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A Tale of Two Castles by Gail Carson Levine

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Author: Levine, Gail Carson

Title: *A Tale of Two Castles*

Year of Publication: 2011

Publisher: Harper Collins

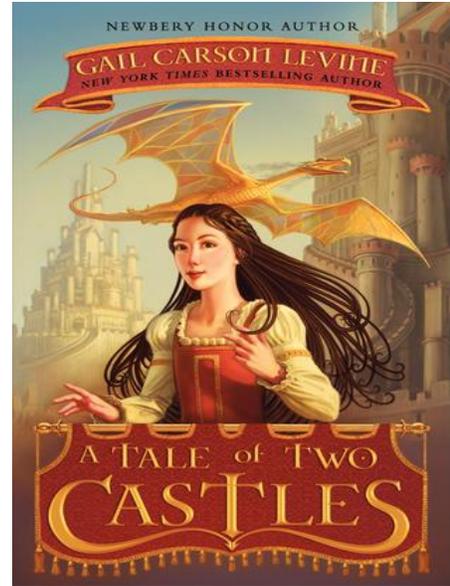
ISBN: 9780061229657

Number of Pages: 336

Rating: Excellent

Reading/Interest Level: Intermediate; Young Adult

Keywords: Novel; Fantasy; Dragons; Ogres; Reasoning; Apprentices; Retold Fairy Tales



Review:

Elodie wants to be an actress, but when she arrives in the town of Two Castles her dream is cut short by her lack of funds. Instead she finds herself an assistant to the dragon Menore which involves proclaiming Menore's unusual ability to find missing items. When the wealthy ogre, Count Jonty Um, comes to Menore for help, Elodie is sent to his castle. There, disguised as a kitchen maid, she tries to determine who wants the ogre dead. However, the stakes are raised when at a feast to celebrate the ogre's betrothal to the princess, the ogre goes missing and the King is poisoned. Elodie uses logic, wit, and her ability to act in order to solve the mystery and save the kingdom.

A mystery wrapped in a fantasy, *A Tale of Two Castles*, provides a fresh look at the *Puss In Boots* fairytale. While it appears to start slow, Levine is carefully presenting clues that eventually cause readers to look back in an effort to solve the mystery before Elodie does. Along with mystery, the plot briefly brushes across deeper themes including prejudice towards the Ogre, the leadership qualities or lack thereof found in the King, and the traditional theme of discovering who you really want to be as Elodie realizes that some dreams are better than others. Complete with a cast of unusual albeit lovable characters, *A Tale of Two Castles*, will appeal to most fairytale lovers young and old alike.

Reviewer: Rebecca Strein

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