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The Princess Tales: Volume One

Elizabeth Meyers

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Levine, Gail Carson. *The Princess Tales: Volume One*. Illustrated by Mark Elliott. Harper Trophy, 2003. ISBN 0060518413. \$6.99. 232 pp.

Reviewer: Elizabeth Meyers

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fairy tales; Fantasy fiction; Humorous stories;

Subject: Fairy tales--Juvenile fiction; Fairies--Juvenile fiction; Magic--Juvenile fiction; Books—Reviews;

From jewels popping out of one's mouth, to being susceptible to all kinds of diseases and injuries, to being ten times as intelligent as anyone else, the heroines of *The Princess Tales* have a lot to deal with. In "The Fairy's Mistake," twin sisters, Rosella and Myrtle both run into the same fairy. While Rosella is rewarded with jewels coming out of her mouth every time she speaks, and Myrtle is punished by insects and snakes doing the same, somehow Rosella ends up miserable while Myrtle is quite content. It takes a little more doing for the fairy to make sure all turns out well. Lorelei in "The Princess Test" is a casebook example of the utterly accident-prone, but it may just win her a prince. In "Princess Sonora and the Long Sleep," the extra-intelligent Sonora has to figure out how to outsmart the machinations of a wicked fairy and find a husband who will actually listen to her.

While, as in many fairy tales, the endings of these stories are perhaps a little too neatly tied up, their freshness and humor succeed in producing an extremely enjoyable reading experience. Gail Carson Levine, well known for her excellent and original rendition of the Cinderella story in *Ella Enchanted*, continues to show her flare for retelling fairy tales in an unusual but highly amusing way. Young teenagers especially will enjoy the book, particularly the romantic bits.