

Gail Carson Levine



ELLA
Enchanted

Now a major motion picture

EXTRAS
INSIDE

CHAPTER ONE

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.

Father was away on a trading expedition as usual, but our cook, Mandy, was there. She and Mother were horrified, but no matter how they explained it to Lucinda, they couldn't make her understand the terrible thing she'd done to me. I could picture the argument: Mandy's freckles standing out sharper than usual, her frizzy gray hair in disarray, and her double chin shaking with anger; Mother still and intense, her brown curls damp from labor, the laughter gone from her eyes.

I couldn't imagine Lucinda. I didn't know what she looked like.

She wouldn't undo the curse.

My first awareness of it came on my fifth birthday. I seem to remember that day perfectly, perhaps because Mandy told the tale so often.

“For your birthday,” she’d start, “I baked a beautiful cake. Six layers.”

Bertha, our head maid, had sewn a special gown for me. “Blue as midnight with a white sash. You were small for your age even then, and you looked like a china doll, with a white ribbon in your black hair and your cheeks red from excitement.”

In the middle of the table was a vase filled with flowers that Nathan, our manservant, had picked.

We all sat around the table. (Father was away again.) I was thrilled. I had watched Mandy bake the cake and Bertha sew the gown and Nathan pick the flowers.

Mandy cut the cake. When she handed me my piece, she said without thinking, “Eat.”

The first bite was delicious. I finished the slice happily. When it was gone, Mandy cut another. That one was harder. When it was gone, no one gave me more, but I knew I had to keep eating. I moved my fork into the cake itself.

“Ella, what are you doing?” Mother said.

“Little piggy.” Mandy laughed. “It’s her birthday, Lady. Let her have as much as she wants.” She put another slice on my plate.

I felt sick, and frightened. Why couldn’t I stop eating?

Swallowing was a struggle. Each bite weighed on my tongue and felt like a sticky mass of glue as I fought to get it down. I started crying while I ate.

Mother realized first. “Stop eating, Ella,” she commanded.

I stopped.

Anyone could control me with an order. It had to be a direct command, such as “Put on a shawl,” or “You

must go to bed now." A wish or a request had no effect. I was free to ignore "I wish you would put on a shawl," or "Why don't you go to bed now?" But against an order I was powerless.

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.

I was in danger at every moment.

As I grew older, I learned to delay my obedience, but each moment cost me dear—in breathlessness, nausea, dizziness, and other complaints. I could never hold out for long. Even a few minutes were a desperate struggle.

I had a fairy godmother, and Mother asked her to take the curse away. But my fairy godmother said Lucinda was the only one who could remove it. However, she also said it might be broken someday without Lucinda's help.

But I didn't know how. I didn't even know who my fairy godmother was.

Instead of making me docile, Lucinda's curse made a rebel of me. Or perhaps I was that way naturally.

Mother rarely insisted I do anything. Father knew nothing of the curse and saw me too infrequently to issue many commands. But Mandy was bossy, giving orders almost as often as she drew breath. Kind orders or for-your-own-good orders. "Bundle up, Ella." Or "Hold this bowl while I beat the eggs, sweet."

I disliked these commands, harmless as they were. I'd hold the bowl, but move my feet so she would have to follow me around the kitchen. She'd call me minx and

How can a fairy's blessing be such a curse?

At her birth, Ella of Frell was given a foolish fairy's gift—the “gift” of obedience. Ella must obey any order given to her, whether it's hopping on one foot for a day or chopping off her own head!

But strong-willed Ella does not tamely accept her fate. She goes on a quest, encountering ogres, giants, wicked stepsisters, fairy godmothers, and handsome princes, determined to break the curse—and live happily ever after.

“As finely designed as a tapestry, with a heroine so spirited that she wins readers' hearts.”—*ALA Booklist* (starred review)

“Thoroughly enchanting.”—*School Library Journal* (starred review)

“Plenty of humorous twists and a spunky, intelligent female lead.”
—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

Newbery Honor Book

ALA Notable Children's Book

ALA Best Book for Young Adults

ALA Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers

School Library Journal Best Book


Publishers Weekly Best Book

US \$6.99 / \$8.99 CAN

ISBN-13: 978-0-06-440705-2
ISBN-10: 0-06-440705-5



9 780064 407052

 HarperTrophy®

An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers

www.harpercollinschildrens.com

Ages 8 up

Cover art © 2007 by Larry Rostant

Learn Gnomic and Ogrese! Includes a glossary, an excerpt from the author's next book, and more!

**EXTRAS
INSIDE**