

PERUSAL SCRIPT

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

by

Matthew Ivan Bennett

based on the Hans Christian Andersen tale

Part 2 of YULETIDE - Episode 9 in the **RADIO HOUR** Series



Newport, Maine

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THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

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CAST OF CHARACTERS — *1girl 1boy 4M 1F 1 either M or F (Can be played by 3 performers)*

Match Girl (girl)

Describer (M or F) Narrator.

Revelers - Can be played by all listed characters except GIRL

Driver (M) - a man in a hurry

Urchin (boy) - A homeless boy

Boozer (M) - A homeless man

Father (M) - An abusive father

Grandmother (F) - A kindly matron

Gentleman Passing (M) - A concerned citizen

ACTOR 1 — Revelers/Urchin/Boozer/Father/Gentleman Passing

ACTOR 2 — Grandmother and Match Girl

ACTOR 3 — Describer, Driver and others as needed

Period Costumes or contemporary clothes

Radio Station setting

Sound Effects required (can be Foley, recorded, or a mix of both. Music required.)

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THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL by Matthew Ivan Bennett Part 2 of YULETIDE - Episode 9 in the RADIO HOUR Series. **1girl 1boy 4M 1F 1 either M or F, can be performed with three actors.** Period Costumes or contemporary clothes. Radio Station setting. SFX essential. Staged Radio Drama, Radio Broadcast, Fully-Staged Production, or Virtual Theatre. 7 minutes. A short lyrical adaptation of the tragic and moving holiday story by Hans Christian Andersen. A girl in desperate straits tries to make money for her family by selling matches on the street in wintertime. When you have nothing, where do you turn for warmth and comfort? The Match Girl strikes a match and in the brief flicker of the flame, she sees her fondest dreams. YULETIDE was a co-production between Salt Lake City's Plan-B Theatre Company and the University of Utah's Public Radio station KUER's Radio West. **ORDER #3243.2**

MATTHEW IVAN BENNETT is a resident of Plan-B Theatre, listed by American Theater magazine as one of 14 companies nationwide exemplifying social action and civic engagement. At Plan-B, he's premiered several stage and radio plays, including an adaptation of "*Frankenstein*" that won a Utah Broadcasters Association award, and "*Eric(a)*"—which won Best Drama at the United Solo festival in New York. He received the Holland New Voices award from the Great Plains Theatre Commons, has twice been a finalist in screenwriting at Austin Film Festival, and in 2016 was an O'Neill finalist. His short plays have appeared at Chicago's Circle Theatre, Rising Sun in New York, Monkeyman in Toronto, and the Source Festival in DC. Matt is a member of the Dramatists' Guild.

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

F/X: *Wind.*

(GIRL is shivering, and vocalizing, throughout)

MUSIC

DESCRIBER: Cold. A terrible, twilight cold.

(read like a stream of consciousness)

F/X: *Footsteps in hardened slush.*

Snow on the cobblestones. The last evening of the year.

(REVELERS laughter from a barroom)

Here, along the street, a little girl, bareheaded, slippers too large for her feet.

Rounding the corner, a carriage, dreadfully fast.

F/X: *Carriage.*

(GIRL lunges free)

DRIVER: Watch yourself, you little brat!

DESCRIBER: Her slippers off in the mud and ice: one of them buried, nowhere; the other—

URCHIN: Ha ha ha ha: finders keepers!

DESCRIBER: A boy in rags, fingers grimy.

GIRL: Thief!

F/X: *Running.*

URCHIN: *(already in the distance)* Ha ha ha ha!

DESCRIBER: The tiny maiden, now with naked feet, toes red and heels blue in the frost.

(GIRL sniffing)

There, inside her frayed old apron, a jumble of matchsticks. There, in her hand, a bundle of matches, the tips like holly berries. But men and women with coins? None; nobody, the whole livelong day, nobody; no shiny money in her pocket.

F/X: *Doors bolting, shop windows closing, carts wheeling off, etc....*

Not a penny, and the cobbler gone now. The tailor gone. The carts with meat pies all gone. Boozers in the alcoves.

BOOZER: *(with a bottle)* Hey, li'l girl. C'mere, sweetie.

DESCRIBER: Trembling, cold, hunger—a picture of sorrow.

BOOZER: (*behind her now*) I said c'mere!

DESCRIBER: Snowflakes on her long fair hair, hair in ringlets, icy wet on her neck; the girl too distracted to feel because—

(GIRL with an inhale of delight)

Oh the candles! The gleam behind glass. The smell! Roast goose? Yes. New Year's Eve.

F/X: *Piano within.*

(GIRL hums along)

F/X: *The wind gusts. The piano fades.*

That corner, formed by two houses, below the rich merchant's window.

(GIRL rubs, and blows on, her hands)

There, little feet drawn up close.

(GIRL chattering)

And yet the air, a kitchen knife, colder, colder, till thoughts of home—

F/X: *Boots.*

FATHER: (*her imagination; above her*) How much? ... I said, "How much"? ... Anything? ... Why're you shakin' so much? Huh?! Why. Are. You. Shak—?!

DESCRIBER: Not home. Not there. No matches sold. No money clinking in her pocket.

Besides, at home, only the roof, the cracks with straw, the wind shrieking.

F/X: *Wind in a crack (made louder by imagination.)*

Not home, here...in the corner...with...the matches! Oh, a match. A world of comfort. If only...if only a single one, out of the bundle, against the wall and—

F/X: *Matchstrike (slow and surreal.)*

Oh the blaze! Oh the warmth! The flame like sunset, so vivid. Her hands over the wondrous light, as though before a large iron stove with burnished brass feet, a brass ornament on top.

(GIRL sighs)

Fire. Fire. Burning. Blessing. The girl's feet stretching now, out, to feel the—

F/X: *The match goes out.*

Cold. The stove gone. A blast of wind. A charred little stick in her hand. Quick, another match, against the wall.

F/X: *Matchstrike (slow and surreal.)*

(GIRL expresses relief)

Light. The wall...transparent like a veil. A room beyond. A table. A snow-white cloth. Porcelain.

F/X: *Plates; Cups.*

A roast goose, steaming. A stuffing of apple and dried plums and cinnamon.

F/X: *The dead goose honks.*

The goose! Alive, a hop down from the dish, reeling about on the floor.

F/X: *Clatter.*

The knife and fork in its breast, a limp, a drag to the poor little girl when—

F/X: *The match goes out.*

Cold. The wall. Damp.

(GIRL chattering)

A match. A match.

F/X: *Matchstrike (slow and surreal.)*

(GIRL expresses amazement)

A Christmas tree, magnificent. A thousand candles on spring-green branches. The ornaments gaily-colored pictures, like the ones she'd seen in the shop windows—peacocks and angels, cardinals and mangers, sandy beaches, blue sleepy townships, bells, stars, the stars, higher and higher, the pine needles brushing the heavens. The girl, her fingers reaching, and then—

F/X: *Meteor (apocalyptic.)*

A star falls! A long blinding trail of fire! A memory: her old grandmother; the only love in her house ever.

GRANDMOTHER: *(in memory)* “When a star falls, a soul rises.”

ONE AND A HALF more pages to the end of the script