

Chapter Charter: Questions to Guide Your Reading



Chapter 1

- “Instead of making me docile, Lucinda’s curse made a rebel of me,” says Ella. What kinds of problems does Ella’s “curse” create for her, and how do you see her fight back?

Chapter 2

- What do Sir Peter’s words and actions reveal about the kind of person he is?
- How is Prince Charmont’s attitude different from that of everyone else at the funeral? Is he the kind of person you’d want to be around if you were going through a hard time?

Chapter 3

- What roles do Hattie and Olive play in Ella’s story? Do the girls seem familiar?
- Why do you think Ella’s mother never told her who her fairy godmother is?

Chapter 4

- Mandy refuses to do “big magic” and sticks to “small magic that can’t hurt anybody.” Does it make sense that the ability to do magic comes with so much responsibility? Do you think that every talent or gift comes with responsibilities?

- Sir Peter describes Ella as “strong” and “determined.” How does she demonstrate these qualities when dealing with her father?

Chapter 5

- How do you feel about Sir Peter? What kind of father is he?

Chapter 6

- Do you think Ella’s talent for mimicry could be useful? How might it help her?

Chapter 7

- If you knew someone could tell you what the future holds for you, would you want to know? Do you think the gnome’s warning will help Ella?

Chapter 8

- How are Hattie and Olive different from each other?
- How would you stand up to Hattie if you were in Ella’s place?

Chapter 9

- In what ways does Ella *not* fit in at school?
- Why do you think Areida wants to be friends with Ella?

Chapter 10

- What subjects come easiest to Ella? Why do you think this is the case?

Chapter 11

- Ella returns to her “old game” in order to cope with her teachers’ orders. What is the “game”?
- Do you think it was right for Ella to give Hattie the bogwort? Do you think it was worth it?

Chapter 12

- Hattie orders Ella to end her friendship with Areida—how does that order, along with the letters Ella reads in her magic book, affect her? What would you do in Ella’s place?

Chapter 13

- What does it mean when the elf woman looks into Ella’s eyes and pronounces her “not like [her] father”?
- When Slannen shows Agulen’s pottery to Ella, why does the figure of the wolf attract her so?

Chapter 14

- The ogres figure out how obedient Ella is . . . yet *she* ends up giving the orders. How does she pull this off?

Chapter 15

- What skills does Ella use to “tame” the ogres?

Chapter 16

- What do both the content and the spelling of Hattie’s and Olive’s letters tell you about the girls?

Chapter 17

- Lucinda gives the newlywed giants a “gift.” Could this gift turn into a big problem? Why do you think so?

Chapter 18

- Lucinda orders Ella: “Be happy to be blessed with such a lovely quality.” Why does Ella suddenly feel “free” for the first time since her mother’s death? Is this a good thing?
- How do you think Ella’s situation would be different if her father knew about the curse?

Chapter 19

- Mandy advises Ella not to be happy about being obedient. “Be whatever you feel about it,” she says. Do you think this a good command?
- Does Ella still have feelings for Char, even though magic causes her to be “enamored of” Sir Edmund? Do you think emotions can be genuine if they’re caused by magic?

Chapter 20

- What do you think of Lucinda’s gift to Sir Peter and Dame Olga? Can you imagine some of its possible consequences?

Chapter 21

- What kinds of things happen to Char and Ella during their time together at the wedding? Does something shift in their relationship?

Chapter 22

- How might Sir Peter's confession to Dame Olga that he's broke end up affecting Ella?
- Why does Hattie prevent Ella from seeing Char?

Chapter 23

- If Dame Olga loves Ella's father so much, why do she and her daughters treat Ella so badly? What might she hope to gain?
- Why does Ella believe her father is the only person who can help her? If you were Ella, would you ask Sir Peter for help?

Chapter 24

- How does Ella and Char's relationship develop through their correspondence? What sorts of things do they learn about each other?

Chapter 25

- Do you think Ella's decision to give up Char is the right one? Do you agree with her reasoning or not?

Chapter 26

- What do you think of Lucinda's attempt to help Ella without breaking her vow not to do "big magic"? Does it explain the familiar fairy-tale elements in this chapter?

Chapter 27

- Is Ella "a fool" for behaving so much like herself? Is it surprising that Char doesn't recognize her?

Chapter 28

- Why do you think Char has decided never to marry?

Chapter 29

- Mandy says, “Nothing is small magic in a moment like this.”
What does she mean?
- How does Ella break the curse once and for all? What is it that gives her the power?
- Ella proposes to Char—why is this significant?

Epilogue

- What do you think of Lucinda’s wedding gift?
- Why does Ella refuse to become a princess but take the titles of Court Linguist and Cook’s Helper?

Plot: What's Happening?



"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."

—Ella, *Ella Enchanted*

Ella *Enchanted* is the story of Ella of Frell, a girl cursed at birth when a misguided fairy gives her a terrible "gift." She goes on a quest to persuade the fairy to remove the curse, but ultimately it is her own strength that saves her.

The fairy Lucinda means to give Ella a gift when she says to the crying infant, "My gift is obedience. Ella will always be obedient." Lucinda doesn't foresee the terrible consequences of this gift, but Ella must live with them. "Anyone could control me with an order," she tells us. "If you commanded me to cut off my own head, I'd have to do it."

When Ella's mother dies, her father, Sir Peter, decides to send her to finishing school with Hattie and Olive, the spoiled, stupid daughters of Dame Olga. She leaves behind her new friend, Prince

Charmont of Frell. Her beloved Mandy, the cook, gives her the gift of a magic book and reveals that *she* is Ella's fairy godmother.

Hattie is a "monster" who discovers that Ella must always obey an order, and makes her life at school miserable by turning her into a servant. When Hattie orders her to stop seeing her only school friend, Areida, Ella turns to her magic book. In it, she reads of her father's plans to attend a wedding of giants at which fairies are likely to be present. Ella decides to run away from school to go to the wedding. If Lucinda is there, perhaps she will break the curse.

Pursuing Lucinda at the wedding, Ella discovers that the fairy is famous for giving misguided gifts. Lucinda doesn't understand why Ella would want to give back her "gift" and orders her to be happy with it. Ella obeys Lucinda's command and her feelings change entirely. "The curse [has] turned into a blessing," Ella tells the reader. She believes she can embrace whatever happens.

After Sir Peter fails to marry Ella to a rich man, he decides to marry Dame Olga for her money. At the wedding, Ella meets up with Char. They skip the wedding ball and go exploring. In a tower room, they find an unusual pair of slippers made of glass. Ella tries them on and they fit her exactly.

After the wedding, Sir Peter confesses to Dame Olga that he is a poor man. Despite her horror at this news, she loves him—thanks to the fairy's gift—but she doesn't feel the same way about Ella. Sir Peter tells his wife that Ella must not be treated like a servant in her own home and, though Dame Olga agrees with him, she looks at Ella with "pure venom."

Ella begins to feel the consequences of her father's deception of Dame Olga. Hattie orders her new stepsister around just as she did at school. When Char comes to visit, Ella is ordered to stay in her room. She won't be able to see him before he leaves for a year in the royal court at Ayortha. So she writes him a letter, and the two friends begin a long correspondence.

Sir Peter resumes his travels, and Dame Olga moves Ella's things to the servants' quarters. Hattie reveals to everyone that, for some reason, Ella "does whatever she is told." From now on, Ella will be a servant, says Dame Olga. The only power Ella has is her quick wit, and her only comfort is her correspondence with Char. Their letters are frequent and grow more affectionate. Finally, Char confesses his love for her. As she reads the letter, Ella realizes she loves him, too.

But can she marry him? Ella realizes that she "wouldn't escape the curse by marrying Char." In fact, Char and his kingdom could be harmed if her obedience were to be discovered by an enemy. As long as she lives under the fairy's curse, Ella can't marry her true love. Miserable, she tries to make him hate her by writing a fake letter from Hattie.

Meanwhile, Mandy has shown Lucinda how all her thoughtless "gifts" have harmed people. Lucinda vows to do no more "big magic," so she cannot break the curse she put on Ella so many years before.

Three balls are being held to celebrate Char's return from his year in Ayortha. Everyone believes he will choose his bride during

the festivities. In secret, Mandy and Lucinda make sure Ella attends the festivities. Ella wears a mask and disguises her voice to keep Charmont from recognizing her, and they dance together each night. When a jealous Hattie pulls off her mask, Ella's identity is revealed. She escapes, losing one of her glass slippers.

Char arrives at Olga's house looking for the girl whose slipper he's found. Hattie and Olive try on the shoe, and it doesn't fit. It fits Ella, of course. "Marry me!" Char says. It is an order, so she agrees, hoping someone will order her not to. In those moments, she realizes that she must refuse him in order to save them both. After a terrible struggle, she is able to say no. The curse is broken because Ella finally has both reason and strength enough to break it. She no longer poses a threat to Char's and Kyrria's safety. Ella also knows she loves Char enough to marry him of her own free will, so she goes down on one knee and proposes to him.

And they live happily ever after!

Thinking about the plot

- Why is the fairy's well-intentioned gift really a curse?
- How is Ella's story like the familiar Cinderella story? In what ways is it different?
- Magic plays a big part in the story. Does it help solve problems or help create them? Why do you think so?
- What are Ella's greatest strengths and how does she demonstrate them?