

The Midas Touch

A Play for Children Ages 9-12

by

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CHARACTERS
(in order of appearance)

Chorus A
Chorus B
Bacchus
King Midas
Servant 1
Servant 2
Servant 3
Hermes
Zeus
Hera
Poseidon
Athena

REQUIREMENTS

The play is presented in classic "Greek" theater style with a Greek Chorus of an undefined number. The settings are the Throne Room of King Midas and on Mount Olympus.

CHORUS A

Myths are stories from ancient times which are entertaining, but, can also explain natural phenomena.

CHORUS B

We are the famous Greek Chorus. We are Greek Chorus B.

CHORUS A

And we are Greek Chorus A.

CHORUS B

We will help to explain and narrate one of the most famous Greek tales involving King Midas and the god of the vines and grapes called Bacchus.

CHORUS A

This myth is commonly known as the story of the Midas Touch. It tells of a king named Midas who gets a special power. It's a story about greed and ...

CHORUS B

But we are getting ahead of our story. (all nod)

CHORUS A

Once upon a time ...

CHORUS B

Many centuries ago ...

CHORUS A

Bacchus, the god of the Grape and the Vine ...

CHORUS B

... decided to leave Mount Olympus and visit the earth.

BACCHUS

I am Bacchus, the jovial and happy god of grapes and vines. I live here on the high peak of Mount Olympus with all the Greek gods. But you know, I would like to make a new friend or two, so, I will travel down to earth.

CHORUS A

That is just what he did.

CHORUS B

He traveled until he came to the kingdom of the mighty and very rich King Midas.

KING MIDAS

Being rich is lovely. I am surrounded by all that is

lovely and rich. Come here chef, let me taste the chocolate cake you are making.

(tastes cake batter)

Hmmm, still not rich enough. Add some cream and - here, add a dollar or two just to make it richer.

(SERVANT gives the audience a "look.")

KING MIDAS (cont'd)

Nothing is too good for the rich King Midas.

SERVANT 2

My lord, look yonder, a traveler approaches. He looks weary, great king. Should I set a goblet of cold water out for him to drink?

KING MIDAS

Water?!?! Never!! Get him our best chocolate milk and cookies and fruit. Only the best for our guest.

(KING sits and admires his throne.)

SERVANT 1

Work work work - get this, get that. You know it wouldn't hurt him to notice us sometimes.

SERVANT 2

Yeah, a little chocolate milk or just a pat on the back would be nice.

SERVANT 3

Will you two stop complaining and get the King's guest his chocolate milk. Talking about pats on the back at a time like this when we have a traveler to take care of.

KING MIDAS

Welcome to my kingdom, traveler. You look pooped ... Come, my friend, sit with me. Want to try my throne? It's very comfy. Here, have some food. "Only the Best for my Guest."

CHORUS A

And so together they dined.

CHORUS B

Chocolate milk, and hot dogs from the fires.

CHORUS A

Cakes, pies and cookies.

CHORUS B

And music from lyres.

(Servants play and hum.)

KING MIDAS

Play beautiful music - bring good refreshment. "Only the Best for my Guest."

BACCHUS

You are a great host. You have treated me, an unknown traveler, like royalty.

KING MIDAS

I am a rich king who loves rich things and, as you know ...

CHORUS A & B

ONLY THE BEST FOR MY GUEST!!!

KING MIDAS

Hey, who said that?

(CHORUSES hide their faces.)

KING MIDAS (cont'd)

As I was saying - you, traveler, were in need of refreshment. It is my pleasure to help you.

BACCHUS

Because you have been so kind I will reveal my true identity to you. I am not a lowly traveler. I am Bacchus - god of the vine and grapes. I have come visiting from Mount Olympus. I will grant you any wish you want because of your generosity to me.

KING MIDAS

Any wish?

BACCHUS

Oh yes, any at all.

KING MIDAS

Hmmm. Let me think. I already am quite handsome ... hmmm. I already have a comfy throne ... hmmm. Nintendo? Not invented yet. I know, I wish everything I touch be turned to gold.

BACCHUS

But, you already said you are very rich. You have more gold than you could ever need. Why do you want more?

KING MIDAS

Oh, a king can never have enough gold. That is my wish.

BACCHUS

Well, I suppose I must grant it ... I DID promise.

CHORUS A

And, so, with a wave of his hand ...

(BACCHUS waves.)

CHORUS B

And a spell very old ...

BACCHUS

Abracadabra.

CHORUS A

King Midas was given his wish ...

CHORUS B

... of turning everything he touches into gold.

CHORUS A

With that, Bacchus left our King Midas and returned to Mount Olympus.

CHORUS B

King Midas enjoyed his new found talent.

KING MIDAS

Hey, this is neat!! Gold columns now hold up my roof. Gold rocks sit in my garden. Gold vases on my table. Gold instruments. Even gold leaves grow on my trees. (yawns) I am very weary from so much gold-making. Servant, Servant, Servant . . .

(SERVANTS come bumping in 1-2-3.)

KING MIDAS (cont'd)

Bring me a snack. Ahhh. (sits on his throne)

SERVANT 1

Notice no "thank you."

SERVANT 2

Yeah, no please either.

SERVANT 3

Oh, and I suppose you want a pat on the back, too.

SERVANT 1 & 2

Yeah.

CHORUS A

The King did not realize his special talent ...

CHORUS B

... could be a special problem, too.

KING MIDAS

A baloney sandwich, my favorite. Hey, I can't eat this!
It is gold! Well, then at least a cup of juice ...

CHORUS A

But when King Midas put the cup to his lips ...

CHORUS B

The result was all too familiar.

CHORUS A

The cup turned to gold as well as the juice inside.

KING MIDAS

I can't eat or even touch anything without it turning to
gold. Servant, servant, come.

SERVANT 1

(To each other) If he touches one of us it would be a
deadly experience.

SERVANT 2

(To each other) But boy would we look shiny and golden.

(Both shake heads "no.")

KING MIDAS

Servant, servant, come.

SERVANT 1

I think I left the pot cooking on the stove.

SERVANT 2

I think I hear my mother calling.

SERVANT 3

Oh sure, don't you want that pat on the back now?

(All shake their heads "no.")

SERVANT 1, 2 & 3

NOT!!! (run off)

KING MIDAS

Everyone has abandoned me. (cries) Oh please, gods of Mount Olympus (falls on his knees) take pity - take back my wish or I will die.

HERMES

Was that a message to the gods? Away I go!

CHORUS A

Hermes, with wings on his feet ...

CHORUS B

... took the king's message to the gods on Mount Olympus.

CHORUS A

Here we see Zeus, King of the gods ...

CHORUS B

... and Hera, Queen of the gods ...

CHORUS A & B

... sitting quietly at home on their thrones.

ZEUS

What is this I hear? Oy, such a ruckus coming from earth!

HERA

Calm down, o great Zeus, don't get your lightning bolts in an uproar. It's probably just your noisy brother Poseidon, King of the sea. He's just storming about, I'm sure.

POSEIDON

Hey, did someone call me?

ZEUS

Pee-yew! You smell like fish!

POSEIDON

Well, I am ruler of the sea you know.

HERA

Don't come in here with those big storm boots on. You'll track mud all over my cloud.

ZEUS

Were you making all that racket below on Earth? It sounds like waves and wind.

POSEIDON

No, not me. I've been on vacation. No storms because of me.

ATHENA

Who is crying like that?

HERA

No one here is crying here, Athena goddess of wisdom. It must be the storm we hear coming from Earth. We three were just discussing it.

ATHENA

Well, Queen Hera, I know wailing and crying when I hear it. That is no storm. It is a person wailing.

HERMES

O great Zeus, I have come from Earth with a plea. A King Midas says please take back his wish or he will starve.

(BACCHUS comes in, looking guilty - hangs off to the side of the stage.)

ZEUS

Poseidon, do you know about any of this? Did you play any tricks on a King Midas?

POSEIDON

Hey, I resent that. Every time a little mischief comes up, like a storm or a ship getting sunk, I get blamed. I told you, I was on vacation! (stamps his foot and folds his arms)

HERA

Athena, do you know of a King Midas?

ATHENA

I am afraid, even with all my great wisdom, I don't have any idea what this is all about.

ZEUS

(Suspiciously) Oh Bacchus ...

BACCHUS

Who, me?

ZEUS

Yes, you. Come here, Bacchus, and tell me what you know about King Midas.

HERMES

Yeah, what is going on?

ZEUS

Excuse me, I'm the King around here. I'll ask the questions.

HERMES

Sorry.

ZEUS

Now, what is going on?

BACCHUS

Well, it was like this ...

CHORUS A

And so Bacchus tells King Zeus and Queen Hera ...

CHORUS B

... and all the other gods, too ...

CHORUS A

... about his visit with King Midas.

BACCHUS

And that was his wish - to touch everything and turn it into gold.

ZEUS

Well, if that was his wish he should have thought of the consequences.

HERA

But he is only a lowly human. And we all know they are not too smart.

CHORUS A & B

Excuse me?

POSEIDON

Good trick, Bacchus. This will be one of our best stories this year at the Greek God's Convention.

CHORUS A

The gods on Mount Olympus must cover their ears ...

CHORUS B

... from the terrible moaning and crying of King Midas.

HERA

Oy! We must do something! This is getting very annoying.

ZEUS

Athena, in your great wisdom what do you suggest?

ATHENA

All people should be given a chance to change and become better. If King Midas promises not to be so greedy from now on I think he should be allowed to live.

ZEUS

Bacchus, will you agree to that?

BACCHUS

Well, only if he promises to change.

CHORUS A

And so Hermes, the messenger to the gods . . .

CHORUS B

... flies off to take the message back to Earth and King Midas.

CHORUS A

King Midas, of course, agrees never EVER to be greedy again.

CHORUS B

And then back to Mount Olympus Hermes flies rapidly.

HERMES

Hey! Ease up, you guys! My wings are getting cramps!

CHORUS A

Upon reaching Mount Olympus, Hermes announces ...

HERMES

Well, Great Zeus, as we all figured King Midas seems truly sorry and promises to never be greedy again.

ZEUS

Well, Bacchus? ...

BACCHUS

Well, if he promised ... okay, okay.

CHORUS A

With a wave of his hand ...

CHORUS B

... and reciting part of an ancient verse ...

CHORUS A

The wish of King Midas was reversed.

(Curtain closes. KING MIDAS rises.)