

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for The Adventures of King Midas by Lynne Reid Banks

Book Information

Lynne Reid Banks, The Adventures of King Midas
Quiz Number: 16733
Avon Books, 1993
ISBN 0-380-71564-3; LCCN
153 Pages
Book Level: 5.0
Interest Level: MG

King Midas travels far and wide to reverse the spell that turns everything into gold.

Topics: Adventure, Life Changes; Adventure, Travel; Behavior, Misc./Other; Fairy Tales, Fairy Tales (All)

Main Characters

Ackerbackus the witch's black cat
Biffpot the King's personal valet
Delia Midas's daughter
Midas the King, who loves gold
Mumbo a young dragon
Nandan the magician who grants King Midas's wish
Old Gollop father of the River Cijam
Stray Midas's dog
Wuzzleflump a witch

Vocabulary

besom broom
eldritch eerie
gilded having a thin coating of gold
kestrel a type of bird
luminous giving off a steady light
proviso a stipulation

Synopsis

King Midas lives in the palace with his daughter, Princess Delia, and many servants. He spends most of his day wearing his heavy crown, having servants do his bidding, and taking care of palace business such as signing important papers.

King Midas has no tolerance for things that are fake. He prefers plain wooden picture frames to gilded ones, saying the gilded ones are only pretending to be gold. In his quest for real golden things, he becomes obsessed with the idea of how nice it would be if everything were made of gold. Princess Delia, who isn't at all spoiled, thinks that would be horrid, and doesn't understand her father's fixation.

When Nandan, the magician, agrees to put a spell on the King which will cause everything the King's hands touch to turn to gold, the King is delighted. Nandan warns the King to think about what he's asking for and to make sure he really wants it, but King Midas assures Nandan that this is his "one dream of happiness." King Midas's delight with his new ability turns to horror after he accidentally turns his dog, Stray, and his daughter, Princess Delia, into gold.

After contacting Nandan again and agreeing to let him marry Princess Delia in seven years, King Midas searches for Old Gollop, the Father of the River Cijam. (Cijam is magic spelled backwards, and the River Cijam can de-spell all kinds of things.) He finds Old Gollop, only to discover that finding him won't help because Wuzzleflump, a witch, has used one of her spells to stop the River Cijam from flowing.

Midas goes to Wuzzleflump's cave, where he meets a young dragon named Mumbo. The King offers to let Mumbo live in the palace if Mumbo will help him. Together, Mumbo, King Midas, and Biffpot, the King's personal valet, work to de-spell things and save the Princess.

Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for The Adventures of King Midas by Lynne Reid Banks

Initial Understanding

How did Midas react when he first realized he could turn things into gold?

He was delighted and excited. He noticed nothing except that he had made himself the most gold-rich person in the world.

Literary Analysis

Authors often write a story to convey an opinion or make a statement about something. What do you think the author was trying to say with this book?

Things aren't always what they seem to be; what we wish for may not be what we really want; we should enjoy the good things we already have, etc.

Inferential Comprehension

What are some examples in the story that show how King Midas's and Princess Delia's personalities are different?

Midas was not content with the gold that he had, while Delia thought they had plenty of gold; Midas wanted to create the most glorious rose, while Delia was content with the things she had, etc.

Constructing Meaning

Why did the King tell Mumbo he could live at the palace?

He needed Mumbo's help, and he felt sorry for him because Wuzzleflump was unkind.

period in a country that had (or has) a royal family, palace, etc., and write a short report on it.

Understanding Sequence The story ends with Wuzzleflump gone, the River Cijam flowing, and Midas, Delia, Biffpot, and Mumbo living in the palace. Have the students write a one page plot outline for a sequel to *The Adventures of King Midas*. Have them be sure the beginning of the sequel and the end of the first book are woven smoothly together.

Deriving Word or Phrase Meaning Mumbo loved big words and was always striving to learn new ones. Being a dragon, he did not have access to schools or books, so he stayed alert to the possibility of hearing new words, and he created his own words like "horriblest" and "gi-normous." Have the students use a dictionary and/or thesaurus to create a list of synonyms of "big" and "little" words. (For example: microscopic - tiny)

Teachable Skills

Recognizing Plot When Midas received what he wished for, he discovered things were not as he expected. Have the students write a brief description of a time when they remember wanting something, only to discover that receiving it was much different than they had expected.

Understanding Hist./Cultural Factors This story takes place in a land with a king and a palace. The United States of America has never had a king, but many countries in Europe do have this heritage. Have the students research a time