

Resource 6a

Transcript from Theatre Alibi's *I Believe in Unicorns*

It was dreadfully cold, snowing and getting dark. In this cold and darkness walked a little girl. She was poor and her feet were bare.

Poor girl.

It was the old days, when some children had to work to help their families survive. This little girl had been sent out to sell matches, but nobody had bought any all day. She was too scared to go home, because she knew she'd be in big trouble.

It was New Year's Eve, and in all the rich houses, people were getting ready for parties, and lighting up their Christmas trees, and fetching roast turkeys out of the oven, and the smell drifted right out into the street, under the little girl's nose. She hadn't had anything to eat all day, and she was freezing. Imagine how cold her feet were, walking all day in the snow. They stung like needles were sticking in them. It was agony.

She huddled between two houses to get out of the wind, but sitting still made the cold creep right into her bones. Just one match, she thought. *I'll strike one match to warm myself a tiny bit. No one will know.*

And, oh! How warm it felt! And then, to her surprise, the match became....an iron stove! All fat with gleaming coals it was! And she stretched out her fingers to toast in the warm glow, when the match burnt out and the stove disappeared.

Imagine how disappointed she felt. So she dared strike another.

And this time, it became a roast turkey, steaming straight out of the oven. And the little girl's mouth began to water like a tap at the smell of it, and she reached out to grab a juicy leg, when the match burnt out, and the turkey disappeared.

So she lit another match.

And then up popped a Christmas tree! All bright with candle-flames it was, and dangling with painted bells and baubles. And she could smell the flames and the gingerbread hanging from the branches, and the lights twinkled in her eyes.

But then the match burnt out, and the tree disappeared.

She had to strike another.

And now – could it really be – her grandmother, who had loved her and cared for her the most in the world? But the match flickered, and her granny started to fade away, so quickly, she started to strike all the matches, one by one, to keep her there. And she felt safe in her arms, like nowhere else in the world. And her grandma carried her off to a new made bed, with crisp white sheets, and a goose-down quilt.

In the morning, they found the little girl, dead of cold. She had frozen to death right there between those two houses. All the burnt up matches lay around her.

"She's been trying to warm herself," the people said, shaking their heads, and then they turned their backs, so they wouldn't be upset by the sight of her anymore.