



THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

A Vision of Hope in the Cold

PART 1: B1 INTERMEDIATE

Introduction (Level B1) - “The Little Match Girl” is a famous story by Hans Christian Andersen from Denmark (1845). It poignantly explores the contrast between extreme poverty and the persistence of hope.

[1] The year was ending, and a freezing wind blew through the dark streets. It was New Year’s Eve. Snow fell on a poor little girl who walked alone in the cold. She carried matches in her hand to sell, but her day had been very difficult. She was barefoot because she had lost her slippers while crossing the street. One slipper had disappeared in the snow, and a rude boy had run away with the other.

[2] Her tiny feet were red and blue from the cold. She clutched her matchbox, but no one had bought anything from her all day. She was shivering and hungry, and she could smell the delicious roast goose cooking in the nearby houses. The lights from the windows danced in the snow, making her feel even more alone.

[3] She was afraid to go home because her father would be angry that she had made no money. Besides, her house was almost as cold as the street. She sat down in a corner between two houses. Her hands felt completely frozen. She thought, “Perhaps just one match could warm me.” She struck it against the wall. *Scratch!* A bright flame appeared. It felt as if she were sitting in front of a large, beautiful iron stove. The fire was warm and wonderful, but just as she reached out her feet, the match went out. The stove vanished.

[4] She struck a second match. The light made the wall look like a thin curtain. Through it, she saw a grand room with a table covered in a white cloth. A roast goose was waiting on the table. To her surprise, the goose jumped down and started towards her! But the match went out, and the vision was replaced by the cold, dark wall.

[5] With the third match, she found herself under a magnificent Christmas tree. Thousands of candles sparkled on the branches. As she reached for them, the match went out and the lights rose higher, turning into stars. One star fell, leaving a trail of fire. “Someone is dying,” she whispered. Her old grandmother had told her that a falling star meant a soul was going to heaven.

[6] She struck another match, and there stood her grandmother, looking kind and bright. “Grandmother!” she cried. “Take me with you!” She quickly lit the rest of her matches to keep the vision alive. They burned brighter than the day. Her grandmother took the little girl in her arms, and they both flew high into the sky, far away from the cold and the hunger.

[7] The next morning, the townspeople found the little girl. She was sitting in the corner with a peaceful smile, but she had frozen to death. "She was trying to keep warm," they said. No one knew the beautiful things she had seen, or the joy she felt as she entered the New Year with her grandmother.

B1 QUESTIONS

1. According to the text, why did the girl not return home?
 - A. She had lost her way in the dark and snow.
 - B. She was afraid of being hit by her father for earning no money.
 - C. Her house was even colder and more dangerous than the street.
 - D. She wanted to stay and watch the people celebrate New Year's Eve.
2. The girl's hands were so cold that she could no longer feel them before she lit the first match.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. In paragraph [3], how does the writer use the description of the 'iron stove' to show the girl's feelings?
 - A. To show that she was angry about her situation.
 - B. To show how much she desired warmth and comfort.
 - C. To explain the type of furniture people had in 1845.
 - D. To warn the reader about the dangers of fire.
4. What did the falling star represent to the little girl?
 - A. That a cold winter storm was approaching.
 - B. That a soul was ascending to God.
 - C. That her matches were about to run out.
 - D. That the New Year's celebrations had begun.
5. Why did the girl light the whole bundle of matches at the end?
 - A. She wanted to be found by the townspeople more easily.
 - B. She was trying to start a fire to keep her grandmother.
 - C. She wanted to keep the vision of her grandmother from disappearing.
 - D. She was trying to use up all the matches so she wouldn't have to sell them.
6. What is the significance of the girl's 'smile' found the next morning?
 - A. It shows she was glad to be free from her father.
 - B. It suggests she had a happy experience before dying, which the people didn't see.
 - C. It indicates that she had finally sold all her matches.
 - D. It shows that she was warmer than the people expected.

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Writing Prompt: Should we help the poor? Or should they just take care of themselves? Explain your answer with reasons and examples.

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THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

A Vision of Hope in the Cold

PART 3: B2 UPPER INTERMEDIATE

Introduction (Level B2) - This classic 1845 narrative by Hans Christian Andersen remains a profound exploration of Victorian social inequality and the stark contrast between human suffering 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.

B2 QUESTIONS

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.

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CLASS

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Writing Prompt: Evaluate the social responsibility of the community. Should intervention for the impoverished be a personal moral choice or a collective societal obligation? Support your argument with evidence from the text.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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

Q1: According to the text, why did the girl not return home?

Answer: B

Explanation: The text explicitly states she feared punishment from her father.

Q2: The girl's hands were so cold that she could no longer feel them before she lit the first match.

Answer: A

Explanation: The text says her hands were almost frozen, indicating extreme cold and lack of feeling.

Q3: In paragraph [3], how does the writer use the description of the 'iron stove' to show the girl's feelings?

Answer: B

Explanation: The stove represents the warmth and security she desperately lacks in reality.

Q4: What did the falling star represent to the little girl?

Answer: B

Explanation: The girl's grandmother had taught her this spiritual meaning of a falling star.

Q5: Why did the girl light the whole bundle of matches at the end?

Answer: C

Explanation: The girl acted out of desperation to prevent the vision from vanishing like the previous ones.

Q6: What is the significance of the girl's 'smile' found the next morning?

Answer: B

Explanation: The smile symbolizes her internal joy and peace, contrasting with the tragic reality seen by the townspeople.

B2 ANSWER 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.