



Ella's Big Chance: A Jazz-Age Cinderella

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The classic story of Cinderella gains even more charm in this glamorous retelling by world-famous picture book writer and illustrator Shirley Hughes.

Ella Cinders loves helping her father in his dress shop and laughing with her friend Buttons, the store's delivery boy. Then comes the terrible day when her father remarries and everything changes. Her stepmother makes her sew in the dreary basement. Her stepsisters mock her shabby dress. And to top it off, the new Mrs. Cinders forbids Ella to attend the duke's grand ball. Heartbroken, Ella is sure that her life will never be what she dreamed. But with the help of a fairy godmother and some sparkling courage of her own, this Cinderella discovers that dreams can come true in the most unexpected ways.

Join Ella amidst the dazzle and fashion of the roaring twenties as she takes happily ever after into her own hands!

Ella's Big Chance: A Jazz-Age Cinderella Details

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Author : Shirley Hughes

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From Reader Review Ella's Big Chance: A Jazz-Age Cinderella for online ebook

Renee says

A gorgeous twist on the classic Cinderella. The illustrations earned the Kate Greenway Medal for Children's Illustrations. The language is decadent, and the ending is fitting. The girls loved it, too. I did NOT, however, appreciate the evil stepmother being named Renee!

Kat says

Charming with stunning pictures.

Natalie Wilkinson says

Traditional Literature

Classic Cinderella but with a fun twist! Great for comparing with other Cinderella stories.

Slow Man says

OMG, Cinderella with a twist.

As I was reading, I thought it is going to be some recycled material that we all have listened a million times before but thank God for that little twist.

I am smiling now and the smile is getting a little bigger as the seconds go by.

Jeani says

My daughter and I both appreciated that the love she wanted was right there all along, and she had the ability to see it and accept it.

Kathryn says

4.5 Stars. I really liked this retelling! There's more than just the setting/era that is different, though... The ending had a definite twist! I admit that I wasn't that huge a fan of the illustrations, though I certainly appreciated their merit and they did fit nicely with the story. Also, I felt a tad bad for "Prince Charming" -- though I can't say why unless I spoil the ending for you!!! But, the story was told really beautifully--just a very warmhearted sort of tale and I absolutely loved the jazz age setting and that Ella works in a clothing design store. The clothes are inspired by the famous French designers of the '20s. ("House of Elliot"--

ANNIE, you must read this!) I'll be looking for more by Shirley Hughes.

See this list for more Cinderella tellings:
<http://www.amazon.com/Everything-Cind...>

McCleary says

Ella's Big Chance by Shirley Hughes won the Kate Greenaway Medal for a very good reason! I have hardly ever seen illustrations as beautiful as these. I literally gasped out loud at many of them! The story was a quirky and unique take on Cinderella that I also loved. I think this story is intended for older elementary school children. As opposed to younger readers, older students may understand the parallel between this book and Cinderella a little better. In addition to that, there were multiple paragraphs per page, which makes this book perfect for older elementary readers. The illustrations in this book were absolutely gorgeous. I think they were done with very pigmented watercolors and then details were drawn over top with a pen. Every spread was beautiful, but one I especially loved was when Ella got to the ball. There were so many vibrant colors, but it looked very blended, too. There were shades of purple, yellow, orange, and white blended together to create the walls, ceiling, and chandeliers, but then very distinctive black lines gave shape to the features of the room. I definitely think the style of this book is impressionist. Impressionist art blurs the lines between colors, which these illustrations definitely had. The illustrations also had a dream-like, airy quality that I also think is characteristic of impressionism. Since this story is a take on Cinderella, I loved the contrast of blended, but bright colors with lines giving a structure to the illustrations' dreaminess. Something physical that made me love this book even more were these little spot art illustrations at the bottom of every page. In the bottom corner of every page, there is a little black and white sketch of what is happening "in between" each scene. For example, when Ella realizes that she can't go to the ball, the small sketch shows Ella's father comforting her. This is such a creative addition to this story! If I were to use this with older children, I would have them compare and contrast this book to the "original" Cinderella and write about their favorite of the two. I am obsessed with these gorgeous illustrations and this creative story! This is a book that I will definitely remember to use with my future students.

Agewen Stifford says

The ending isn't like I always expected. AND I LOVE IT

Sara Check says

1. The genre of this book is picture book, other.

2. Shirley Hughes has taken the story of Cinderella, that we all know too well and transposed it into the roaring twenties. Ella and her father are dressmakers and their lives are turned upside down by his new wife, Madame Renee, and her daughters. Ella works day and night sewing dresses but is kept smiling by her faithful company, Mr. Buttons, the doorman to their famous salon. Invitations to the "grand ball", a visit from a Fairy Godmother and a breathtaking entrance to the ball are all steps toward Ella getting her "Big Chance"; dancing with the Duke of Arc. Will she take her big chance and fall in love with the Duke or

realize what is truly important to her, her faithful and loyal confidant?

3.A. The most spectacular part of this book is the illustrations that accompany Shirley Hughes' version of Cinderella.

B. From cover to cover, Hughes has filled the entire book full of intricate, dazzling and sophisticated drawings that take more than one look to appreciate. She varies picture composition and layout while the size and placement of the outlined text boxes are constant. Her realistic style, emphasis on detail and rich colors make the characters and setting come to life and give the reader a true sense of the roaring twenties!

C. Hughes definitely created a vast contrast in characters and setting using various hues and intensities. In the beginning of the story on page 1-2, when Ella and her dad were happy the colors were bright and the sun was shining; life was good. They worked together in their salon and they had many sewing projects going on at once. In the middle of the book on pages 11-12, when Madame Renee's influence took over, colors turned dark and Ella was in a bleak basement with cold grays and harsh line details. Moving through the grand ball on pages 27-28, the colors and details became glitzy and glamorous. The dancing sequence between Ella and the Duke is amazing on page 27. The movement of her dress and the looks on their faces show they are truly moving across a dance floor. In the end, when Ella gets her "Big Chance", on pages 41-42, the colors, shapes and details become more realistic and believable. It truly shows that Ella made the right decision when she had her "Big Chance".

4. Curriculum Connection- I believe this picture book would be best suited for older students, upper elementary to middle school to truly understand it. Although, I'm sure my three year old daughter would love looking at these glamorous pictures and seeing a different Cinderella. In the classroom, teachers could definitely use this piece to practice compare/contrast against the true Cinderella story and to share an alternate view of a classic story. History teachers could use this to spark conversation about the roaring twenties and analyze how true to the time it is. Teachers could also use this as a springboard to change other classic stories. Since this story has a twist at the end that does not exist in the original Cinderella, how could the students make their own twist in classic stories themselves?

Enola Stevenson says

Gorgeous retelling of a classic, with such a sweet twist! The illustrations are stunning, too, making it one of those story books that is just as enjoyable for the 'grown up' reader.

Joelle says

3.5 stars

The illustrations in this picture book were beautiful (and award winning). I found this version of Cinderella to be a welcome departure from the earlier, more well-known versions. The twist at the end is likely more applicable to most people's lives and serves as an important message to all readers.

Valerie says

Summary/A Thoughtful Review:

This version of Cinderella, set in the 1920's Jazz Era, tells the story of Ella Cinder, seamstress and daughter of dress shop owner, Mr. Cinder. After her mother died, she and her father have lived and worked happily together, along with their delivery boy and friend, Buttons. Ella and Buttons build a friendship, laughing, singing, and dancing together. In not to long, her father remarries an evil stepmother, Renee, who attempts to take over the family business, forcing Ella to work even harder, in the dismal basement. Stepsisters, Ruby and Pearl, tease and taunt Ella, forcing her to do everything, as well. After being invited to the Duke of Arc's grand ball, the woman go over the top in preparations by Ella and forbid her from going. Ella's father has lost all control in the situation and merely says, "You see how it is. There is nothing I can do." Buttons consol's Ella, offering to make her dinner, but is surprised by an unexpected visitor, the Fairy Godmother, who transforms Button's bicycle into a "gleaming limousine," the cat into a "smart chauffeur," and Ella's rags into a silver ball gown, "glittering all over with silver beads." As the story goes, Ella arrives at the ball, unrecognizable to all, meets and dances with the Duke, but hurries away, dropping a slipper at midnight. So, when the Duke travels from house to house in search of "the girl who had worn the glass slipper," her notices the servant standing in the corner shadows of the Cinder's house. When the shoe fits, does Ella accept or decline his proposal?

The setting of this story, the 1920 Jazz Era, plays a prominent role in the story's events and themes. Historically, the 1920's were roaring, alive, and full of independence for both men and women. Here, we meet Ella, a strong woman character, determined to better herself and her life, yet not willing to take the "easy street." Again, Shirley Hughes, author and illustrator, challenges the original Cinderella story in a way that builds on strong characters and their motives. The bright and bold illustrations also depict this time of glimmer and shine in fashion. A beautiful story all around!

LH Johnson says

There's a richness to everything Shirley Hughes produces, and it's this richness which comes to the forefront of Ella's Big Chance. This, as the front cover, states is 'a fairy tale retold'. It is a retelling of Cinderella, set in 'the jazz-age'. And it is practically glowing with riches.

Cinderella is such an archetypal story that it needs very little precis. It is the story of a girl, her wicked stepmother and a night on the town that Cinderella will never forget.

In this story, we meet Ella, the daughter of Mr Cinders. The two of them run a dressmaking shop 'in a quiet but elegant part of town'. There's an air of faded gentility from the start as the sun eases through the windows to illustrate the shop - the colours, living, under the touch of Ella and her father.

Ella herself is something particularly glorious. Drawn as a sort of Gina Lollobrigida meets Sophia Loren hybrid both facially and physically, her hair close cropped into a wild bob, she's an all too rare and incredibly beautiful creation. I loved her.

As ever in a Hughes book, there's a deep awareness of time and the experience of the reader. She's never selfish in her illustrations, there's always some sort of - look at me - moment to ever scene. The majority of the pages are constructed in a half and half scenario, a white block of text playing next to, or opposite a full colour image. What's particularly interesting in these pages is that the majority of the text sections have a

sort of 'transitory' image in pen and ink. These simple black and white moments carry a lot of the book until the ball, and they do so because of their elegance. They transition the reader from scene to scene, joining the story together in a sort of visual stitching. Hughes is very skilled at not letting you go once she has you.

When we reach the ball scene, which is something we're always waiting for in a Cinderella story, it is not disappointing. Hughes goes for it and produces images that are just - richness. They are luscious and edible and dreamlike all at the same time. She balances the vivid intensity of the moment with human touches. When Ella arrives at the ball, walking down the stairs in her silver dress that is visually stunning, Hughes throws in moments all over the scene. A gentleman at the edge of the far page has eyes for nobody but Ella even though his partner is talking; a group of women stare in shock and distaste at this competitor, whilst another woman serene in her duties as host holds out her arm to greet Ella who pauses, so very briefly, at the stairs to close her eyes and savour the moment.

It's worthwhile to note that in this book Hughes designed all of the dresses. So when you read it, remember this and note her use of colours and shapes. See how Ella in her black shift dress is the centre of the picture, always, linked by the black and white images that thread through this book and yet somehow, always in the shadows, her dress blurring into the darkness of the shop and the cellar. Watch the peacock nature of one of Ella's step-sisters, posing in her vivid red dress, uncaring that she blocks up half of the image and steals focus from her sister. Look at the way Ella's ball dress is conjured from the night and the stars and the silvery magic of her fair godmother.

Look at this book, and treasure it, and take your time over it. And then do it all over again. It's a book that rewards slow, leisurely, indulgent reading.

(And it gives you the most perfect, perfect of conclusions).

Meg McGregor says

This is a Jazz-Age version of the classic Cinderella story, with a unique ending, and a timely message!

Many times we don't see what is right in front of us! I am so glad Ella was able to see where her true love really was. Although I did feel very sorry for the Duke but I think Ella chose wisely!

Beautifully illustrated and with vibrant and lovely use of language, this book is one that Mothers and daughters can certainly read and enjoy together!

CandC says

I loved the retelling of the classic Cinderella. There were a few differences, obviously, the setting and era but also the relationship between father and daughter as the father is still alive and the twist at the end. Great book to introduce children to the jazz era. I enjoyed the illustrations and they gave my kids a taste of the 20s style.

