

# Pandora's Box

Two brothers in Ancient Greece, named Epimetheus and Prometheus, had upset Zeus, King of the Gods, by giving the gift of fire to humans and now Zeus wanted to punish them.

He created a beautiful woman called Pandora and took her to Prometheus, but he refused to accept her because he knew Zeus wanted to punish him. Epimetheus thought Pandora was so beautiful that he fell in love with her, so he agreed to marry her.

One day the god Mercury arrived, carrying a magnificent box. He asked Epimetheus if he could leave the box with them until he returned from his journey. Mercury would not tell them what the box contained but only that it must never be opened.

Pandora had promised Mercury she would never open the box. But she could not forget about it. She began to imagine that it contained great treasures.

Eventually, Pandora's curiosity got the better of her and one day she grabbed the box, unfastened it and lifted the heavy lid. To her horror, there were no great treasures inside.

Instead, it was crammed with all the terrible evils of hate, despair and jealousy. They poured out like a swarm of bees. With a horrified cry, Pandora slammed the lid shut.

Then Pandora could hear a voice calling to her from the box, pleading with her to be let out. She did not want to be tricked again, and when Epimetheus, who had heard her cry, came into the room, she asked what she should do. He agreed that nothing inside the box could be worse than the evils that had already been released, so they cautiously opened the lid.

There at the bottom of the box was Hope. It fluttered from the box like a beautiful dragonfly and out into the world, so even though Pandora had released pain and suffering upon the world, she had also let the world have Hope.

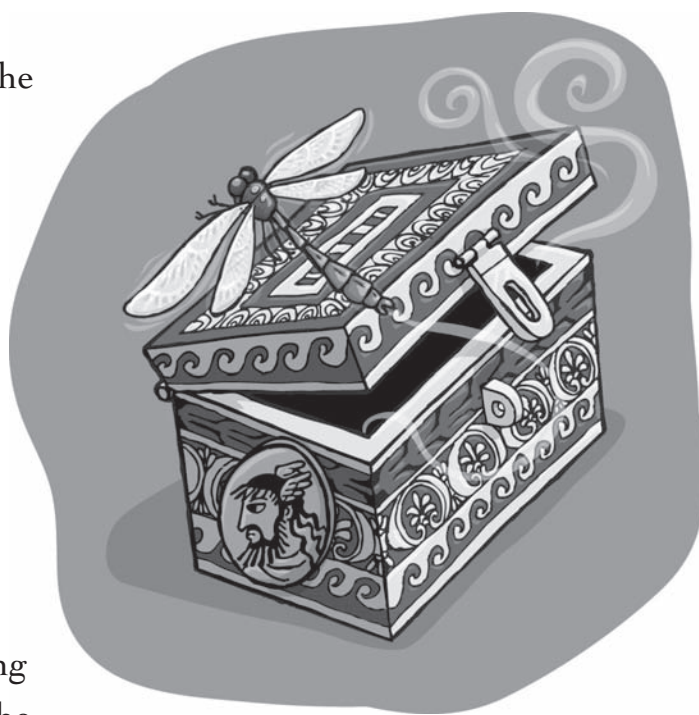


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