



The Little Match Girl

Once upon a time, there lived a poor girl who sold matches to earn money for her family. Each day she would head out onto the cold streets of Copenhagen and try to sell her wares to anybody who would buy them. Often, she would go hours without making a single penny. Her family were destitute, and her clothes were old and dirty, and her shoes nothing more than flaps of fabric.

Wandering through the town during one particularly cold winter, the little match girl found herself alone. The sun had long before sank below the horizon and yet she hadn't made a solitary sale. Without any money, how could she return home to her mother and father? She pushed on into the night and desperately sought anybody who might require a match.

There are areas in Copenhagen where the houses are tall and stately, and the people who live in them have more money than most. It was past one of these houses that she wandered on that frost-bitten evening. The rich scent of cooked goose wafted through an open window and pricked at her nose. It had been a long time since she'd eaten a wholesome meal. Between the two houses there was a small crevice and she decided to wait a while out of the drifting wind. Tucked away in the shadows, she was invisible to any passers-by. But the chill still found her.

She rummaged in her apron. There was a thick bundle of matches, ready to be sold. Could she really use them? What if her father found out? She felt she had no other choice. Her hands were blue, and her teeth chattered more than her mother in the salon. Quickly, she struck the first match against the brick of the house. It was such a meagre thing, but it burned so brightly and warmed her fingers. All too soon, it flickered out, and she was left with the charred stick.

Now she had nothing to lose. She struck another match. Suddenly, she noticed that the wall of the house appeared to drift away like smoke and she saw the fat, roast goose nestled amongst the vegetables on a heavily-laden table. As she watched, it jumped from the platter and ran towards her. Her mouth started to moisten at the thought.

With a hiss, the match went out, and the solid wall returned. Quickly, she struck another and again the wall disappeared. This time she was at the foot of a giant Christmas tree. It stood guard over a mountain of presents, all addressed to her. Again the match spluttered out, and again she struck up another. Now her grandmother stood in front of her. Her arms were extended, and the poor little girl longed to run and embrace her. Instead, she grabbed the entire bundle of matches and struck them all. She never wanted her grandmother to disappear. A sense of happiness overcame her, and she felt warm to her core by the feeling of love emanating from the vision.

When the townspeople found the little match girl the next morning, they saw that she had died, frozen to the spot, with a smile on her face. They never knew the wonders that she had seen in the light of a little match.



VOCABULARY FOCUS

1. Use the context of the sentence to write a definition for the word “**wares**”.
2. Which word tells you that the girl hadn’t made a single sale?
3. What does the word “**stately**” tell you about the houses?
4. Write a list of alternative verbs for “the **drifting** wind”.

VIPERS QUESTIONS

R

Where does the story take place?

E

How did the girl feel when she died? What makes you think this?

S

List the three visions that the girl had, in order.

I

Why were her teeth chattering?

Answers:

1. Only interested in herself
2. Solitary
3. Impressive or large in size and appearance or similar definitions
4. Any suitable verbs such as howling, raging, whispering etc

R: Copenhagen

E: Happy. She had a smile on her face when they found her. (Do not accept warm)

S: The goose, the Christmas tree and her grandmother

I: She was cold