

A Golden Realization

by

James McIntosh

Inspired by a short version of the *King Midas* story

Not very long ago, in a city with a beautiful balance between structures and nature, there lived the most brilliant scientist ever. His name was Arnold Kapowski, and he was not widely known. One of his greatest works was a machine that could give humans super powers. On the day that he had finished the machine, Arnold commenced to search for a volunteer on whom he could test the machine's capabilities. He found a man named Mike who seemed eager to volunteer, but he had his own secret selfish motives. Arnold promised Mike that if he volunteered, he could have any power he wished, if it were within the machine's capabilities to give it to him. Despite his brilliance, Arnold had not anticipated what Mike would request, the power to turn anything he touched into gold. Arnold had made a promise, so he reluctantly agreed. He did, however, attempt to get Mike to change his mind about which power he wanted and, when that did not work, to scare him out of wanting to volunteer. Arnold informed Mike of some terrible risks and gave him stacks of waivers to sign, which Mike hardly glanced through. Mike finally did get the chance to step into the machine and get the power to turn anything he touched, except for the clothes he currently wore at the time, into gold. Mike was so excited to have his power that he did not even stop to thank Arnold. Mike just ran right out of the building, turning every door he touched into gold.

Mike wanted popularity, as well as wealth. He went to some of the city's monuments to turn them into gold, and he also turned some rocks into gold, which he stored in his pockets, along the way. When he had turned the monuments into gold, word of Mike's deeds began to fly through the city. Some people loved him for what he had done, but others hated him. Mike loved the fame, but he soon found

trouble. Everything he touched, even if he simply brushed past, turned into gold. He would push buttons on stoplights to change the crosswalk sign, but the stoplights turned into gold and would thus cease to function. This caused accidents. Animals Mike came into contact with would turn into gold. Usually, the only ones he did this to on purpose were neighborhood pets that he despised. Vehicles, park benches, trees, and people were some of the other things permanently turned into gold by Mike, most of which on accident. More people began to fear and hate him. And two things made his situation worse, his inability to eat, because any food he touched turned into inedible gold, and a confrontation by the mayor.

While Mike was slumped on a golden bench in a park, the mayor, with some armed body guards protecting him, came up to Mike, but not too close to him. When Mike saw the mayor, he immediately stood up and, despite his distress, held out his hand for the mayor to shake.

The mayor glanced at Mike's hand and asked, "Is this an assassination attempt?" This made Mike and the guards tense up. At first, Mike did not understand what the mayor meant, but then he remembered his power.

"Oh, no!" he exclaimed. "I was just so surprised by your appearance that I forgot about my power for a moment, that's all."

"Well," snorted the mayor, "after what you have done to some of the fine items and people of this city, including my nephew's cat, you've got some charges against you, including murder. I know that Arnold Kapowski did this to you, so run back to him and tell him that I said, 'Fix this, or else!'" With that, the mayor, with his guards, turned to leave. Mike was wishing to be normal again anyway, so he did as the mayor had ordered. Arnold swiftly finished building a machine that would reverse the effects of the other machine by removing Mike's power, but not by reconverting things or people who had been turned into gold. Mike stepped into the new machine, and Arnold powered it up.

When the machine's process completed, Arnold informed Mike, "You currently still obtain your power, but it should wear off within the hour. I will attempt to invent something that will convert anything or anyone out of the golden state you have put them into." Mike, who was so enthralled to know that his power would soon be gone, hugged Arnold. Before Arnold could protest, he was solid gold. Mike was horrified by what he had done because he realized that Arnold could never build that invention to turn golden items and people back to normal, so those charges would remain against him. Many people claim that "all that glitters is gold," but it can be realized that gold is not always what is desirable.