

Drama

Midas and the Donkey Ears

A Play

retold by Elizabeth Brereton

illustrated by Clare Caddy



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Education

PAIRED
READ

It's Party Time!

VOCABULARY & SKILLS

Comprehension Skill

Theme

Vocabulary

alarmed, anguish,
necessary, obsessed,
possess, reward, treasure,
wealth

Expand Vocabulary

ancient, foolish, judge,
kept, marvelous, obey,
stand

Word count: 976

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Essential Question

How do you decide what is important?

Midas
and the
Donkey Ears
A Play
 retold by Elizabeth Brereton
 illustrated by Clare Caddy

Characters 2

Scene One

The Music Contest 3

Scene Two

A New Hairstyle 7

Scene Three

The Secret Is Out!..... 12

Respond to Reading..... 16

PAIRED READ **It's Party Time!** 17

Focus on Genre..... 20

Midas and the Donkey Ears

Characters

TOWNSPERSON

PAN

KING MIDAS

APOLLO

BARBER

MOTHER EARTH

Props Needed

chair

crown

mirror

winner's wreath

donkey ears

scissors



Scene One

The Music Contest

King Midas sits on his throne. He is wearing a crown. Pan and Apollo are next to him. Townsperson enters.

TOWNSPERSON: In **Ancient** Greece, there was a vain king. He was always looking at himself in the mirror. He was **obsessed** with **wealth**. One day two gods asked the king to judge a singing contest.

(Townsperson exits.)



PAN: I have a song just for you, King Midas.

KING MIDAS: I love your singing, Pan.
I know you will do well in the contest.

APOLLO: You should listen to both of us
before you choose a winner, King Midas.
I **possess** a beautiful voice, too.

KING MIDAS: Oh, yes, Apollo. Please begin.

*(Apollo sings. King Midas doesn't notice him
much. He is busy looking at himself in a
mirror.)*



KING MIDAS: I liked the song, Apollo.
It was pleasing. But I didn't like the tone
of your voice. Let us hear Pan sing.

(Pan sings. King Midas listens and smiles.)

KING MIDAS: That was **marvelous**! You
sang beautifully. Pan has won the contest.
He gets the **reward**.

*(King Midas gives a wreath to Pan. Pan grins
and exits.)*



APOLLO: That was not fair, King Midas. My voice is better. Your ears must be too small to hear well. I will give you donkey ears!

*(King Midas looks **alarmed**. He takes off his crown and he has donkey ears. He screams and runs off. Apollo laughs and exits.)*



STOP AND CHECK

Why did Pan win the contest?



Scene Two

A New Hairstyle

*Mother Earth is sitting on the floor.
She doesn't move.*

*King Midas is sitting in the barber's chair.
He is wearing his crown.*

*Barber stands behind King Midas.
He has a pair of scissors.*

KING MIDAS: Barber, I want to tell you a secret. But you must promise not to tell anyone.

BARBER: Yes, Your Majesty.

(King Midas lifts his crown. Barber gasps.)

KING MIDAS: No one must know I have donkey ears. People would laugh at me. They wouldn't **obey** me.



BARBER: Okay. Can you cover your ears with your crown?

KING MIDAS: I cannot wear my crown all the time. It is **necessary** for you to cut my hair so that it hides these ears.

(Barber cuts King Midas's hair. Finally, the ears are hidden. King Midas looks in the mirror.)

KING MIDAS: Good. Now I can go out again.

STOP AND CHECK

Why did the king want Barber to cut his hair?



(King Midas pays Barber and exits. Barber walks up and down the stage.)

BARBER: I cannot keep the secret. I must tell someone. What should I do? I know! I will dig a hole in the ground. I will tell only Mother Earth.

(Barber goes outside and digs a hole. Mother Earth makes a circle with her arms to form a hole. Barber kneels by it.)



BARBER: *(whispering into the hole)*
King Midas has donkey ears!

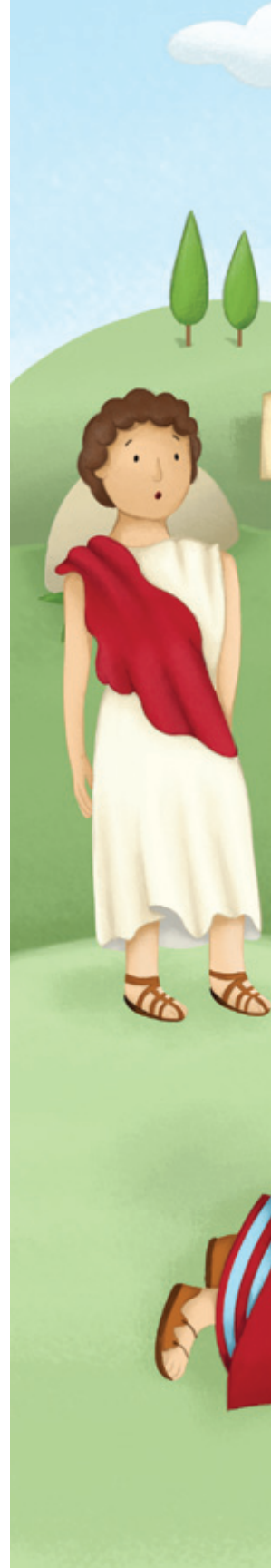
*(Mother Earth laughs. She leans
closer to hear.)*

BARBER: King Midas has donkey
ears! *(standing)* Now I feel better.

*(Barber exits. Mother Earth laughs
and exits.)*

STOP AND CHECK

Why did Barber dig a hole
in the ground?





Scene Three

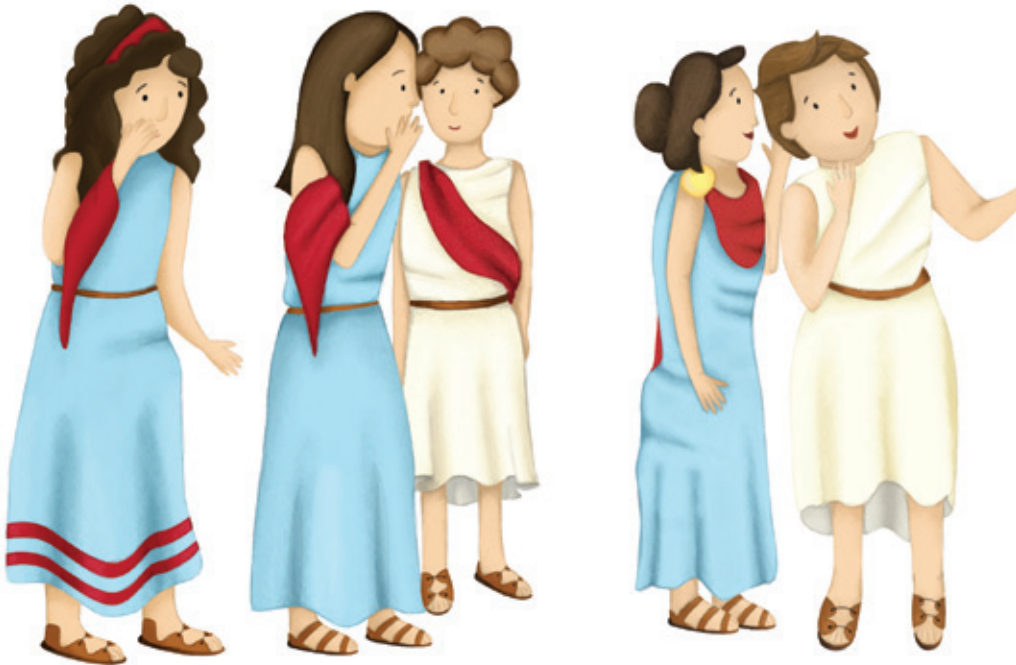
The Secret Is Out!

King Midas, Pan, Townsperson, Barber, and Apollo enter. King Midas sits on his throne. Mother Earth enters and hides. She begins to make the sounds of the wind.

TOWNSPERSON: Why did King Midas have his hair cut like that?

BARBER: I don't know.

MOTHER EARTH: (*whispering*) King Midas has donkey ears!



TOWNSPERSON: (*looking around*) What was that noise?

BARBER: It was the wind.

MOTHER EARTH: (*louder*) King Midas has donkey ears!

TOWNSPERSON: That was Mother Earth. I can almost hear what she is saying.

MOTHER EARTH: (*even louder*) King Midas has donkey ears!

TOWNSPERSON: (*very loudly*) Really? King Midas has donkey ears!



*(King Midas looks up in **anguish**.)*

PAN: Is this true, King Midas?

KING MIDAS: *(takes off his crown)* Yes, Apollo gave me donkey ears. It is unfair!

APOLLO: I gave you donkey ears because you were not a fair **judge** for the contest. But you do not seem to have learned your lesson. Perhaps you should live with the donkeys!

(Everyone laughs.)



(King Midas exits. Apollo, Pan, Barber, and Mother Earth exit.)

TOWNSPERSON: From then on, when the wind blew, Mother Earth whispered King Midas's secret. The **foolish** king could not **stand** people laughing at him. Perhaps Midas gave up his crown and his **treasure** and hid. Or maybe he **kept** his crown and became the king of the donkeys. Hee-haw!



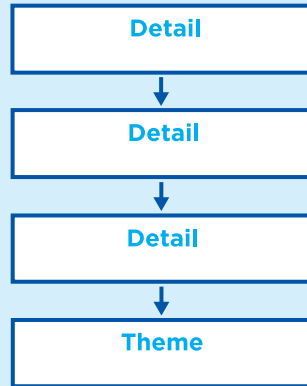
STOP AND CHECK

How did everyone find out about the king's donkey ears?

Respond to Reading

Summarize

Summarize *Midas and the Donkey Ears*. Use details from the story. Your chart may help you.



Text Evidence

1. Reread pages 5 and 6. Why did Apollo give the king donkey ears? What is the main message of the story? **THEME**
2. Find the word *vain* on page 3. What does it mean? What clues help you figure it out? **VOCABULARY**
3. Write about why Mother Earth kept whispering the king's secret.

WRITE ABOUT READING

Compare Texts

Read about a person who learns a lesson.

It's Party Time!

Jake noticed his best friend sitting with the rest of their basketball team. He walked over.

“Are we all invited to your birthday party, Jake?” Matt asked.

“Yes, the whole team is,” Jake said. “I’ve invited Liam, too.”

“Who’s Liam?” Simon asked.

“Jake’s neighbor,” Matt said, rolling his eyes.

“Liam is my friend,” Jake said.

“But he’s not on our team,” Matt said.

After school, Jake walked home with Liam.

“I’m looking forward to your party,” Liam said.

Jake shrugged his shoulders and didn’t reply. He was thinking about what Matt had said.

“Look at this,” Liam said, bouncing a soccer ball on his foot.

“Can I try?” Jake said.

Jake tried the trick, but the ball fell off his foot.

“I need to practice,” Jake said, laughing.

“You can borrow my ball,” Liam said.

Jake smiled. Liam was a good friend.

“Thanks,” Jake said.

“See you at the party.”





The party wasn't going well, and everyone looked bored.

"Where's Liam?" Matt asked.

Jake couldn't see Liam. He sighed. No one had talked to Liam. Then he saw Liam kicking his soccer ball.

"Come and play!" Liam called.

Jake raced outside. Soon the others came out, too, and they all began to play soccer.

"Great party, Jake," Liam said later.

"Yes," Jake said. "Thanks to you!"



Make Connections

How did Liam's friendship teach Jake something important? **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

How are King Midas in *Midas and the Donkey Ears* and Matt in *It's Party Time!* both unfair to somebody else? **TEXT TO TEXT**

Focus on Genre

Plays A play is a story that is written to be performed in front of an audience. The people who perform in a play are called actors. Stage directions describe what the actors do. Props, such as the donkey ears in *Midas and the Donkey Ears*, help the story come alive.

Read and Find In *Midas and the Donkey Ears*, the names of the characters are written in upper case and bold. The words that the character speaks come after the character's name. The stage directions are written in italics. The directions tell the actors what to do.

Your Turn

Imagine what happened to King Midas when he left his castle. Maybe he asked the donkeys if he could join them. Maybe he went to live somewhere else. Turn to a partner and talk about what you think happened to King Midas next.

Thinkmark

Plot

What is *Midas and the Donkey Ears* about?

Author's Purpose

Why do you think *Midas and the Donkey Ears* was written?

Characters

Who are the main characters in *Midas and the Donkey Ears*?

Setting

Where was *Midas and the Donkey Ears* set?

When did *Midas and the Donkey Ears* take place?

Grade 3 • Unit 6 Week 1

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