

A cartoon illustration of King Midas, a man with a dark beard and curly hair, wearing a blue robe with a yellow patterned border and a yellow headband. He is smiling and holding a large pile of gold coins in his hands. To his right is a large, unrolled scroll with the title 'KING MIDAS AND THE GOLDEN TOUCH' written on it in stylized, colorful letters. The background shows a classical building with columns and a fountain.

KING MIDAS AND THE GOLDEN TOUCH

Many years ago, there lived a king named Midas.
King Midas had one little daughter whose name was Marigold.



King Midas was extremely rich. It was said that he had more gold than any other king in the world. One room in his great castle was almost filled with gold treasures.



Eventually, the King grew so fond of his gold that he loved it more than anything else in all the world. He even loved it more than his own daughter. His one great wish seemed to be for more and more gold.



One day while he was in his gold room admiring his gold, a beautiful fairy boy stood before him. The boy's face shone with a wonderful light and he had wings on his cap and feet. In his hand he carried a strange looking wand and that also had wings.



"Midas, you are the richest man in the world," said the fairy. "There is no King who has so much gold as you."

"That may be," said the King. "As you see, I have this room full of gold, but I should like much more; for gold is the best and the most wonderful thing in the world. If I could have but one wish," said the King, "I would ask that everything I touch should turn to beautiful yellow gold."

"Your wish shall be granted" said the fairy. "At sunrise tomorrow morning your slightest touch will turn everything into gold. But I warn you that your gift will not make you happy."



The next day King Midas awoke very early. He was eager to see if the fairy's promise had been kept. As soon as the sun arose, he tried the gift by touching the bed lightly with his hand. The bed turned to gold.



The King soon felt hungry and went to eat his breakfast. When he raised a glass of clear water to drink, it became solid gold. Not a drop of water could pass his lips.



The bread turned to gold in his hand. The meat was hard, yellow and shiny.
Not a thing could he eat. All was gold, gold, gold.



His little daughter came running in from the garden. Of all living creatures, she was the dearest to him. He touched her with his lips. At once, the little girl was turned into a golden statue.



A great fear crept into the King's heart, sweeping all the joy out of his life. In his grief he called and called upon the fairy who had given him the gift of the golden touch. "O fairy," he begged, "take away this horrible golden gift! Take all my land. Take all my gold. Take everything, only give me back my little daughter."



In a moment the beautiful fairy was standing before him.

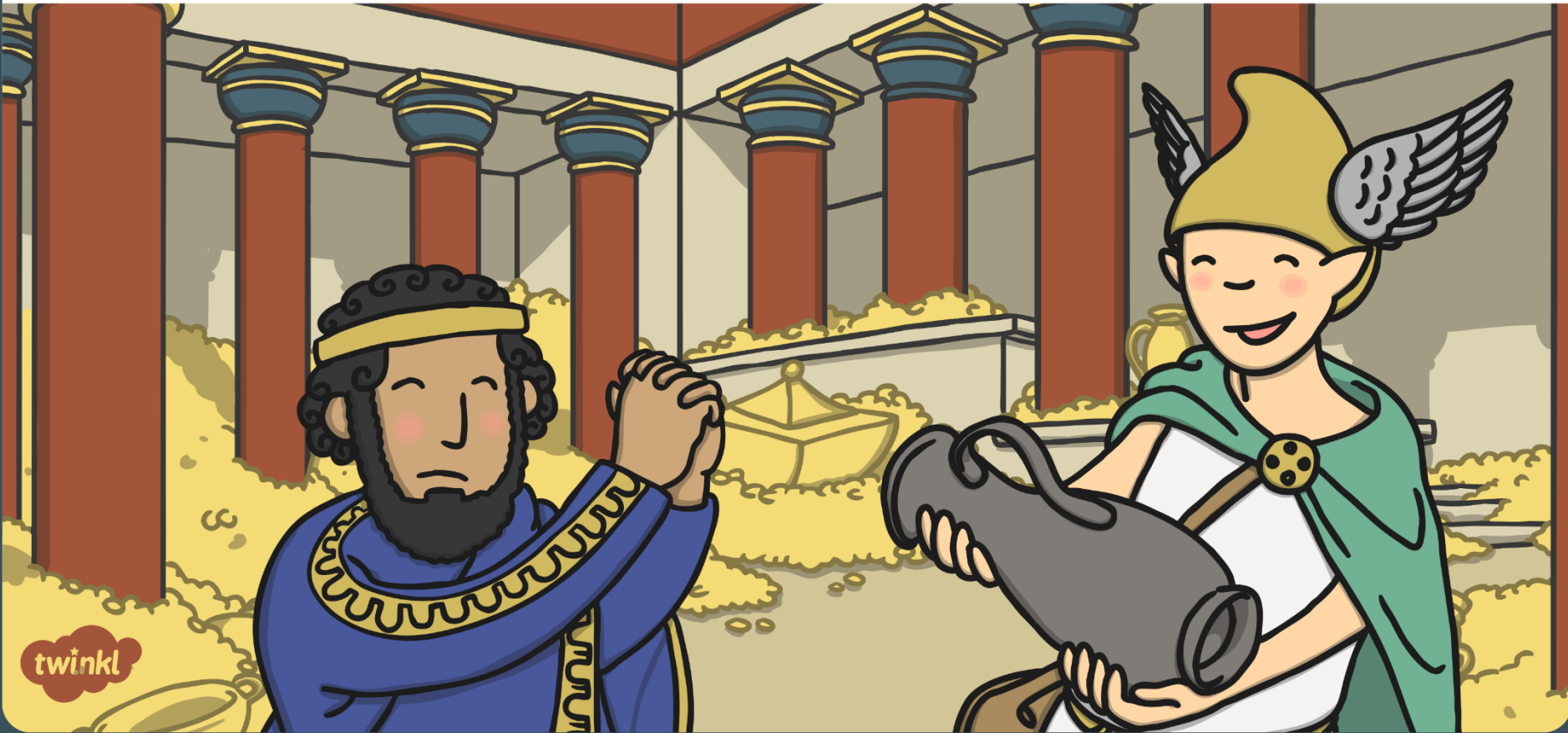
"Do you still think that gold is the greatest thing in the world?" asked the fairy.

"No! No!" cried the King. "I hate the very sight of it!"

"Are you sure that you no longer wish the golden touch?" asked the fairy.

"I have learned my lesson," said the King. "I no longer think gold is the greatest thing in the world."

"Very well," said the fairy, "take this pitcher to the spring in the garden and fill it with water. Then sprinkle those things which you have touched and turned to gold."



The King took the pitcher and rushed to the spring. Running back, he first sprinkled the head of his dear little girl. Instantly, she became his own darling Marigold again and he gave her a kiss. The King sprinkled the golden food and to his great joy it turned back to real bread and real butter.



Then he and his little daughter sat down to breakfast. How good the cold water tasted! How eagerly the hungry King ate the bread and butter, the meat, and all of the good food! The King hated his golden touch so much that he sprinkled even the chairs and the tables and everything else that the fairy's gift had turned to gold.

