**King Midas and the Golden Touch**

King Midas was a greedy man—in fact, he was one of the greediest people who ever lived. All day long he thought about how much gold he had, and all night he dreamed about how he could get even more. Midas once did a favor for a god, and in return he was granted one wish—anything he wanted. Midas thought long and hard. How could one wish satisfy his countless desires? He thought he deserved at least three? After all, weren’t three wishes the standard reward? He felt cheated, until an idea struck him like a flash.

“I know how I can get it all! My wish is that everything I touch will turn to gold!” Midas exclaimed.

Midas could not resist testing his new power immediately. He reached out and broke off a twig from a tree. To his delight, the twig became solid gold. He began grabbing everything in sight—dirt, leaves, grass, flowers—and everything he touched hardened into pure gold.

“Ill be the wealthiest, most powerful king in all the world! I’m going to spend every minute of the day turning things into gold. I won’t even stop to sleep!” he decided.

The greedy king worked up quite an appetite rushing about, tagging everything in sight. After many hours, he returned to the castle to order a royal feast. As he sat down, the table and chair turned to gold at his touch. He noticed with glee that the cup became a golden goblet in his hand. Midas took a sip of water to quench his terrible thirst and suddenly choked on a glob of metal! Spitting it out, he realized the water had turned to gold.

Midas picked up a piece of bread and shoved it into his mouth as quickly as he could. But he could not outsmart his golden touch—as soon as the bread touched his lips, it turned into a chunk of gold.

“What is the use of having more gold than Apollo if I can’t even eat a piece of bread? I’ll be the richest, hungriest king in history!” Midas cried.

Storming out of the banquet hall, Midas bumped into a servant. He turned to yell at the servant for getting in his way but instead came face to face with a life-sized golden statue.

Sobbing, Midas collapsed on the floor and begged the gods for mercy. His tears fell like tiny, golden marbles, which only made him cry harder.

“I have learned my lesson! I was too greedy and am punished for it! Now I know that riches cannot buy happiness. Please take away all this gold and let things return to the way they were!” he wailed.

The gods took pity on the pathetic king and took away the Midas touch—which was, after all, a curse rather than a gift. But just in case Midas forgot his own foolishness, the gods gave him a reminder. Two donkey ears sprouted from the top of his head, and Midas never forgot his lesson.

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**Cause and Effect in Midas’ Touch**

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**Questions for King Midas’ touch:**

1. Myths usually contain what kinds of people as characters? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the purpose of the myth of King Midas’ touch? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Curiosity and the Box: The Story of Pandora**

In the early days, life was very different for humans. It all changed, however, when they accepted the gift of fire from one of the less powerful gods, named Prometheus. Zeus was furious with the humans for not asking his permission first, so he devised a plan to punish them.

He ordered Hephaestus to create a beautiful woman, and he named her Pandora. Aphrodite gave her the gift of beauty, Athena taught her various arts, and Zeus gave her a shiny golden box inlaid with precious stones and told her never to open it. Last, he gave her curiosity.

“Why, thank you, Zeus. What’s inside?” Pandora inquired.

“That’s for me to know and you NOT to find out.” Zeus replied.

Hermes guided Pandora down from Mount Olympus and presented her to Prometheus’s brother, Epimetheus. The two married and lived happily—except that Pandora could not forget about the forbidden box. Every night she lay awake thinking about what could be inside. She tied the box shut and locked it in a chest in the attic, but she could not get it out of her mind.

“Maybe if I take up a hobby, I’ll stop thinking about this box.” she thought.

Pandora tried everything—stomping grapes, designing togas, playing the lyre—but nothing could get her mind off that mysterious present. One night, Pandora lay awake, once again thinking about the little golden box.

“The suspense is killing me! What’s the harm in taking one little peek? Then I’ll just close up the box and no one will ever know I opened it.” she said.

She crept into the attic, unlocked the chest, untied the string, and—holding her breath—opened the box.

Suddenly, a swarm of evils exploded from the small box, filling the air with howls of grief! Disease, Envy, Vanity, Spite, Old Age, Deceit, Distrust, and other miseries flew out of the box—evils that would plague humankind from that moment on.

Pandora shut the box as quickly as she could, trapping one last evil inside. This last evil was Despair—the total loss of hope.

If Despair had escaped from the box, people would never expect anything good to happen. All of their hopes and dreams would seem impossible, and they would simply give up. But with Despair trapped in the box, hope would survive. And hope is what keeps humankind optimistic, always looking on at the bright side of what is yet to come.

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**Cause and Effect in Pandora’s Box**

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**Questions for Pandora’s Box:**

1. What is one life lesson, or theme, found in this myth? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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2. What is the purpose of the myth of Pandora’s Box? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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