

Pandora's Box

Zeus sat high on his throne on Mount Olympus and watched as the humans cooked and warmed themselves around their fires. This made Zeus furious. The humans had accepted the gift of fire from Prometheus, a less powerful god. The humans had not asked Zeus for permission prior to accepting the gift. Zeus decided to formulate a plan to punish them.

Zeus commanded Hephaestus to create a beautiful woman. Hephaestus molded her to look like his beautiful wife, the goddess Aphrodite. Zeus was satisfied with the woman and named her Pandora.

Each of the gods and goddesses gave Pandora a gift. Athena breathed life into her and taught her various arts. Aphrodite gave her the gift of beauty and dressed her in fine clothing. Other gods gave her the gifts of kindness, peace, generosity, and health. Zeus gave her the gift of curiosity.



Then Hermes guided Pandora down from Mount Olympus and presented her to Prometheus's brother, Epimetheus. Hermes told Epimetheus that Pandora was a gift from Zeus for all of his hard work. Prometheus, Epimetheus's brother had always warned him that Zeus was tricky and could not be trusted. But Epimetheus was so spellbound by Pandora's beauty that he forgot about his brother's warnings. All he could think about was Pandora. The two were soon married.

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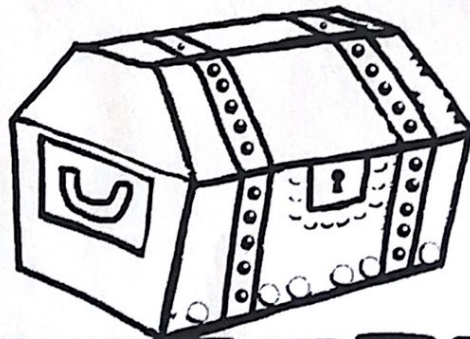
As a wedding present, Zeus gave Pandora a sparkling, golden box covered with precious stones and jewels. Immediately Pandora was intrigued by the box. However, Zeus instructed Pandora to never open the box.

Epimetheus brought Pandora to live in his house. He placed the box in the corner and forgot about it. The two lived happily. The only problem was that Pandora couldn't forget about the forbidden box.

Every night Pandora laid awake thinking about what could be inside the box. The longer the box sat in the corner, the more curious Pandora grew. She tried to stay away from the box, but she found herself making excuses to go to the corner of the house. She tried covering the box with a cloth, but that didn't help. She tied the box shut and locked it in a chest in the attic, but she couldn't get the box out of her mind.

One day, Epimetheus was not home. Pandora found herself thinking about the box. "The suspense is getting the best of me," thought Pandora, "What's the harm in taking one peek? I'll just open it for a minute and close it. No one will ever know I opened it."

Pandora slowly crept into the attic, unlocked the chest, took a deep breath, and opened the box.



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The box exploded with horrible and evil things. Greed and Envy swarmed around her. Hatred and Pain wailed in her Pandora's ears. Disease, Hunger, Spite, Old Age, Deceit, and other miseries flew out of the box. Zeus had known that curiosity would lead to the unleashing of these evils and from that moment on, they plagued mankind.

"What have I done?" Pandora cried. She quickly closed the lid of the box. As she did, she trapped one evil, Despair-the total loss of hope.

Because Despair was trapped inside the box, hope survived. Humans have been able to hold on to hope in order to survive most of the troubles and wickedness that Pandora released from the box. Hope keeps humans optimistic and always looking on the bright side. Hope allows us to believe that no matter how bad today is, tomorrow will be better.

What is the theme of the story?

What does the allusion "opening Pandora's box mean?"

