

Literature Circle Questions

Use these questions and the activities that follow to get more out of the experience of reading *Ella Enchanted* by Gail Carson Levine.

1. How does the curse cause Ella to be “in danger at every moment”? What happens to her if she tries to disobey an order?
2. What does Mandy reveal about herself to Ella after Ella’s mother dies? What does Mandy tell Ella about Ella’s family line?
3. Why are the gnomes friendly to Ella? What does the gnome predict for her?
4. Ella's father doesn't know about her curse. Why not? Why does Mandy advise Ella not to let him find out? What kind of man is Sir Peter? Find passages where his character is discussed.
5. How does Hattie figure out that Ella will obey her commands? What does she do with her power? Why doesn't she tell anyone? What does Ella hope to learn from the bogweed?
6. Even though she is cursed with obedience, how does Ella disobey orders? Does Ella's curse ever help her? Find an example of a positive result of the curse.
7. Each time Ella’s book of fairy tales is opened, a different tale appears. Do the tales reflect the person reading the book? Why else do you think the fairy book shows certain things at different times?
8. Can you find any patterns in the different languages spoken in the book? Can you find any spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or other characteristic that distinguishes each from the other? Make a chart or list of your findings.
9. How does Prince Charmont feel about Ella? Does Ella realize how he feels? Find passages from his letters and their conversations to support your answers.
10. After meeting Lucinda, Ella thinks, “I knew I was happy only because I’d been ordered to be, but the happiness was absolute.” If you were cursed as Ella was, would you rather be free to hate being obedient or be forced to be happy about it? How much freedom do you have to disobey orders in your own life? What keeps you from disobeying? If you do disobey, how does that come about?
11. What would you do in Ella’s situation if you were forbidden to continue a dear friendship? If your circumstances prevented you from marrying the person you loved? Can Ella behave differently? How? What would the consequences of her actions be?

12. What do you think is the worst “gift” Lucinda bestows on anyone during the novel? Compare your choice with other gifts and discuss the disadvantages of each. Try to think of unusual ways each gift would affect the person’s life.
13. What is the difference between small magic and big magic? Discuss how Mandy’s and Lucinda’s ideas about big and small magic are different. How do Lucinda’s opinions change? Can you think of real-life situations in which people have power equal to big magic?
14. *Ella Enchanted* is based on the story *Cinderella*. Discuss how Ella’s character and story is similar and how it is different from the traditional tale. What do you think the three most important differences are? Explain.

Note: These literature circle questions are keyed to Bloom’s Taxonomy: Knowledge: 1-2; Comprehension: 3-5; Application: 6-7; Analysis: 8-9; Synthesis: 10-11; Evaluation: 12-14.

Activities

1. Pick a famous fairy tale and write your own, new version of it. For example, set "The Frog Prince" in a high school or change Rumpelstiltskin from a mean villain to a lonely old woman. Imagine how the story of Pinocchio would change with the invention of lie detectors or how computers might help Hansel and Gretel.
2. Try living as if you were cursed like Ella for one hour, obeying every command you are given, without telling anyone about your curse. For a second hour, obey not only commands from people around you, but also commands you hear on TV and from anything you read. Present to the class what you learned from your experience.
3. Within the novel, there are many magical and fanciful creatures. Imagine what each of the different kinds of creatures would look like together in one place and draw a colorful scene of them. Include at least one human, elf, fairy, ogre, giant, and centaur.

Other Books by This Author:

The Princess Tales Series, HarperCollins Juvenile Books

Dave At Night, HarperTrophy, 2001

The Two Princesses of Bemarre, HarperCollins Juvenile Books, 2001

The Wish, HarperCollins Juvenile Books, 2000