

# **The Little Match Boy**

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*His little sister, the only person who had ever been kind to him, had once told him this: when a star falls, it means that a soul has gone to God.*

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# 1 - The Little Match Boy

Michiro-Chan: Very simple piece I put together, based on the "Little Match Girl" fairytale you hopefully all know of. Just to make this clear to all of you, Jounouchi is the little match seller, and Shizuka is his angel savior. Enjoy.

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It was New Year's Eve, and the weather was bitterly cold. The sky was pitch black, and snow fell in large flakes. In the midst of the blizzard, a little boy staggered down the street, his head and feet bare. When he had left home, he had been wearing old clogs, but as he was crossing the road, he had been in such a hurry, that he had lost both of them. One of them had fallen right under the wheels of a large carriage, and the other had been grabbed by an urchin who wanted to use it as a boat.

The little boy staggered along, his naked feet blue with cold. In his torn and dirty pockets, he carried a large bundle of matches. He held a matchbox in his hand. He had had a very bad day. No one had bought a single match from him. He was cold and hungry and was frightened to go home, because his father would beat him when he discovered he had not earned a penny. The snow continued to fall and the flakes looked like swan feathers in his pretty, curly, blonde hair. But the splendor of his unkempt yet groomed golden locks were the least the least of his concern now... all he knew was that on New Year's Eve all other little children and their parents enjoyed a big celebration feast.

The little boy found a spot between two houses where he sat down, becoming colder and more frozen. There was no point in going home where his father would be angry with him. In any case, it was almost as cold inside his home as outside, the wind whistled so sharply through the large cracks in the walls.

The little boy could hardly move, his fingers were so stiff with cold. He told himself that if he lit one match, just one, it would warm him up. He struck one match. There was a joyful crackling and the flame rose, warm and bright in his hand. The little boy had a sudden vision that he was sitting in front of a large copper stove. He stretched out his feet to warm them.

Too late! The stove had disappeared. All that remained was a blackened stump of a match in his fingers.

The little girl decided to strike a second match. This time, the flame was even brighter and more beautiful. The little boy saw a room containing a table covered with beautiful china. A large roast goose, all brown and plump, lay on a handsome platter. Then, suddenly, the goose rolled off the table and disappeared. All that lay before the child was the cold, gray street. It was unbearable. The little boy desperately wanted to find the copper stove that had crackled so joyfully and the tasty goose that had smelled so delicious...

The little match seller struck a third match and found himself transported immediately to a beautiful house that contained a shining Christmas tree, covered with glittering garlands and brightly colored balls. Fruit and toys hung from the branches. Children were dancing in a ring around the tree, and they

took his hand and brought him into the circle. The little boy wanted to join in the dancing, but suddenly he was outside in the cold again.

The snow had stopped and the stars shone over the dark, deserted street. A few passersby, in a hurry to get back to their friends and family, rushed past without seeing the little boy, who huddled between two houses and stared at the sky. A shooting star left a long and brilliant trail. The little boy knew that this meant someone was about to die.

His younger sister, the only person who had ever been kind to him, had once told him this: if a star falls, it means that a soul has gone to God. He struck another match and this time his late sister appeared to him, looking as she used to, with her sweet and gentle expression.

“Sister, take me away!” begged her desolate older brother. “Do not leave me alone. I know that when the match goes out, you will disappear just like everything else I have seen until now. Like the fire that burned so brightly, like the goose that smelled so delicious, like the Christmas tree, you will fly away and I shall be left all alone in the dark street without anyone to look after me.”

Terrified at the idea of being abandoned once again, the little boy lit one solitary match, but burned the whole box. His tiny sister reappeared, looking so beautiful in her black velvet gown, that she wore only on special occasions. The young girl smiled tenderly at her brother and took him gently by the hand. Then they flew away into the sky amid the brilliant glow of the matches, and were soon in heaven.

The dawn broke on New Year's Day. A passerby discovered the beautiful barefoot little boy with curly hair, lying dead in the snow. All around him lay spent matches.

The poor little boy wanted to warm himself, thought the man, little suspecting that the child had left this world in a blaze of light, safe in the presence of his sister.