella disliked her step-sisters purely because they were fat and ugly - I cannot begin to fathom where this reader came up with that since it’s made very clear that her step-sisters were money-grubbing and selfish and not very comforting to Ella during the loss of her mother. Their physical descriptions were also given very objectively - if the reader interpreted them as ugly, that’s on them. I simply had to include those defenses in my review. I was happy to purchase a hardcover copy of this book - I find hardcover more and more difficult to come by in older titles. I would recommend this to any

fantasy/fairy tale lover and to any young girl.

When Ella was a baby, a foolish fairy bestowed upon her the blessing/curse of obedience -- whatever anyone tells her to do, she must do. This leads to uncomfortable and even dangerous situations as the adventurous young girl meets hungry ogres and nasty stepsisters! But good things happen to Ella, too. She loves her mother, has a trusted elder who watches after her, she has a talent for languages, and she has befriended the prince.My one problem is that the first part of the story is heavily populated with elves, fairies, giants and even a pet centaur, but these elements are unceremoniously dropped, not to be mentioned again. In all other respects, however, this is a wonderful update of the classic fairy tale, with elements from that story adapted with ingenuity and humor. Well done!

I bought this for my niece but it is one of my favorite books from my childhood. The characters are amazingly developed and enjoyable and the story just beyond darling. I love it!

This book was one of the most exciting books I've read in a long time. The author has an amazing style of drawing you into the characters. You get to know them and you actually FEEL their pain. The main character Ella has a "gift" of obedience (i.e. a CURSE) from a "well-meaning" fairy... she MUST obey any order given to her. Throughout the book you hurt right along with Ella as she struggles to overcome the curse.. but can't--therefore making her liable to playing the pawn to anyone's orders--the poor girl would even walk into a fire and kill herself if someone ordered it. You'll be ready to rip the book apart during times when her enemies use her.. and you'll cry with distress and anger at the torment the poor girl is put through. Its a wonderful twist on the classic Cinderella story! Its a definate MUST read for everyone who loves classic fairy tales! Get this book now!

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