

# **Daffydowndilly and the Golden Touch**

# The Little Classic Series

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## **THE GOLDEN TOUCH.**

There was once a king who was very rich. His name was Midas. King Midas loved gold better than anything else in the world. There was nothing he loved half so well except his little daughter, Marygold. He thought, foolish man, that the way to show this love, was to get for her as much gold as he could.

Down deep under his castle, was a small, dark room. In this room King Midas kept his gold. Every day he went there to look at it.

He was always careful to lock the door, so that no one could follow him. This room was a very dreary place. Only one little sunbeam ever thought of peeping into it. King Midas loved this little sunbeam, because his gold could not shine without it.

He used to put his treasure right where the little ray would fall upon it. Then he would play with the pieces of gold, throwing them up and catching them again. He had a large bowl of solid gold. It was so bright that he could see himself in it. He would sit for hours and look at his face in this rich mirror. Sometimes the face seemed to be making fun of him. Then he would lay it aside.

Next, he would bring out his bags of gold dust and let the dust run through his fingers, as a child plays with sand. He often said to himself:

“Oh, I wish I had the whole world for my treasure-room, and full of gold all my own; then I could be happy.”

One day while he was looking at his gold, he thought the sunbeam grew larger. It seemed to fill the whole room. The rays danced in the corners like fairies. King Midas looked up. There stood a beautiful young man near the door. His face was so bright that the king shaded his eyes with his hands as he looked.

“You are a very rich man, friend Midas. With all this gold you ought to be the happiest man in the world.”

“Yes,” said Midas, “I have done very well; but it has taken almost a lifetime to get this. Now, if I could live a thousand years, I might get rich!”

“Why, haven’t you enough yet?” asked the young man, opening his eyes very wide.

“No,” said Midas.

“Well,” said the stranger, “I should like to know what would satisfy you. Will you be kind enough to tell me?”

The king thought for a time and then said:

“If I could have my way, everything I touch would turn to gold.”

“Are you quite sure this would satisfy you?” asked the young man.

“Sure of it?” cried Midas. “Why shouldn’t it satisfy me?”

“And are you sure you would never be sorry you made such a wish?” said the stranger.

“How could I be sorry? I tell you I should be the happiest man in the world.”

“Very well,” said the stranger, “to-morrow, at sunrise, you will have the Golden Touch.”



“IN THIS ROOM KING MIDAS KEPT HIS GOLD”

When King Midas awoke the next morning a little sunbeam shone on his bed. He put out his hand and touched the

coverlet. It was changed to gold. With a cry of joy he sprang from his bed.

“Hurrah! I have the Golden Touch,” he cried.

He ran about touching everything in the room. Of course they all turned to gold. Then he dressed himself and was delighted to find that his clothes had become beautiful garments of gold. He put on his spectacles, but could not see through them. Taking them off and rubbing them he saw that the glass had become plates of gold.

As he went down stairs, he put his hand on the railing. It turned to gold.

He opened the door and went into the garden. The roses were nodding in the fresh morning breeze; the air was filled with their sweet perfume. But King Midas did not care for this. What do you think he did? Why, he changed everyone of those roses into hard, shining gold. The dew drops became diamonds.

Then he went back to the house. Breakfast was ready. Marygold had not yet come in, so he had her called. She always had bread and milk for her breakfast. She ate it out of a beautiful china bowl. This bowl had strange trees and houses painted upon it. While the father waited for her, he thought he would change her bowl to gold.

“That will please her,” thought he.

Just then he heard her coming. The door opened and she came in. She had her apron to her eyes and was crying as if her heart would break.

“Why, what is the matter my dear child?” asked the king.

“Oh, my beautiful roses! They are all ugly and yellow,” cried she. “When I try to smell them, their hard petals prick my nose.”

“Well, dear, don’t cry about it. Sit down and eat your bread and milk.”

They both sat down to the table. He thought she would forget about the roses, when she saw her golden bowl; but she was too sad to notice it. Perhaps it was best that she did not, for she had always been so fond of looking at the pictures upon it. These faded as soon as the bowl was changed to gold.

His walk in the garden had given the king a good appetite. His breakfast of baked potatoes, fish, hot cakes and coffee looked very good indeed.

“Well, this is nice,” he said, as he poured out a cup of coffee. He smiled when he saw the coffee pot turn to gold.

“I shall soon have nothing but gold on my table,” thought he, and began to wonder where he could keep his treasure.

He raised the cup of coffee to his lips. That, too, turned to gold. Of course he could not drink it. He set the cup down quickly. Marygold looked up and asked,

“What is the matter, father?”

“Nothing, child, nothing,” said the king.

He thought he would try one of the fish. As soon as he touched it, it became hard and bright. Then he broke one of the cakes. It became yellow and heavy.

“I don’t quite see how I am to get any breakfast,” thought the king.

He looked at Marygold. She was quietly eating her bread and milk. How he longed to have just one bite! What good would all this gold do him, if he could not eat anything?

The potatoes looked so tempting that he thought he would try again.

“Perhaps I can swallow so quickly, that a potato will not have time to turn to gold,” thought he.

Poor foolish Midas! He popped one into his mouth, but it changed as soon as he touched it. The hot gold burned him so that he jumped up and cried out with pain.

“Why, what is the matter, dear father?” cried Marygold. “Have you burned yourself?”

“Oh, my child,” said the king, “I don’t know what is to become of your poor father!”

Marygold got down from her chair and ran to him. By this time Midas hated the very sight of gold. He felt that Marygold was all he had to love now. He took her in his arms and kissed her.

Oh, unhappy Midas! Marygold, too, had become hard, shining gold. There were the tears still on her cheeks; they

were little lumps of gold now. Everything was the same, even the pretty dimple in her chin.

Poor Midas! His heart was almost broken. He threw himself upon the floor and tried to pray. The words would not come.

All at once the room grew very bright. Midas raised his head. There stood the stranger who had given him the Golden Touch. His face was sad, yet Midas thought he saw a smile there, too, as he said:

“Well, friend Midas, how do you like the Golden Touch?”

“Hush!” cried the king. “I hate the very name of gold!”

“Why, how is this?” asked the stranger. “Have you not enough yet?”

“Enough!” cried the king. “Too much! I wish I might never see gold again. Gold is not everything. See,” said he, pointing to Marygold. “I would give all the gold in the world, just to see her smile again.”

“You are sure you have had enough of the Golden Touch?” asked the stranger.

Midas’ look showed that he thought the question a very foolish one.

“Take a vase,” said the young man, “and go to the river that runs by your garden; jump head first into the river and fill the vase with the water; then put a few drops of it on anything you have changed to gold. It will become as it was before,” and the stranger was gone.

You may be sure the king lost no time. He took a vase, and running to the river, jumped in. As soon as he touched the water his heart seemed to grow light. He was glad to see the vase become china again.

He filled it and went quickly to the house. The first thing he did was to sprinkle a little water over Marygold. As soon as it touched her, her cheeks became pink and her blue eyes opened wide.

“Why are you throwing water on me, father?” she cried. “You will soil my pretty dress.”

The king said nothing. He did not want her to know how foolish he had been. He took her in his arms and kissed her many times.

While she went to put on another dress, he took the vase into the garden and put a few drops of water on each flower. When Marygold came out she was delighted to see them bowing to her as if nothing had been wrong.

The king did not stop until he had put water on everything he had turned to gold. Then he remembered that he was very hungry. Never had he eaten anything half so good as that breakfast. He was a happy man now.

Two things were left to remind him of the Golden Touch. The sand in the river sparkled like gold, and Marygold’s hair, which had once been brown, now had a tinge of gold. As this made her more beautiful, Midas was not sorry. He used to say it was the only gold he cared for now.

# LITTLE DAFFYDOWNDILLY.

There was once a little boy whose name was Daffydowndilly. Isn't that a pretty name? Well, Daffydowndilly was a very pretty little boy. He had bright blue eyes and his cheeks were like roses, while his hair made one think of spun gold.

You think his name sounds like the name of a flower? So it does. That is why it was such a good name for this little boy. He looked like a bright flower. He often played in the meadows all day long. He liked to do only what was easy and pleasant.

Daffydowndilly's mother was very kind to him. Her sweet face always wore a smile for the little boy. Indeed, I do not think he knew what a frown was.

But Daffydowndilly could not always play. Like all little boys, he was soon old enough to go to school, and then was sent away from his pleasant home to a school so many miles away, that he had to stay there all the time. The schoolmaster's name was Mr. Toil.

Daffydowndilly had never before seen a face like Mr. Toil's. There were such deep lines in it. How he frowned on the lazy boys! How harsh his voice was when he spoke to them!

Daffydowndilly had been at school but a week when he said to himself, "I don't like to go to school. I'm afraid of

Mr. Toil. I don't like to work. I want to play. I'll run away."

So the very next morning, Daffydowndilly ran away. He had some bread and cheese for his breakfast and a little money in his pocket.

How glad he was to get away from school! He felt like a bird out of its cage.

He had not gone far when he overtook a man who, also, was walking.

"Good morning, my boy," said the stranger. "Where are you going so early?"

Now, Daffydowndilly had never told a falsehood in his life and would not tell one now. After looking at the stranger for a moment he said,

"I am running away from school because I do not like the master. His name is Mr. Toil, and oh, he is so cross! I want to go where I shall never hear of him again."



"I AM RUNNING AWAY FROM SCHOOL BECAUSE I DO NOT LIKE THE MASTER," HE SAID

"Oh, very well, my little friend," said the stranger. "We will go together. I, too, know Mr. Toil, and should like to find a place where he has never been heard of."

This did not quite please Daffydowndilly. He would like a little boy for his companion much better. Then they could stop and gather flowers or chase butterflies. That would be so pleasant. But he thought,

“This man will know better which way to go. He will take care of me and keep me from harm.”

So he trudged along with the stranger. They had not gone far, when they came to a field where men were at work, cutting the tall grass. Then they spread it out in the sun to dry.

Daffydowndilly was delighted with the sweet smell of the new-mown grass. The sun shone down on the field. The birds sang in the trees near by.

“Oh, how beautiful!” cried he. “Let us stop and watch them. I wish I might stay here always. How much nicer it is here, than in that old school room.”

Just then he saw something that made him start back and catch his companion’s hand.

“Quick, quick!” cried he. “Let us run away or he will catch us!”

“Who will catch us?” asked the stranger.

“Mr. Toil, the old schoolmaster,” answered Daffydowndilly. “Don’t you see him in the field there?”

He pointed to an old man who seemed to be the owner of the field. He had taken off his coat and was working in his

shirt sleeves. He did not rest a moment. All the time he kept saying,

“Make hay while the sun shines, my men.”

Sure enough, he did look just like Mr. Toil. His voice, too, was the same, yet Mr. Toil must have been in the school room at that time.

“Don’t be afraid,” said the stranger. “This is not Mr. Toil, the schoolmaster. It is one of his brothers. He is a farmer. People say he is worse than the schoolmaster. But he won’t trouble you, unless you go to work on his farm.”

Daffydowndilly believed this, yet was glad to get away. By-and-by they saw some carpenters building a house. Daffydowndilly wanted to stop again. He loved to watch the men making doors and putting in windows. How neatly they did their work.

It was a pretty sight to see the shavings roll from under the plane. They looked like ribbons.

“How nice it would be to have a saw, a hammer, and a plane, and build a little house for myself,” thought he.

While he was thinking what fine fun this would be, he saw something which made him cry out,

“Make haste. Quick, quick! There he is again!”

“Who?” asked the stranger.

“Old Mr. Toil,” said Daffydowndilly. “There! Don’t you see him among the carpenters? That’s my old schoolmaster, as sure as I live!”

The stranger looked where he pointed. He saw an old man with a carpenter’s rule in his hand. He was marking out the work to be done. All the time he was telling the men to work hard. And they sawed and hammered and planed as if for their lives.

“Oh, no!” said the stranger, “this is not Mr. Toil, the schoolmaster. It is another brother of his. He is a carpenter.”

“I’m very glad to hear it,” said Daffydowndilly. “But I’d like to get out of his way as soon as I can.”

So on they went. Soon they heard the sound of a drum and fife. Daffydowndilly knew there must be soldiers coming.

“Let us make haste,” said he, “I want to see the soldiers.”

They walked as fast as they could, and soon met a company of soldiers. They were gayly dressed, with beautiful feathers in their caps and carried bright guns on their shoulders.

In front marched two drummers and fifers. How they beat their drums and played their fifes! What lively music they made! Daffydowndilly thought he would like to follow them to the end of the world.

“If I were a soldier,” he thought, “Mr. Toil would never dare to look me in the face.”

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