“The Little Match Girl” questions

1. There are several elements of the story that could hold greater symbolic meaning What might the girl’s slippers symbolize and why?
2. How does the opening scene/setting possibly point to an ongoing theme of darkness throughout the story? What could this say about the little girl’s life?
3. Find an example of  foreshadowing--give the quote and explain what it is foreshadowing,
4. Do you think the little match girl had been out on the streets for awhile or just for one day? Does the text point us to any elements that might lead us to believe she is starved, hungry, or sleep deprived? Defend your position.
5. What is a general theme statement for this story, what does it teach, and is there a moral?
6. Do you think that the girl realizes that she is going to die when she cries out to her grandmother, and if so, why do you think she would accept death?
7. Find a quote about the little girl’s home life-- provide the quote and discuss how you think her home life affected her current situation.
8. Should the girl have sold the matches and returned home, or do you think her choice to sit and light them for herself was justified? Explain.
9. An ongoing motif throughout the story was the burning of matches. What could these matches have symbolized? What could the author have meant while writing these into the story?
10. The matches of the girl gave off both fire and light. Fire often symbolizes something destructive in literary works, but light can symbolize hope. In this story which do you think it was for the little match girl?
11. Think about the outcome of this story. Is it a happy ending or not? Defend your position.
12. Most of Andersen’s writings were derived of stories he had heard as a child. Do you think “The Little Match Girl” is one of them and do you think that the story could be true?
13. In the last paragraph of the story, multiple people stand by and comment on the dead child’s expression. Why do you think they react so calmly to this? Is it perhaps a common occurrence?
14. Andersen’s father read the book *Arabian Nights* to Andersen when he was a child. Do you think the culture of that book influenced Andersen’s writing style?
15. Knowing about the girl’s abusive home life, do you think her family ever found out about her death? If so, do you think they were remorseful?