Emily Booth, "Entry on: The Midas Flesh: Volume One by Braden Lamb, Ryan North, Shelli Paroline", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1399. Entry version as of October 10, 2026.

Braden Lamb , Ryan North , Shelli Paroline

The Midas Flesh: Volume One

United States (2014)

TAGS: Dionysus / Dionysos Golden Touch Midas Silenus

We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	The Midas Flesh: Volume One
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2014
First Edition Details	Ryan North, Shelli Paroline and Braden Lamb, *The Midas Flesh Volume One*. BOOM! Box, Los Angeles, 2014, 128 pp.
ISBN	9781608864553
Genre	Comics (Graphic works), Science fiction, Science fiction comics
Target Audience	Crossover (young adults, adults)
Author of the Entry	Emily Booth, University of Technology, Sydney, Emily.Booth@uts.edu.au
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators

Braden Lamb (Author, Illustrator)

Braden Lamb is the husband and artistic partner of Shelli Paroline, together forming an Eisner Award-winning duo who have collaborated on numerous series together. This includes *Adventure Time* (2012-2018, KaBOOM!), *Garfield Homecoming* (2018, KaBOOM!), and *One Day a Dot* (2018, First Second Books) with the writer Ian Lendler. He is a colourist for numerous New York Times bestselling novels, including *Sisters* by Raina Telgemeier (2014, Graphix), *Ghosts* by Raina Telgemeier (2016, Graphix), and *Guts* by Raina Telgemeier (2019, Graphix).

Source:

Illustrator website (accessed: September 2, 2021).

Bio prepared by Emily Booth, University of Technology, Sydney, Emily.Booth@uts.edu.au

Ryan North and his dog Chompsky by Connie Tsang. Retrieved from

Ryan North (Author)

Ryan North was born in Ontario, Canada, and has an undergraduate degree in computer science from Carleton University in Ottawa, and a Masters in computer science at the University of Toronto. While completing his undergraduate degree in 2003, he created the fixed-art webcomic *Dinosaur Comics*. He has since accomplished commercial and critical success for his comics writing, including being a writer for *Adventure Time* (2012–2015, KaBOOM!), *Romeo and/or Juliet: A Chooseable-Path Adventure* (2016, Riverhead Books), and most

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Wikimedia Commons, licensed underCC BY-SA 4.0(accessed: February 8, 2022).

notably, *The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl* (2014–2019, Marvel).

Sources:

Official website (accessed: September 2, 2021);

Profile at the goodreads.com (accessed: September 2, 2021);

Choose Your Own Profile - Ryan North available at The Globe and Mail (accessed: September 2, 2021);

Mitchel Bill, *IN-DEPTH: Ryan North* available at the CBR.com (accessed: September 2, 2021).

Bio prepared by Emily Booth, University of Technology, Sydney, Emily.Booth@uts.edu.au

Shelli Paroline (Author, Illustrator)

Shelli Paroline is the wife and artistic partner of Braden Lamb, together forming an Eisner Award-winning duo who have collaborated on numerous series together. This includes *Adventure Time* (2012-2018, KaBOOM!), *Garfield Homecoming* (2018, KaBOOM!), and *One Day a Dot* (2018, First Second Books) with the writer Ian Lendler. Shelli is co-director of The Massachusetts Independent Comics Expo (MICE), a local arts festival.

Source:

Official website (accessed: September 2, 2021);

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Additional information

Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs	Ryan North, Shelli Paroline, and Braden Lamb, *The Midas Flesh Volume Two*, BOOM! Box, Los Angeles, 2015, 128 pp.

Summary

The Midas Flesh follows a trio of friends who have formed a spaceship crew to battle an intergalactic authority known as The Federation. The friends include Captain Joey, a snarky and impulsive woman; Fatima, a compassionate woman who is the ship's navigator and a hijabi; and Cooper, an anthropomorphic male dinosaur. Other notable characters include Sluggo, a slug-like creature who works for The Federation and is Fatima's ex-boyfriend, and General Russ of The Federation, the primary antagonist.

A series of flashbacks depict the events of the myth of The Midas Touch, with Midas discovering a passed-out, drunk Silenus in his garden one morning. Silenus is the human father of Dionysus, who has been reborn as a human and recently crowned king. Silenus and Midas spend a week hanging out as friends, as they are both lonely, and then Midas travels with Silenus on his return to his kingdom. To thank Midas for befriending and caring for his father, King Dionysus asks Midas what his one wish would be, if he could have anything. Midas wishes that anything he touched would turn to gold. As there were no constraints on this wish, when it was granted, it also meant that anything that was touching something that was touching part of Midas' body also turned to gold. This wish therefore caused a cataclysmic event that turned everything on earth into gold, ending all life in an instant – even Midas, as the oxygen in his lungs turned to gold, and he suffocated. Anything new to arrive on the planet also turns to gold, as it is – however indirectly – touching something that is touching him.

As the Federation have not been able to determine the cause of what makes the planet inhospitable, they have concealed the existence of the Golden Planet and safeguarded it with weapons. However, another flashback reveals that Cooper, when his planet was attacked by The Federation and he hid from the soldiers, discovered a secret stash of papers by someone who had researched the planet long ago. He informed Fatima, and the duo convinced Joey to travel with them to the coordinates that indicate the location of the Golden Planet. They

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believe the planet holds a weapon that can be used to destroy the Federation. Joey agrees, and the trio travel to the planet, dodging Federation forces.

At the planet, the trio conduct experiments to determine how the weapon works, and locate and identify King Midas' preserved body as the weapon. As no bacteria can touch him without turning to gold, his corpse is perfectly preserved. The trio sever a finger from the corpse and take it on board their ship. However, they are discovered by Federation ships that have secretly been deployed to kill them. Among their forces is Sluggo, Fatima's former boyfriend. He commands the Federation forces to destroy Joey's ship; however, their weaponry is too weak to cause damage to it. More shockingly, they fire on each other, and Sluggo is rescued from turning to gold, by Joey, though he is restrained as a prisoner. The Federation had secretly ordered the other ships in his team to all destroy each other after defeating Joey's ship, to prevent any survivors from knowing about the Golden Planet.

As they leave the orbit of The Golden Planet, they are confronted by General Russ on board a large Federation ship called the Titanic. He has learned of the power in Midas' body, and intends to kill them all and claim the body as a new weapon for the Federation. Joey and her crew flee from the Titanic, and out of desperation, they eject Midas' severed finger behind them, hoping to wipe out the enemy ship and all of its inhabitants – which includes thousands of non-military personnel and civilians. Sluggo breaks free of his restraints and warns General Russo, who dons a space-suit. The severed finger touches a missile shot by the Titanic, destroying the entire ship and killing everyone except General Russo. Joey and her team plan to recover the finger, and return to the Golden Planet for the rest of Midas' body, to use as a weapon against the Federation.

Analysis

The Midas Flesh expands on the myth of King Midas and the 'Midas Touch", transforming a personal curse on one man into a force powerful enough to extinguish all life on a planet. Instead of the curse only applying to objects that Midas touches, the curse spreads through anything that shares contact with an object that shares contact with him. Direct parallels are drawn between the "miracle" that caused the first forms of sentient life on earth to emerge through evolution, and the "miracle" which causes objects to evolve in form yet again. Even Midas' blood, which is still liquid as no bacteria can touch

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any part of his flesh to deteriorate his body, carries the curse. This makes the science fiction genre of the story, and the setting in space, particularly appropriate for such an interpretation of the myth. The curse can be contained to single planets; and Midas' flesh can be moved safely only when put into a stasis using the advanced technologies of the futuristic society.

The contrast between the mythical world that Midas lived in, and the futuristic, technology-based world of Joey and her crew, is further emphasised through the graphic novel's use of colour. Midas' world on a living earth is depicted in pale shades of yellow, blue, and green, drawing attention to the natural world's features of sunshine, open skies, and plants. In contrast, Joey's world has more vibrant colours, often in shades of brown, and the vastness of space is emphasised by panels dominated by black. The solid-gold planet of earth therefore occupies an uncanny territory between the two, sharing more colours and imagery with Midas' world, but possessing the lifelessness and metallic qualities of Joey's world.

Earth's two "miracles" are also linked through colour. The miracle of evolution and life emerging from primordial seas on earth is depicted on the first page of the book in shades of blue and grey, and a bolt of lightning strikes the ocean in the centre of the page, linking the heavens and the earth. The moment Midas' "miracle" occurs, the outside of Dionysus' home is depicted in these same blue-grey shades, with a storm overhead and a bolt of lightning striking the house. Divine influence on the earth is therefore an abnormality powerful enough to change the course of the future for all life, for better or for worse.

The first volume of *The Midas Flesh* overall suggests that the world of myth and the world of science, when combined, produce a wholly unnatural state of existence. Whether it is Midas' careless wish that ended all life on earth, or the actions of Joey's crew, which unleashed a powerful weapon that was quick to claim lives, it is human interference in matters beyond their concern that brings about destruction.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and

Dionysus / Dionysos Golden Touch Midas Silenus

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Concepts

Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Adversity Death Friendship Future Gaining understanding Humour Murder Science Survival Transformation Treasure-hunting Violence War

Further Reading	Rogers, Brett M. and Benjamin Eldon Stevens, eds, *Classical Traditions in Modern Fantasy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Rogers, Brett M. and Benjamin Eldon Stevens, eds., *Classical Traditions in Science Fiction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Rogers, Brett M. and Benjamin Eldon Stevens, eds, *Once and Future Antiquities in Science Fiction and Fantasy*, London: Bloomsbury, 2019. Tarbox, Gwen Athene, *Children's and Young Adult Comics*, London: Bloomsbury, 2020.

Addenda	Edition used for entry: Ryan North, Shelli Paroline, and Braden Lamb, *The Midas Flesh Volume One*, BOOM! Box, Los Angeles, 2014, 128 pp.

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