

The Golden Touch

The Story of King Midas

King Midas was a powerful, yet greedy man. He spent his days counting his gold and at night he dreamed of great riches. No matter how much gold he received, it was never enough.

One day King Midas was out in his beautiful rose garden when he met a satyr- half man, half goat. The satyr was lost, so King Midas gave him some food and directed him back to the right path. The satyr was very grateful to the king for his assistance. He wanted to reward Midas by granting him one wish.

King Midas thought long and hard. How could one wish fulfill his many wants? In fact, Midas felt a little cheated because he

knew three wishes was the standard reward. He was just about to voice this very sentiment to the satyr when suddenly he had a brilliant idea. Visions of money, wealth, and treasure filled his mind.

"Gold!" shouted the King. "I want everything that I touch to turn to gold!"

"Oh, I don't think that is a good idea," said the satyr. "You should reconsider your request."

But Midas insisted and the satyr granted the wish.

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Midas could not wait to test out his new gift. He reached down and picked up a rock. As his eyes widened in disbelief, the rock became solid gold. The king was thrilled and began touching everything in sight- grass, leaves, acorns, flowers, and tree branches. *I have the golden touch*, he thought.

He raced through the forest. The king was finally happy. He would be the richest man in the world.

Back at the castle, King Midas demanded a huge celebration feast. He wanted meats, fruits, cheeses, and breads. Nothing but the best would do for the king now that he was going to be rich!

As he sat down to eat, the chair turned to gold at his touch. He reached for a drink and the cup turned into a golden goblet in his hand. Midas went to take a sip of the water, but suddenly choked on a lump of gold. He grabbed a piece of bread, bit into it. It, too, turned to gold.

"Oh, no!" cried the king. "I will starve to death."

At her father's cry, the king's young daughter rushed to console her father. As she wrapped her arms around her father, she quickly turned into a golden statue.

Sobbing, Midas fell to his knees and begged the gods to set him free of his foolish wish. His tears became tiny golden marbles as he cried.

"I have learned my lesson! My wish was foolish and now I am being punished for it. I have learned that money can't buy

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happiness. Family is more important. Please take all the gold and let things return to the way they were," begged the king.

The gods took pity on the king. He was instructed to go to the River Pactolus to wash his entire body and remove the Midas touch-which was a curse rather than a gift.

King Midas raced to the river and scrubbed himself. He could see flecks of gold floating in the water. When he stepped out of the river, his power was gone and his daughter had sprung back to life.

King Midas realized that he was now truly happy. However, the gods gave King Midas a reminder of his foolishness. Two donkey ears sprouted from the top of his head, and Midas never forgot his lesson.