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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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## The Golden Touch

Once upon a time, there was a king named Midas. He was crazy about gold. He loved it so much that he could not think of anything else. The king had a daughter named Marygold. He loved her very much, but the more he loved her, the more he longed for gold. He wanted it for her so she could have lots of gold from him.

The king had not always been obsessed with gold. He had once loved flowers. His garden still had the most beautiful specimens in the world. Every morning, his daughter would pick some flowers for him. Although the king thought the flowers were beautiful, he could not help but think about how much money these exotic flowers would bring him.

The king had the habit of retiring to his treasure room every night before going to bed. There he hugged all his gold objects. "Oh, if only I were the richest man on earth," he often thought to himself. "If only I could possess all the gold in the world," he sighed again and again.

One evening, a stranger appeared in the treasure room. That was strange, because the king always locked the door, even when he visited the treasure room. This must be an angel or a fairy. He was not afraid of the stranger, whose face looked very friendly.

The stranger said, "So, Midas, I see you are a wealthy man."

"Well, yes," replied the king.

"But you don't seem very happy," the stranger continued.

"Oh, I would give anything to be the richest man on earth," said Midas. "But this is only a hopeless little bit compared to the gold in the world."

"So you are not satisfied with everything you have?" asked the stranger.

Midas shook his head.

"What do you need to be a satisfied person?" asked the stranger.

The king had to think. So he thought and thought and thought. Somewhere he felt that this stranger would help him fulfill his wish. So he had to think of something good. What would make him the richest man on earth? Then he came up with a brilliant plan.

"I wish everything I touch will turn to gold," he finally exclaimed.

The stranger began to smile. "Fine, Midas, if this is really what you wish, I can grant your wish. But are you sure you will not regret it?"

"No way," cried the king. "I will be the happiest man on earth!"

"Okay then, as you wish," said the stranger. "Tomorrow morning you will receive my gift of the golden touch."



That night the king could not sleep. He was like a little child who would receive his long-awaited gift in the morning. As soon as the sun began

to shine in his bedroom, Midas jumped out of bed. Everything he touched turned to gold. The king hurried to his flower garden to immortalize the flowers in gold. He thought they would increase greatly in value. Even the breakfast table he turned into gold. The king had a royal breakfast with lots of fresh fruit, fried eggs, fresh-baked bread, but he was waiting for his daughter Marygold, who walked crying through the hall. When she entered the breakfast room, the king asked why she was so sad. From her apron she took out a golden flower. "Look now," she cried, "the color of the flower is completely gone and changed into an ugly yellow color. And the scent has completely disappeared. What has happened to these poor flowers?"

"Oh, my dear daughter," said Midas, ashamed to admit that he had personally changed the flowers. "Come sit with me and enjoy a delicious breakfast. A golden flower will remain beautiful forever and will not wither in a day like a normal flower would."

Midas took an egg that had already been peeled by his servants. But the egg turned to gold in his hands, and a golden egg, of course, cannot be eaten. Then the king tried to eat a piece of bread, but it also became as hard as a stone when he touched it. He began to realize that he might not be so happy with his gift of the golden touch. He looked at his daughter's sad face and realized that he had caused her a lot of grief by changing the flowers. Then he tried to take a sip of his coffee, but before the cup reached his mouth, the contents of the cup had become solid.

"Oh," cried the king. "What now? I can't even enjoy a piece of bread or a cup of coffee like the poorest beggar would do. How can I undo this? Would I rather be a beggar instead of a king with the most money in the world?" The king was very confused.

The king looked at his daughter and realized that he had misjudged wealth. His most valuable possession was sitting right in front of him, and nothing could outweigh the value of his daughter, not even the gift of the golden touch. A tear rolled down his cheek, and when Marygold saw it, she asked, "Dear father, what's wrong with you?"

"My dearest Marygold, you will think your father is an old fool," the king replied. Marygold then stood up to hug her father, and the king gave her a kiss. "You're a darling," said the king. But Marygold did not respond. She had turned to gold.

Oh, what had he done? With his touch, he had turned his daughter into a golden statue! The king, who at times when he loved his child most, always said that she was worth her weight in gold, had now made that expression a reality. How foolish he had been. He would give up all his riches immediately if it meant getting his daughter back to her original state.

Suddenly, the stranger was back at the door.

"And Midas," said the stranger, "do you like the golden touch?"

Midas shook his head. "I am very unhappy," he said.

"Gold is not everything. I have lost everything that really mattered to me. I now realize that a piece of bread is better than all the gold in the world."

"So you would like to trade the gift of the golden touch to get your little Marygold back the way she was an hour ago?" asked the stranger.

"Nothing more than that," replied the king.

"You are wiser than you were," said the stranger, looking at him seriously. "Your heart has not turned to gold. You now seem to understand that the most common things within everyone's reach are much more valuable than the riches that so many people desperately seek. If you want to get rid of the gift of the golden touch, you must dive into the river that flows past your palace. Take a vase and fill it with the water from the river. Sprinkle the water on all the changes you want to undo. If you do this in all sincerity and honesty, it will repair the damage you have caused with your greed."

The king didn't waste any time grabbing a vase to jump into the river. In the water, he realized that he had changed; he felt lighter and definitely happier. He filled the vase and rushed back to the palace, where he poured the water over Marygold. Not all of it, because it was also needed to restore the flowers. Marygold returned to her normal self and didn't even know she had been a golden statue for a while.

Midas didn't feel the need to tell her how foolish he had been, but preferred to show how much wiser he had become. They lived happily ever after and their grandchildren loved to listen to the wonderful story of the old king. The king never looked back at gold, but only had eyes for the real treasures around him.