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King Midas and the Golden Touch

from a Greek myth by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Before You Read

Before you read "King Midas and the Golden Touch," study the words below. Make sure you know what each word means. This will help you understand the story.

myth: an old story; a story from the past

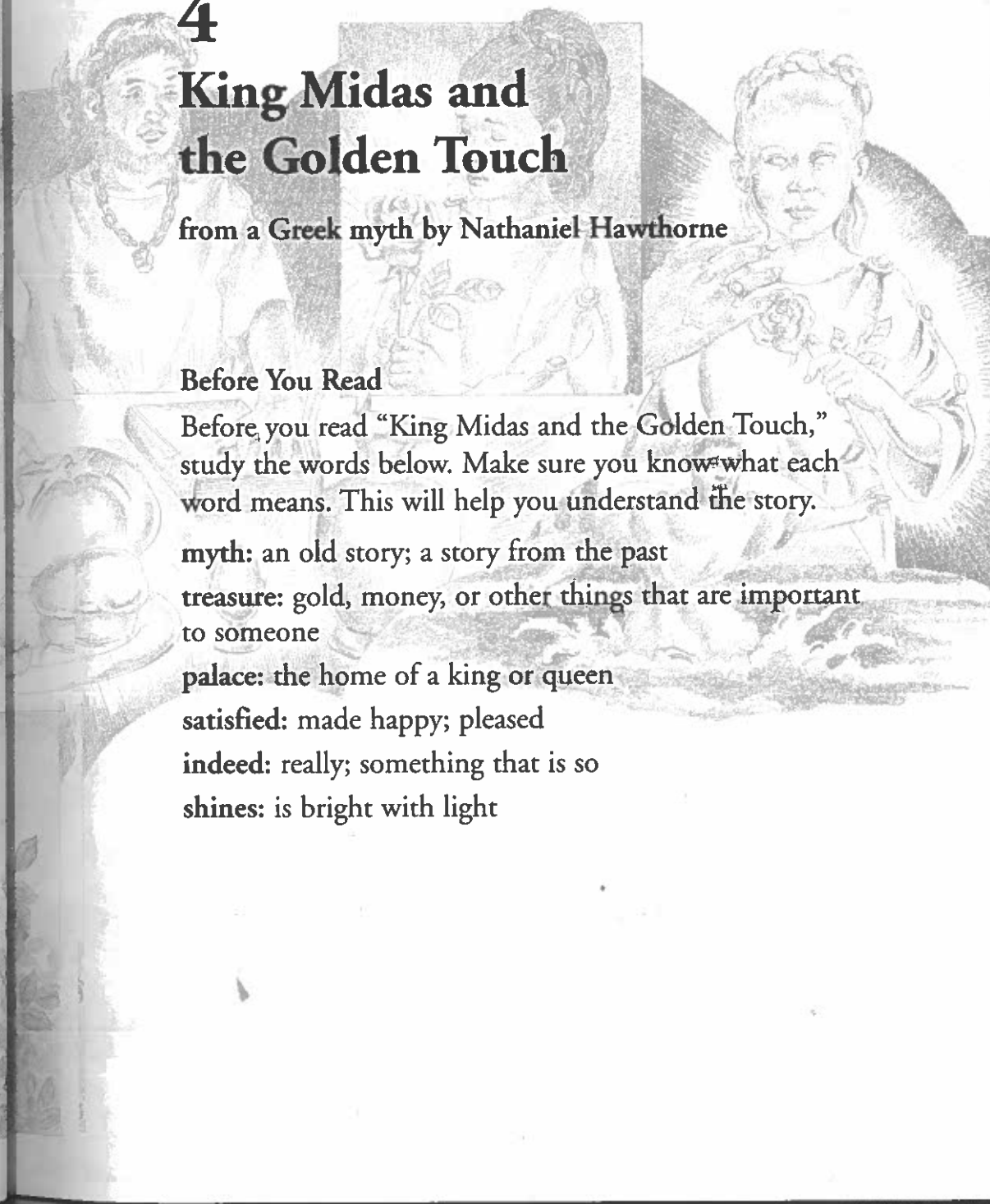
treasure: gold, money, or other things that are important to someone

palace: the home of a king or queen

satisfied: made happy; pleased

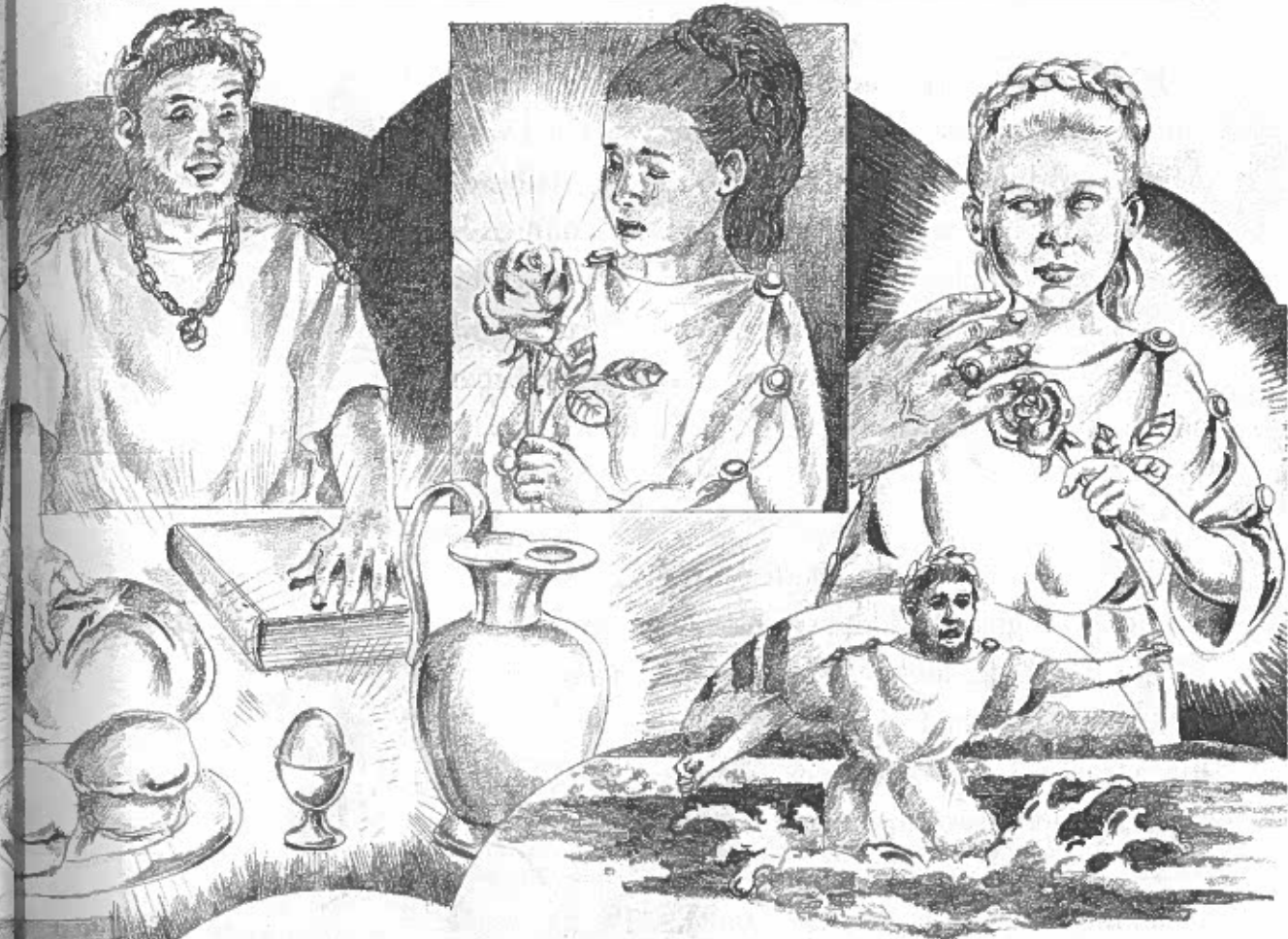
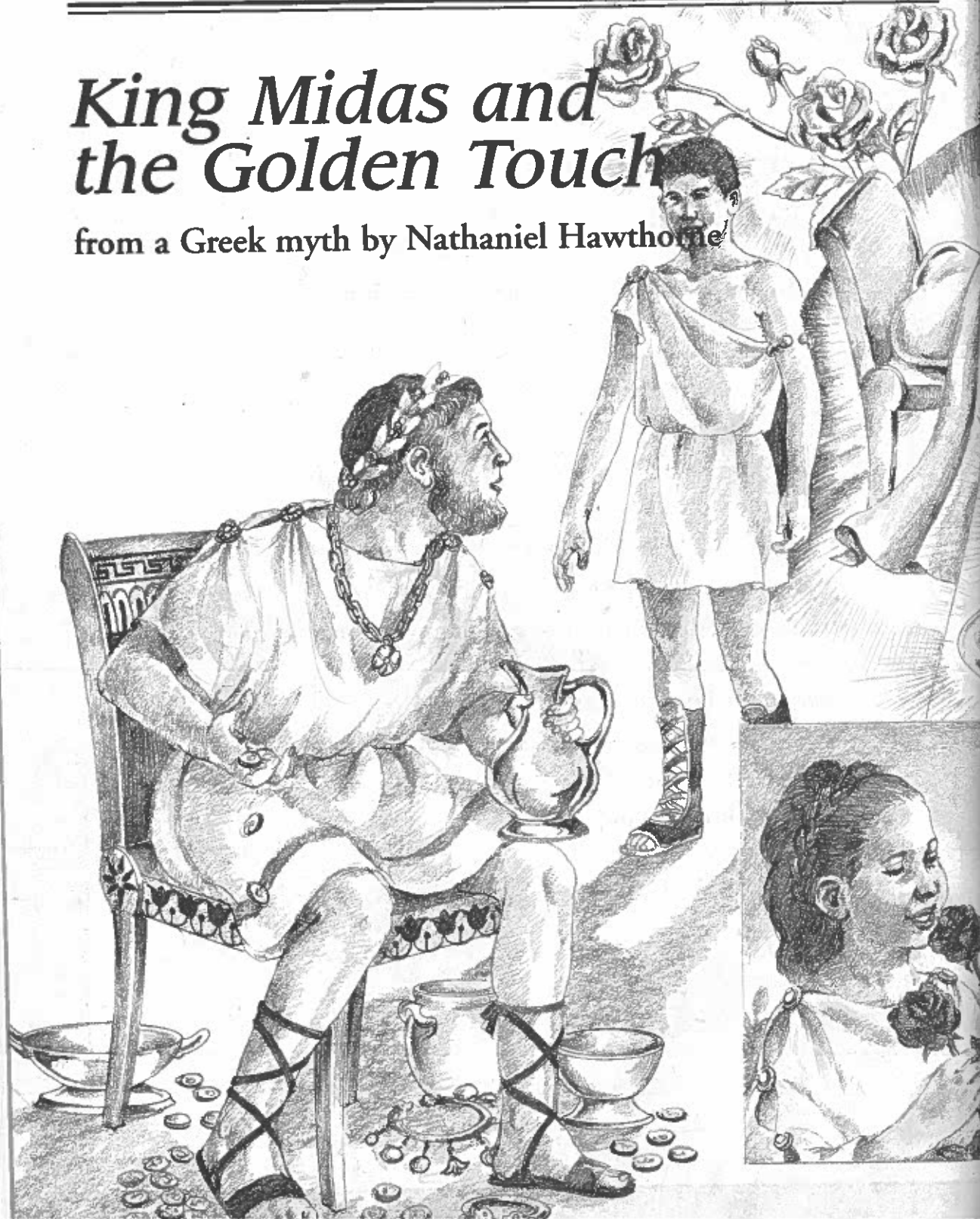
indeed: really; something that is so

shines: is bright with light



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from a Greek myth by Nathaniel Hawthorne



A long time ago there lived a king named Midas. King Midas loved gold. He loved gold very much. There was only one thing he loved more. That was his little daughter, Marygold.

King Midas had once loved flowers. He had planted a garden filled with roses. The garden still grew. The roses were beautiful.

Sometimes Midas went into his garden. He looked at the roses. He said to himself, "There are so many roses in my garden. I wish each rose were made of gold. Oh, how wonderful my garden would be."

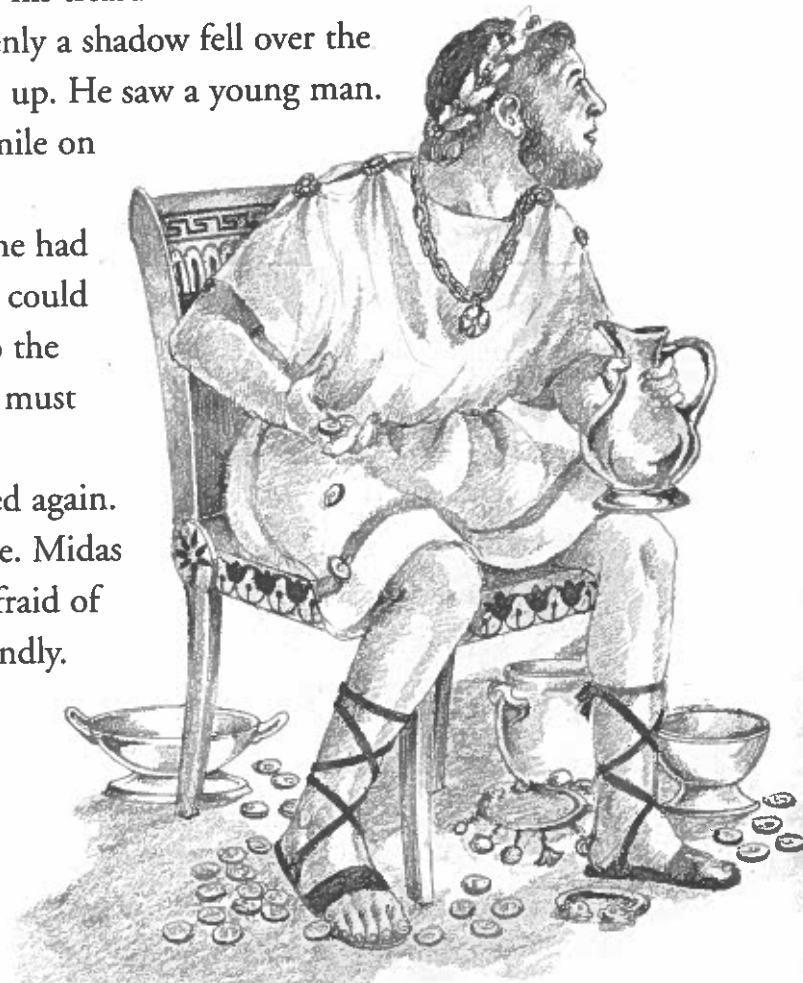
King Midas lived in a very large palace. It had many rooms. The biggest room in the palace was filled with gold. Midas called it his treasure room.

Every day Midas went to that room. He counted his bags of gold. He let the pieces of gold slip through his fingers. Then he whispered softly, "Oh, Midas! Rich King Midas! What a happy man you are!" Then he whispered again, "But how much happier you would be if you had more gold!"

One day Midas was in his treasure room. He was counting his gold. Suddenly a shadow fell over the gold. King Midas looked up. He saw a young man. The young man had a smile on his face.

King Midas was sure he had locked the door. No one could break into that room. So the king knew that the man must have very great powers.

The young man smiled again. He had a very kind smile. Midas thought, "Should I be afraid of this man? No. He is friendly. See how he smiles. Has he come here to help me?"



The man looked around. Then he said, "You are rich, King Midas. You are very, very rich. No other room in the world has this much gold."

"I have done well," Midas said. "Very well. That is so. But it has taken me years to get this gold. And there is so much more gold I would like to have."

"What?" said the young man. "You are not satisfied?"

"I am not," said the king.

"Tell me," asked the young man. "What would satisfy you? I would like to know."

King Midas thought for a while. Then he said. "It is this. Only this. I wish—that everything I touch would turn to gold."

The young man smiled. "The Golden Touch!" he said. "The Golden Touch! That is a very fine wish. A fine wish, indeed! But are you sure that would satisfy you? Would that make you happy?"

"Oh, yes!" said the king. "I am sure of that!"

"And you would never be sorry because of it?"

"Sorry? Oh, never!" King Midas said.

"You shall have your wish," the young man said. "You shall have your wish when the sun comes up. Everything you touch will turn to gold."

King Midas smiled. He was filled with joy.

"Good-bye—for now," the young man said. And he disappeared.



Midas woke up early the next morning. The sun was not up yet. Midas thought about the young man. Had it all been a dream? No! The young man had really been there!

Midas reached out. He touched a chair. Then he touched the table by his bed. They did not change. They did not turn to gold!

Midas walked to the window. He looked outside. The morning was gray. Then he saw the sun. It was just coming up.

Midas walked to the bed. He touched the bed. It turned to gold! He picked up a book. It turned to gold! He put on his clothes. He was suddenly wearing a fine suit of gold!



Midas pushed open the door. The door turned to gold. He went out to the garden. He touched every rose. Each rose turned to gold.

Now Midas was hungry. He went into the palace. "Bring the King breakfast!" he told his servants. "And call for my daughter."

Little Marygold came into the room. She was crying! "Dear child. What is wrong?" asked the king. "Why are you crying on this fine morning?"

She put out her hand. She was holding a rose from her father's garden.

"It is a beautiful rose," said her father. "It is a rose made of gold!"

"It is *ugly!*" Marygold said. And she cried even louder.

"Dear girl," said the king.

"I went into the garden. What did I find? All the beautiful roses have changed. They are all like this one."

She held out her hand. "I do not like roses like this. This rose is hard. And it has no smell. A rose should be soft! And a rose should smell sweet!"

She looked at the rose in her hand. Then she tossed it away.



“Do not cry,” Midas said. “You can get hundreds of roses for one made of gold.”

The servants came in with breakfast for the king. They put the food on the table.

“Let us eat,” Midas said.

He picked up some bread. But it turned to gold! Midas stared at the bread. He could not eat gold!

There were rolls on the table. Midas picked up a roll. The roll turned to gold!

Midas reached for an egg. The egg turned to gold! There was water in a glass. He picked up the glass. The glass turned to gold! When the water touched his mouth, the water turned to gold.

The king could not eat. He could not drink. You cannot eat gold! You cannot drink gold!

Marygold jumped out of her chair. She ran to her father’s side.

The king put his arms around his child. “Dear girl. Dear girl,” King Midas said. He kissed her head. But Marygold had turned to gold! She did not move. She did not speak.

“What have I done!” King Midas said. “What have I done! Dear child! Dear child!”

The king stared sadly at the ground. His eyes were filled with tears.



King Midas heard a sound. He raised his head. He saw the young man standing there.

“Well, King Midas,” said the man. “I see you have the Golden Touch. Are you now a happy man?”

“No!” King Midas shook his head. “I am not a happy man. I have never been so sad.”

“How can that be?” the young man asked. “You got your wish. Is that not so? You have the Golden Touch. Touch something. It will turn to gold.”

“Gold!” King Midas said. “There are more important things than gold! The Golden Touch has cost me Marygold. It has cost me food and drink. How I hate the Golden Touch!”

“Ah!” the young man said. “You are wiser than you were. Do you want to lose the Golden Touch?”

“With all my heart,” King Midas said.



“Then hurry to the river,” said the man. “Throw yourself into the water. It will wash away your wish. Bring back

water from the river. Pour some water on your daughter. You will have her back again.”

King Midas did as he was told. He hurried to the river. He threw himself into the water. Suddenly, his heart felt lighter.

Midas stepped out of the water. There were roses growing near the river. Midas touched the roses. The roses did not turn to gold. The Golden Touch was gone!

Midas brought water from the river to his palace. He poured the water on his daughter. All at once she came to life! She did not know she had been changed to gold.

Midas went back to the river. He brought back water. Then he went into his garden. He put a drop of water on each rose. Each rose turned red. And each smelled sweet.

Midas smiled. He was a happy man. He never wanted gold again.

The next day Midas went back to the river. He looked at the sand. He saw that the sand was shining brightly. And to this day sand shines like gold.



TELL ABOUT THE STORY.

Put an x in the box next to the right answer. Each sentence tells a *fact* about the story.

- At first King Midas wished that
 - a. his daughter loved him.
 - b. he lived in a bigger palace.
 - c. the roses in his garden were made of gold.
- The young man gave Midas
 - a. three wishes.
 - b. the Golden Touch.
 - c. bags filled with gold.
- When Midas put his arms around Marygold, she
 - a. smiled at him.
 - b. began to cry.
 - c. turned to gold.
- Midas lost the Golden Touch by
 - a. throwing himself into the river.
 - b. giving money to the poor.
 - c. making the young man take it away.

ADD WORDS TO SENTENCES.

Complete the sentences below. Fill in each blank with one of the words in the box. Each word can be found in the story. There are five words and four blanks. This means that one word in the box will not be used.

My Uncle Fred has “the Midas _____.” Whatever he does, he always _____ money. Since everything he touches always “_____ to gold,” Uncle Fred is “as rich as _____.”

turns makes
Midas
touch smiled

NUMBER
CORRECT

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LEARN NEW WORDS.

The vocabulary words are printed in **dark type** in the story. You may look back at the words before you answer these questions. Put an *x* in the box next to the right answer.

- The young man said good-bye and disappeared. When something has *disappeared*, it
 a. looks bright.
 b. is easy to see.
 c. cannot be seen.
- The king's servants put breakfast on the table. Usually *servants*
 a. cook and clean.
 b. are soldiers.
 c. have a lot of money.
- Marygold tossed the rose away. The word *tossed* means
 a. sold.
 b. threw.
 c. saved.
- He poured the water on his daughter. The word *poured* means
 a. cleaned.
 b. drowned.
 c. let fall.

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EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED.

Here is how to answer these questions. First think about what happened in the story. Then *figure out* (work out) the right answer. This is called *critical thinking*.

- The story shows that
 a. people never change.
 b. Marygold did not like roses.
 c. some things are more important than gold.
- When Midas got the Golden Touch, he thought he
 a. would always be happy.
 b. would not be able to eat.
 c. might lose his daughter.
- Midas put a drop of water on each rose. This shows that he
 a. still loved gold.
 b. liked real roses more than roses made of gold.
 c. was angry with his daughter.
- When Midas woke up, the chair he touched did not turn to gold. Why?
 a. Midas was still very sleepy.
 b. The young man had lied.
 c. The sun was not yet up.

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SPOT STORY ELEMENTS.

Some story elements are **plot**, **character**, and **setting**. (See page 3.) Put an *x* in the box next to the right answer.

- What happened first in the *plot*?
 a. Midas saw a young man in the treasure room.
 b. Midas jumped into the river.
 c. When Midas touched the bread, it turned to gold.
- Who is the *main character* in the story?
 a. King Midas
 b. Marygold
 c. the young man
- Which sentence best describes (tells about) the *character* of Midas?
 a. He did not love Marygold.
 b. At first he loved gold very much.
 c. He never liked flowers.
- The story is *set*
 a. a long time ago.
 b. a few years ago.
 c. today.

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THINK SOME MORE ABOUT THE STORY.

Your teacher might want you to write your answers.

- Why do you think the young man let Midas lose the Golden Touch?
- Suppose that Midas had not been able to give up the Golden Touch. How you think the story would have ended?
- What lesson or lessons does the story teach?

Write your scores in the boxes below. Then write your score on pages 138 and 139.

<input type="checkbox"/>	T ELL ABOUT THE STORY
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<input type="checkbox"/>	A DD WORDS TO SENTENCES
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