

# Little Flyer Girl

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*Based on Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Match Girl."*

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**Chapter 1 - Burning Papers**

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# 1 - Burning Papers

It was cold. Snow was falling from the sky in large heaps of white harshness, stinging the faces of those walking on the sidewalks. The clouds covered the sky in what seemed to be a gray blanket covering the world in icy warmth. Some people were lucky and passed by the walkers in cars. However, the lack of warm heat made the situation no better.

One person in particular was having the worst time out of all. A little girl stood on the sidewalk against a brick wall with a pile of papers in her hand. She wore a dark red jacket and had her hair up in two pigtails. A small scarf wrapped around her neck, but her cheeks were still flushed bright pink. She had a pair of stockings on and one boot—she lost the other one scrambling out of the way of a car.

The little girl held up one of the pieces of paper. “Flyers!” she called. She waved the piece of paper from side to side. “Would anyone like a flyer? Come join the military! Help the state today!” She continued to wave it until her arm became tired. “Isn’t anyone here good at alchemy? Try becoming a State Alchemist!”

The people gave the little girl no thought to her existence. She stopped waving the paper and put it back in her stack of other flyers. The wind picked up, stinging the girl’s face. She brought her scarf up to her nose and sat down against the brick wall, hoping the wind and snow could not reach her if she stayed small.

“No one is interested,” she mumbled. “All those rumors about the military reach them too quickly. They know what’s going on...” She buried her face into her hands and tried to remember some happy times. Being only a four-year-old, she did not have that much to consider. What could she remember? The first thing that came to mind was her birthday. She remembered how happy she had been with her mom, her dad, her friends, and that pretty girl Winry. She thought about the cake. She could see the colorful balloons in her mind. Everyone was cheering for her.

Her daydream stopped short when a violent wind pushed against everything in its path. The little girl gasped and grabbed the stack of flyers. She held them close to her body until the wind died down. Only then did she dare to peek up at the streets.

“I can’t go back to Central giving away no flyers like this,” she mumbled to no one. “Mustang will be mad and punish me for sure.” She took one flyer from her pile and set it down in front of her. She placed the rest next to her and pointed her fingers at the single sheet. Slowly, she began to draw something around the paper.

“Here’s a trick Mustang showed me once.” She finished drawing the transmutation circle and made sure the design was right. When she confirmed it, she pressed her two palms down into the snow and made the small area start to glow. In an instant, a blazing fire appeared before her.

A warm house appeared before the girl’s eyes. She saw the smoke coming out of the chimney and bright lights in every room. The cheeriness filled the house with warmth and joy, everything any person

could ever want.

...And the flyer burned up.

The little girl huffed to herself and took another flyer from the pile. She placed it in the center of the circle and pressed her palms down into the snow again. The bright flash appeared once more.

A big dinner was set at the table. A huge chicken sat near the centerpiece of a beautiful vase with an array of flowers exploding from the center. Mashed potatoes, string beans, steamed broccoli, honey-glazed carrots, and cranberry jelly all surrounded the chicken, making the display quite appealing. Coming in from the kitchen was a big, juicy pie. The woman carrying it set it down on the table and offered it to everyone else there.

...And the flyer burned up.

That last daydream had been even better than the first one. The little girl was starting to get angry since none of the papers lasted long enough to satisfy her. She needed to escape from this horrible nightmare of a night. She made sure the transmutation circle was right one more time; she lit up one last paper. "No more after this," she said to herself. "I need to save some flyers for the people."

A giant Christmas tree appeared before the girl. She gasped at the bright, colorful sparkles shining against the candles lit all over the room. She stood at a window and pointed at the night sky. "Daddy!" she called. "Daddy, come look!"

The little girl's father got up from his chair and walked over to the window. He stood behind her and stared up at the night sky. "What is it, Alicia?" he finally asked.

Alicia pointed at the sky. "There was a shooting star! Did you see?" She hopped up and down in her spot, excited for the amazing scene.

The father sighed. "Do you know what it means when there's a shooting star?" he asked.

Alicia shook her head. "No, I don't, Daddy. What does it mean?"

"It means someone is dying."

"Dying?"

"Yes, someone is dying. Someone is going to heaven to be with God. Someone is dying."

...And the flyer burned up.

"Daddy!" Alicia screamed. "Daddy! Oh, Daddy, please don't leave me out here! I'm so cold and lonely!" She grabbed as many flyers as she could and threw them in the transmutation circle. She pounded her hands into the snow so hard they began to bleed. The fire blazed in front of her eyes, and she saw her father stand before her.

Alicia's father held out one of his hands to his daughter. Alicia was unsure for a moment but finally took the hand. Her father brought her close to him and picked her up in his warm grip. Alicia snuggled up against him and felt light, feathery wings wrap around her. A tiny glow appeared as a halo grew above her head. For the first time in a long time, she felt truly safe...and happy.

The next morning, the soldiers found the frozen body of a small girl. Mustang shut his eyes tightly and made a fist at his mouth to keep himself from cursing. "I was wondering why Alicia never came back last night. Her orders were to hand out flyers to people and then come straight back to Central."

"She's just a child, Sir," Hawkeye reasoned. "She knew no better. Still...I wonder what happened here." She scanned the ground and saw burnt pages littering the snow. In one spot, the faded remains of a transmutation circle could be seen. Alicia's body looked cold and stiff next to it.

"So what happened?" Fury finally asked.

Hawkeye sighed. "She died last night."

"Poor thing..."

"Frozen stiff..."

Mustang looked at the burnt papers and recognized the transmutation circle as one for fire. "She tried to warm herself..."

The only thing no one saw was the tiny grin on Alicia's frozen face.