



THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

A Vision of Hope in the Cold

Context (B2) - This 1845 narrative by Hans Christian Andersen remains a profound exploration of Victorian social inequality and spiritual transcendence.

[1] A bitter, unforgiving cold gripped the city on the final night of the year. While most residents prepared for celebrations, a thick blanket of snow covered the cobblestone streets, deepening the sense of isolation for those on the margins. In the gloom, a young girl wandered aimlessly; her tattered clothing, which offered no protection against the winter wind, was arguably the only thing she owned. Having lost her oversized slippers while dodging a carriage, she was now barefoot. One slipper had been lost in the snow, whereas the other was snatched by a mocking boy, a small act that emphasized the cruel environment she inhabited.

[2] Moving through the city was an exercise in pure endurance. Her feet were numbed into shades of raw red, yet she clutched her bundle of matches with a sense of desperate duty. It had been a disastrous day of trade; not a single soul had spared a coin, an outcome that felt inevitable given the festive distractions of the wealthy. The savory scent of roast goose, which wafted from glowing windows, served as a painful reminder of her exclusion. To her, the celebration was not a reality but a distant world, separated by a wall of glass and profound indifference.

[3] Fearing her father's inevitable anger was a greater deterrent than the lethal cold, so she dared not venture home. Besides, her dwelling offered little sanctuary, as the wind whistled through gaps in the roof. Seeking refuge, she huddled in a narrow alleyway. Her fingers were stiff with frost, and in her desperation, she decided to strike a single match. *Scratch!* The match flared into a tiny, brilliant candle. In its magical glow, the environment seemed transformed. She was seemingly no longer

in the snow but seated before a magnificent iron stove. However, just as she stretched out her feet, the match died. The stove vanished, and the cold reality returned.

[4] Striking a second match revealed a new vision. As the light expanded, the brick wall appeared to dissolve into a transparent veil. She found herself peering into a grand dining room where a feast was laid out. A succulent roast goose, stuffed with fragrant apples, steamed at the center of the table. To her astonishment, the goose leapt from its platter and waddled across the floor. Nonetheless, before it could reach her, the match extinguished, and the cold wall of the alleyway was all that remained.

[5] With the third match, she found herself beneath a spectacular Christmas tree. Thousands of candles sparkled upon its branches, an image that beckoned to her lost childhood. As she reached upward, the match went out. The lights rose until they transformed into stars. One star streaked across the heavens, leaving a fiery trail. “Someone is passing away,” she thought, remembering her late grandmother—the only person who had ever treated her with genuine compassion. Her grandmother had always said that a falling star signaled a soul’s journey to the divine.

[6] Frantically, she struck another match. In the sudden radiance, her grandmother stood before her, bathed in celestial light, looking serene and incredibly kind. “Grandmother!” the girl pleaded. “Oh, please take me with you!” To prevent the vision from vanishing, which she knew would happen eventually, she struck the entire bundle of matches at once. The light became brighter than midday. Her grandmother reached out, took the girl into her arms, and together they soared through joy, far above the earth, to a place where there was no cold, no hunger, and no fear.

[7] At dawn, the townspeople discovered the small figure, her cheeks flushed and a peaceful smile gracing her lips. She had passed away during the night, surrounded by the charred remains of her matches. “She was only trying to keep herself warm,” the people remarked solemnly. None of them could have imagined the magnificent splendors she had witnessed, or the radiant glory in which she had entered the New Year.

1. How does the 'mischievous boy' incident contribute to the mood established at the beginning of the story?

- A. It introduces a theme of childhood innocence amidst poverty.
- B. It emphasizes the cruelty and indifference of the world the girl inhabits.
- C. It provides a logical explanation for why the girl's mother had passed away.
- D. It foreshadows the magical elements that will appear later in the visions.

2. What does the girl's refusal to go home, despite the 'debilitating cold', reveal about her domestic life?

- A. Her fear of her father's violence was greater than her fear of the elements.
- B. She was hoping to find her lost slippers before her mother found out.
- C. She felt more at peace in the cold streets than in her own dwelling.
- D. She was determined to prove her worth as a match-seller.

3. What is the significance of the wall 'dissolving into a veil' during her second vision?

- A. It suggests that the cold has begun to damage her ability to perceive reality.
- B. It represents the breakdown of the boundary between her desperate reality and her desires.
- C. It indicates that the girl has found a way to actually enter the rich merchant's home.
- D. It shows that the brick wall was physically falling apart due to the weather.

4. The girl was fully aware that her grandmother's presence would fade once the match was extinguished.

- A. True
- B. False

5. Which of the following best evaluates the purpose of the 'goose waddling toward her' in the narrative?

- A. To illustrate the girl's declining sanity through surreal imagery.
- B. To prove that nature itself was sympathetic to the girl's hunger.
- C. To emphasize the hallucinatory intensity of her extreme starvation.
- D. To provide a lighthearted contrast to the bleakness of death.

6. How is the grandmother's role in the girl's life portrayed through her final words and actions?

- A. As a protective figure who offers a spiritual escape from physical suffering.
- B. As a ghostly presence that lures the girl away from potential rescuers.
- C. As a wealthy benefactor who failed to help the girl while she was alive.
- D. As an imaginary friend created to cope with loneliness.

7. What does the final image of the girl with 'rosy cheeks' and a 'peaceful smile' symbolize?

- A. A medical description of the final stages of hypothermia.
- B. The tragic beauty of her death and the success of her inner journey.
- C. The townspeople's hope that she would find a better life in the New Year.
- D. A cruel trick played by the cold to make her look healthy in death.

8. The townspeople's comment, 'She was trying to keep herself warm,' represents what literary device?

- A. Foreshadowing - it hints at her eventual rescue by her grandmother.
- B. Irony - it shows their complete ignorance of her profound experience.
- C. Allegory - the matches represent the spark of life in every human.
- D. Personification - it gives human intentions to the cold wind.

Key Summary: (1) B (2) A (3) B (4) A (5) C (6) A (7) B
(8) B

Q1: How does the 'mischievous boy' incident contribute to the mood established at the beginning of the story?

Answer: B

Explanation: The boy's mockery while the girl is in a dire situation highlights the lack of empathy in her environment.

Q2: What does the girl's refusal to go home, despite the 'debilitating cold', reveal about her domestic life?

Answer: A

Explanation: The 'wrath' she fears from her father is a more immediate deterrent than the lethal cold of the street.

Q3: What is the significance of the wall 'dissolving into a veil' during her second vision?

Answer: B

Explanation: The 'dissolving' is a psychological metaphor for her exclusion from the comfort she sees inside.

Q4: The girl was fully aware that her grandmother's presence would fade once the match was extinguished.

Answer: A

Explanation: She explicitly states her awareness that the vision is temporary and tied to the match's light.

Q5: Which of the following best evaluates the purpose of the 'goose waddling toward her' in the narrative?

Answer: C

Explanation: The surreal detail of the waddling goose with cutlery emphasizes the hallucinatory nature of her starvation.

Q6: How is the grandmother's role in the girl's life portrayed through her final words and actions?

Answer: A

Explanation: The grandmother is the only figure associated with compassion and ultimate relief from her suffering.

Q7: What does the final image of the girl with 'rosy cheeks' and a 'peaceful smile' symbolize?

Answer: B

Explanation: The smile symbolizes her internal triumph and peace, despite her external tragic fate.

Q8: The townspeople's comment, 'She was trying to keep herself warm,' represents what literary device?

Answer: B

Explanation: The irony lies in the gap between the mundane explanation and the girl's transcendent experience.