Name _____ Date _____

King Midas and the Golden Touch

Myth or legend · 3rd–5th grade

Long ago in ancient Greece, there lived a king named Midas. He had a beautiful palace, a rose garden and a daughter he loved very much. But more than anything, Midas loved gold. Every night he went down to his treasure room and counted his coins, again and again.

One day, Midas helped an old traveler who was lost. The traveler turned out to be a friend of Dionysus, one of the Greek gods. To thank him, the god offered Midas a single wish. Midas did not need to think. "I wish that everything I touch would turn to gold!"

The next morning, Midas tested his wish. He touched his bedpost, and it turned to shining gold. He touched a chair, a table and a stone. Gold, gold and gold! He ran into his garden and touched a rose. Its soft petals became cold, hard metal. Midas laughed with joy.

At breakfast, he picked up a piece of bread. It turned to gold before he could bite it. He lifted a cup of water. The water became a lump of gold in his mouth. Midas began to feel afraid. How could he live if he could not eat or drink?

Just then, his daughter ran in to hug him. "Father, the roses have all turned hard and strange!" The moment she touched him, she stopped moving. His laughing daughter had become a golden statue.

Midas fell to his knees and begged Dionysus to take the wish away. The god told him to wash in the river. Midas ran to the water and jumped in. When he climbed out, his touch was ordinary again. He carried river water home and poured it over his daughter, and she came back to life.

From that day on, Midas gave away much of his gold. He found that a warm hug, a loaf of bread and a living rose were worth more than any treasure.

Questions

1. What did Midas love more than anything at the start?

2. Why was Midas given a wish?

3. When did Midas first feel afraid?

4. How did Midas undo the wish?

5. What is the theme of the myth?

6. What would you have wished for instead?

7. How did Midas change from the beginning to the end?

The lesson in my own words

Answer Key

1. Gold.
2. He helped a lost traveler who was a friend of a god.
3. When his food and water turned to gold.
4. He washed in the river.
5. Greed can make us lose what really matters.
6. Answers will vary.
7. Answers will vary.

Lesson: Greed can make us lose what really matters.