

Pandora's box

Many years ago, in ancient Greece, there lived two brothers. Their names were Prometheus and Epimetheus and they were Titans. The Titans were an ancient race of gods who were at war with the new gods of Olympia.

However, the brothers had not fought with the rest of the Titans, so when the Olympians caught them, they were spared. Instead, the Olympians gave the brothers the task of creating all of Earth's creatures. Epimetheus created animals, and Prometheus created men. Prometheus loved his new creation even more than the gods and wanted to give them a special gift. He gave the men fire to cook with and to keep warm.

The ruler of the Olympian gods, Zeus, became angry with Prometheus. He did not think that men deserved to have fire. Prometheus had also played other tricks on Zeus recently, which angered him even more! Zeus punished Prometheus by taking fire away from men.

Prometheus did not give up. He secretly flew up to the Sun, lit a torch and brought fire back to the men. Zeus found out, and his anger grew. In a fury, Zeus decided upon a rather unusual punishment for the brothers.

He asked a blacksmith called Hephaestus to create a perfect woman out of clay. Zeus and the other gods gave her life and named her Pandora. They gave her many gifts including musical talent, beauty, charm and curiosity. Zeus also presented Pandora with a special box. He told her, 'Never, ever open the box!' However, secretly he knew this would only make her curious about its contents.

It was now Zeus' turn to play tricks. He sent Pandora to Prometheus and Epimetheus as a gift. Prometheus was suspicious but accepted her because she was so perfect. Pandora became the first woman on Earth and Epimetheus fell in love with her instantly. Soon, he and Pandora were married.

After living happily with Epimetheus for many days, Pandora became bored. Her mind turned to her secret box, the one Zeus had forbidden her to open.



‘What is inside this box?’ she wondered aloud. ‘What harm could it do to open it?’

As Zeus had predicted, Pandora’s curiosity got the better of her and she carefully opened the box.

As soon as she did so, a flash of bright light shot from the box and out flew several horrid insects named Poverty, Illness, Sadness, Old Age, Pain and Death. Zeus had created them to carry misery into the world.

Horried, Pandora tried to shut the lid, but the evil beings had already escaped. They flew and buzzed around her, biting Pandora harshly. They then flew out of the window and into the world.

Pandora cried out in despair, ‘Help me! Oh, what have I done?’

Epimetheus ran in to comfort her. ‘What has happened?’ he asked. Pandora told him what she had done. They became very afraid. The world would now be full of misery!

As they sat sadly together, they heard a quiet buzzing from inside the box. Pandora carefully peered inside. There was one last insect left. She decided to let it out, to free it from its prison. This final creature was named Hope. It landed on Pandora and healed her bites, then fluttered out of the window.

Pandora smiled. She realised that, even though she had let terrible things into the world, she had also released Hope.

