

The Golden Curse

A delightful adaptation of the myth of King Midas

About the Story

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to identify and respond to the theme of a play based on an ancient myth

Key Skills: character, inference, interpreting text, text structure, tone, author's craft, theme

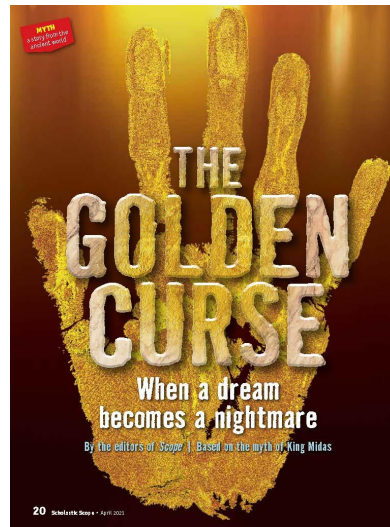
Essential Questions:

- What do people need to be happy?
- What role does wealth play in our lives?
- Can money buy happiness?

Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.5, R.7, R.10, W.2, W.9, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Text-to-speech
- Pronunciation Guide

Slideshow:

- Vocabulary Slideshow

Connected readings from the Scope archives

Skill Building Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Theme Anticipation Guide
- Preparing to Write: What Midas Learns
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- **Literary Elements:** Character Thinking Tool
- Choice Board
- Quiz*
- Contest Entry Form

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1. Preparing to Read

10 minutes

Do-Now: Respond to a prompt. (5 minutes)

- Project the **Theme Anticipation Guide** on your whiteboard or share your screen in your virtual classroom. Have students decide if they agree or disagree with each statement. (After reading the play, ask students to share if their answers changed and why—alternatively, have them complete the Theme Anticipation Guide as one of the characters.)

Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Project the **Vocabulary Slideshow** on your whiteboard, or if you're remote, share it on your screen. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class or in groups. Optionally, share the slideshow link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently. Highlighted words: *disheveled*, *lavish*, *misguided*, *pruning*, *sallow*

2. Reading and Discussing

45 minutes

- Have a volunteer read the As You Read box on page 21 of the magazine or at the top of the digital story page.
- Assign parts and read the play as a class.
- Break students into groups to discuss the following close-reading and critical-thinking questions. *Tip: If you're remote, you can have each group respond in a shared doc or discuss the questions in their own chat rooms; you can also make the questions an asynchronous assignment.*

Close-Reading Questions

(10 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **Based on information in Scenes 1 and 2, what can you conclude about King Midas and what he values?** (character, inference) *In Scene 1, King Midas barely acknowledges his daughter while he is in his treasure room counting gold coins. Marigold mentions that he has not left the room in days, and Midas responds, "Why would I leave? My precious gold shines brighter than the sun." When Marigold asks whether there is anything else precious to him, Midas ignores her. This interaction shows that Midas values his wealth above all else—possibly even more than his own daughter. In Scene 2, King Midas is angry when he is summoned from his treasure room. He says, "What can possibly be so important?" This line suggests that Midas feels that nothing is more important than his wealth.*
2. **In Scene 3, Midas wishes for everything he touches to turn to gold. Dionysus agrees to grant this wish, and Chorus 1 says, "For that is what Midas truly deserved." What does Chorus 1 mean? What purpose does this line serve?** (interpreting text, text structure) *Chorus 1 means that Midas has made a greedy and foolish wish, and that he deserves whatever bad things happen to him as a result. This line offers commentary on Midas and also hints that his wish will not work out well—that it will be a punishment rather than a reward.*
3. **In Scene 5, Marigold is upset when Midas turns her roses to gold. Midas says, "But they are worth a fortune." Marigold replies, "They are ruined—as I fear are you." What do these lines reveal about the two characters and how they differ?** (character, inference) *The lines tell you that Midas and Marigold value different things. Midas is pleased because he has increased the monetary value of the roses; monetary wealth is what he values most. Marigold is upset because she values the natural qualities of the roses and the work she put into growing them. Marigold also fears that wealth has "ruined"—or corrupted—her father.*
4. **In Scene 1, Chorus 1 says, "Behold King Midas of Phrygia, the richest man in all the land." At the end of Scene 6, Chorus 1 says nearly the same thing: "Behold, the richest man in all the land." How do the two lines differ in tone? Why might the authors have included this repetition?** (tone, author's craft) *In Scene 1, the tone is descriptive or perhaps admiring; the Chorus is just telling the audience that Midas is rich. In Scene 6, the tone is ironic; the Chorus is alluding to the fact that although Midas is richer than ever in one sense, he has, in another sense, lost everything. The authors may have included the repetition to encourage readers to consider the true meaning of wealth.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

(10 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. In Scene 7, why does Dionysus decide to help Midas? If you were Dionysus, would you have helped Midas? When Midas begs for mercy, it's on behalf of Marigold; Dionysus believes Midas has learned his lesson and gotten his priorities in order. Answers to the second half of the question will vary.
2. Answer the question posed in the caption titled "The Midas Touch": What do you think King Midas would say about how we use the phrase "the Midas touch" today? Answers will vary, but students will likely say that Midas would not agree with the way we use the phrase today. In the myth, Midas's ability to turn everything into gold proves to be a curse and reveals the danger of placing too much value on material wealth. Because of this, Midas would likely not agree with the phrase being used as a compliment.

3. Skill Building and Writing

30 minutes

- Have students complete **Preparing to Write: What Midas Learns**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 24 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page.
- Alternatively, have students choose a culminating task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of differentiated activities.

Connected readings from the *Scope* archives that explore what makes us happy/what matters:

- Fiction: ["Good Enough"](#) (November 2019)
- Drama: [A Christmas Carol](#) (December 2019/January 2020)
- Fiction: ["Girl Can't Dance"](#) (November 2020)
- Drama: [The Space Rock](#) (October 2020)

Connected readings from the *Scope* archives that explore greed:

- Drama: [The Man Who Broke the World](#) (March 2019)
- Drama: [The Monkey's Paw](#) (October 2017)
- Drama: [The Doomed Quest](#) (May 2017)