

## SOME GREAT CHRISTMAS TALES

### The Little Match Girl

By HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

IT WAS late on a bitterly cold New Year's Eve. The snow was falling. A poor little girl was wandering in the dark cold streets; she was bare-headed and barefoot. She had, of course, had slippers on when she left home, but they were not much good, for they were so huge. They had last been worn by her mother, and they fell off the poor little girl's feet when she was running across the street to avoid two carriages that were rolling rapidly by. One of the shoes could not be found at all, and the other was picked up by a boy who ran off with it, saying that it would do for a cradle when he had some children of his own.

So the poor little girl had to walk on with her little bare feet, which were red and blue with the cold. She carried a quantity of matches in her old apron, and held a packet of them in her hand.

Nobody had bought any of her matches all the long day, and nobody had even given her a copper. The poor little creature was hungry and perishing with cold, and she looked the picture of misery.

The snowflakes fell on her long yellow hair, which curled so prettily around her face, but she paid no attention to that. Lights were shining from every window, and there was a most delicious odor of roast geese in the streets, for it was New Year's Eve. She could not forget that! She found a corner where one house projected a little beyond the next one, and here she crouched, drawing up her feet under her, but she was colder than ever. She did not dare to go home, for she had not sold any matches and had not earned a single penny. Her father would beat her, and besides it was almost as cold at home as it was here. They had only the roof over them, and the wind whistled through it although they stuffed up the biggest cracks with tags and straw.

Her little hands were almost dead with cold. Oh, one little match would do some good! If she only dared, she would pull one out of the packet, and

strike it on the wall to warm her fingers. She pulled out one. R-r-ah-ah! How it sputtered and blazed! It burnt with a bright clear flame, just like a little candle, when she held her hand around it.

Now the light seemed very strange to her! The little girl fancied that she was sitting in front of a big stove with polished brass feet and handles. There was a splendid fire blazing in it and warming her so beautifully, but—what happened? Just as she was stretching out her feet to warm them, the flame went out, the stove vanished—and she was left sitting with the end of the burnt match in her hand.

She struck a new one. It burnt, it blazed up, and where the light fell upon the wall, it became transparent like gauze, and she could see right through it into the room.

The table was spread with a snowy cloth and pretty china. A roast goose stuffed with apples and prunes was steaming on it. And what was even better, the goose hopped from the dish with the carving knife sticking in his back and waddled across the floor. It came right up to the poor child, and then—the match went out, and there was nothing to be seen but the thick black wall.

She lit another match. This time she was sitting under a lovely Christmas tree. It was much bigger and more beautifully decorated than the one she had seen when she peeped through the glass doors at the rich merchant's house on the last Christ-

mas. Thousands of lighted candles gleamed under its branches. And colored pictures, such as she had seen in the shop windows, looked down at her. The little girl stretched out both her hands towards them—then out went the match. All the Christmas candles rose higher and higher, till she saw that they were only the twinkling stars. One of them fell and made a bright streak of light across the sky.

"Now someone is dying," thought the little girl, for her old grandmother, the only person who had ever been kind to her, used to say, "When a star falls, a soul is going up to God."

Now she struck another match against the wall, and this time it was her grandmother who appeared in the circle of flame. She saw her quite clearly and distinctly, looking so gentle and happy.

"Grandmother!" cried the little creature. "Oh, do take me with you. I know you will vanish when the match goes out. You will vanish like the warm stove, the delicious goose, and the beautiful Christmas tree!"

She hastily struck a whole bundle of matches, because she did so long

to keep her grandmother with her. The light of the matches made it as bright as day. Grandmother had never before looked so big or so beautiful. She lifted the little girl up in her arms, and they soared in a halo of light and joy, far, far above the earth, where there was no more cold, no hunger, and no pain—for they were with God.

In the cold morning light the poor little girl sat there, in the corner between the houses, with rosy cheeks and a smile on her face—dead frozen to death on the last night of the old year. New Year's Day broke on the little body still sitting with the end of the burnt-out matches in her hand.

"She must have tried to warm herself," they said. Nobody knew what beautiful visions she had seen, nor in what a halo she had entered with her grandmother upon the glories of the New Year.



Illustrated by A. S. PACKER

"Grandmother!" cried the little girl. "Oh, do take me with you."

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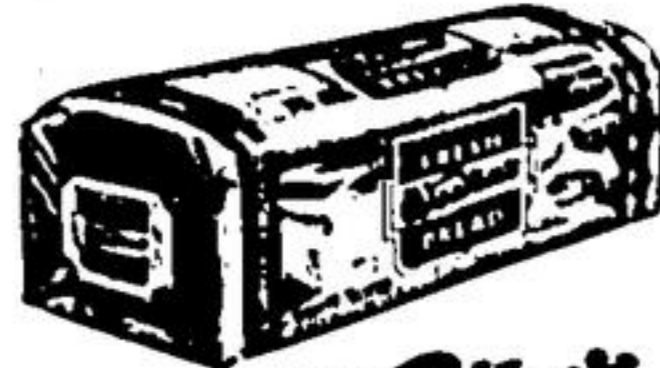
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The minimum of capital needed to farm is \$20,000 - \$30,000, according to 41 per cent of the forums who reported their findings to National Farm Radio Forum. The November 11 broadcast on Farm Credit resulted in some very interesting comments.

The amount needed to farm varied as widely for different areas in the same province as for different provinces. The majority of the forums think that two-thirds to 75 per cent of this capital needed to farm should be obtainable in the form of credit.

One-quarter of the forums who reported to the National Farm Radio Forum office on the topic "A New Look in Farm Machinery", were satisfied with the machinery presently available to them. 13 per cent of the forums want more moderately priced machinery.

A wide variety of new types or changes in old types of machinery were suggested by the forums. One of the most common suggestions was for a combine and baler in one unit. 41 per cent of the forums want more standardization of machinery parts so that tires and such may be used on more than one machine.

One-third of the forums thought that machinery should be of better quality and that repairs should be less expensive.

Keeping other traffic guessing is as dangerous as leaving an unmarked bottle of poison in the medicine cabinet, warns the Canadian Highway Safety Conference.

Signals, either by hand or by flashing light or both, are not only protection for others, the Conference adds, but for you. Make signalling a habit—and live longer.

It's so simple for a motorist to signal his intentions in traffic. All it takes is the flicking of a little lever, or holding out a hand. Too many drivers seem to think that all they do by signalling is a favor for someone else and that, in their mixed-up code, is not being done this year! By their standards, consideration must never be given to others, either driving or walking. The fact is, says the Conference, those drivers are begging for trouble for themselves and, at the same time, breaking the law.

CHSC urges this: signal every move. Do not wait until the last minute, give the drivers behind and in front of you plenty of time to adjust their actions to your intended movements, otherwise they are certain to either make a move that can cause a crash or become peeved and consequently dangerous.

It takes no effort and it means so much for a driver to signal his intentions.

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