

Long ago, in a strange, faraway land, there lived a magnificent king named Midas. King Midas loved many things in his life, two of which he held especially precious. One was his lovely daughter, Evelyn, and the other was his gold. King Midas was a very cheerful king. Each morning as he counted his gold, Evelyn would bring him fresh flowers from the garden, and there was nothing more King Midas could possibly wish for.

As time passed, King Midas became more and more discontent. He greedily wished for more gold. His castle was filled with riches, and yet he longed for more gold. He reigned from a golden chair, ate and drank from golden dishes, and slept in a bed made of gold! But King Midas wanted more.

One evening after supper, when King Midas was counting his gold, a wee tiny man suddenly appeared before him. Startled, Midas asked, "Who are you? What do you want?" The strange figure eyed Midas. "I have noticed that you are unhappy, and I am here to help you," he said in a raspy voice. "How?" asked Midas. "By granting you a wish," said the tiny man with a wicked smile.

"I wish for everything I touch to turn to gold!" Midas said eagerly. "So be it!" was the man's reply.

King Midas was transformed into the happiest king in the world. He clapped his hands and clicked his heels. "I'm rich! I'm rich!" he sang as he twirled and danced through the castle. Suddenly, he stopped! Was the man really magic? Could he grant wishes to kings? Midas was almost afraid to touch anything for fear his wish would not come true. He walked into his garden to smell a rose and, as he cupped

it with his hands, the rose became stiff and golden. Midas was astonished and changed all of the flowers into gold.

While he was gloating over his new power, King Midas heard his daughter Evelyn weeping in the garden. "What is wrong, my dear?" he asked. "The flowers are gold," she cried. "They are all stiff and have lost their fragrance." "But, my dear, that is the way I wish them to be," the king said.

That statement made Evelyn cry even louder, and the sympathetic king bent to pull her into his arms. At once, to his horror, King Midas realized that he had turned Evelyn into a stiff, golden statue. He then knew his power would mean nothing. He had lost the thing he had loved most on this earth.

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