**Molly the Chimney Sweep**

Trembling, Molly clutched her threadbare shawl around her thin shoulders and gazed longingly at smartly-dressed children who were in the warmth of the toyshop. She would give anything to be part of a family! Suddenly, Mr Drudge’s voice boomed from behind her, “Get a move on you ruffian! We need to get to the big house.” With that, he gave her a sharp shove forwards.

Mr Drudge was a great hulk of a man, with dark, bushy eyebrows that hung low over his angry, bloodshot eyes. Spittle rattled through his rotten teeth when he shouted at her, which was most of the time. When he had rescued her from the orphanage to work, she had thought that her job would be a ladies’ maid, but the brute of a man made Molly climb up chimneys and sweep the soot down. He’d made Molly’s life a misery.

Before long, they arrived at the big house and the girl was shoved up the fireplace that was still hot from the embers. Up and up she climbed, Molly’s small, bony fingers were barely able to grasp the filthy bricks. She gulped. Her scarred, scrawny feet had little strength left in them and she could feel them slipping hopelessly down the charred brick.

To her horror, she plummeted down the dark shaft until the poor orphan hit the floor and rolled out into the bright light. Why was her life so hard? As she lay there crying, a soft, warm hand gently stroked her forehead. “My dear, are you ok?” a soothing voice asked.

Molly opened her eyes to see a beautiful woman. The woman’s golden hair tumbled around her shoulders. Her eyes twinkled kindly and a smile danced across her face. The lady introduced herself as Mrs Love, the owner of the house. After Molly had told Mrs Love about her sad life, a solitary tear slid down the woman’s cheek. “You must come to live with me!” Mrs Love proclaimed. Molly could not believe her ears and smiled gratefully. At last the poor, orphaned girl had a family.