

# King Midas and the Golden Touch

Ancient Greek

King Midas had everything he could wish for, but his prize possession was his daughter, Philomena. One day, Silenus, the satyr, arrived at his palace and King Midas fed him, entertained him and gave him a bed for the night.

Silenus was very grateful and, in return, told Midas that the next thing he wished for would come true. Midas was a greedy man and he loved gold, so, without thinking, he wished that everything he touched would be turned to gold.

At first, Midas was delighted. He ordered a cup of wine which was brought to him in a bronze cup. The moment Midas touched it, it turned to burnished gold. Midas turned the glittering golden cup around in this hand, admiring its deep lustrous shine.

Then, he raised it to his lips and tilted it to drink. Nothing happened. For a few moments, Midas, in his confusion, held the cup up and shook it a little, before the truth finally dawned on him. The wine, too, had turned to gold.

As Midas went around the palace, his dream turned into a nightmare as everything, including his food and drink, turned to gold the minute he touched it. Unless something was done, he would starve to death.

Seeing his beloved daughter, Midas went to her without thinking and, the minute he touched her, she turned into gold, too. In his despair, he begged the god Dionysus to release him from his curse. Dionysus took pity and told Midas to bathe in the River Pactolus. The curse was lifted, and the sand at the bottom of the river has been pure gold dust ever since.

1. Why was the wish a particular problem for somebody like King Midas?


2. Silenus was a very wise satyr. Why do you think he offered to grant Midas a wish?


3. What would you have seen at the moment Midas touched the bronze cup? Describe the scene, including people's expressions.


4. When and why did Midas' mood change and what were the consequences?


5. Do you think Midas might have learned anything from his experience? If so, what?
