QUICK INTRODUCTION

When Zeus, the king of the Olympian gods, was young and trying to establish his rule, he was challenged by a group of ferocious Titans, who tried to keep him from gaining power. A long and terrible war ensued, with all the Olympian gods joined against the Titans, who were led by Cronus and Atlas.

After ten years of fighting, and with the help of the Cyclopes and the Hecatoncheires (The Hundred-Handed-Ones), Zeus and his fellow Olympians defeated the Titans. Only a few Titans, including Themis, Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus, fought on the side of Zeus - against their fellow Titans - and once Zeus won, he rewarded them.

But soon Prometheus made Zeus very angry by stealing fire from Mount Olympus and giving it to the race of mortal men living on earth, who were cold and hungry. Zeus had warned Prometheus not to give fire to men, and was outraged that anyone had the nerve to ignore his command.

Still, he would seem ungrateful if he appeared to forget the important role that Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus had played in the war against the Titans, and he couldn't just kill the brothers, so he cunningly devised a scheme to get even.

PANDORA IS CREATED

In revenge, Zeus ordered Hephaestus, the god of smiths, to craft a gorgeous woman out of earth and water. The beautiful goddess of Love, Aphrodite, was asked to pose as a model, just to make sure the woman was perfect. Once this was done, the Four Winds (or some say Hephaestus himself) breathed life into her and there she lay sleeping, brand spanking new!

The first mortal woman on earth was to be bestowed with unparalleled charm and beauty, and her unknown mission would be to bring mischief and misery upon the human race. Zeus then summoned the other Olympians and asked them each to give this new creation a gift.

Aphrodite adorned her with beauty, grace and desire; Hermes, the Messenger god, gave her cunning and boldness; Demeter showed her how to tend a garden; Athena taught her manual dexterity and to spin; Apollo taught her to sing sweetly and play the lyre; Poseidon's gift was a pearl necklace and the god of the sea promised her that she would never drown.

But Zeus also made her foolish, mischievous and idle. This was the first woman, divine in appearance but quite human in reality.

The gods called her Pandora, which means "All-gifted", or "The gift of all", because each god had given her a power by which she would work the ruin of man, and because of the many presents bestowed upon her at Olympus.

Lovely Pandora was created to become the wife of the Titan Epimetheus, who was the not-very-bright brother of Prometheus, the one who had gotten on Zeus' bad side. Before sending her to earth, the gods held a big banquet and Hermes, the Messenger god, presented Pandora with a splendidly crafted jar (some say a box), adorned with wonderful images. But Hermes warned Pandora that she must never open the jar (box)!

She must NEVER open the box...And then Zeus' wife, Hera, gave her the quality of curiosity! Tell me, is that fair?
They also gave her silvery raiment and a broidered veil, and in her hair they placed bright garlands of fresh flowers and a wonderful crown of gold. Her gowns were most sumptuous and she was truly a vision from heaven.

When Pandora was finally brought out and shown to the gods, resplendent in all the finery she had received, great amazement and wonder took hold of them, such was the effect of her beauty...

**PANDORA COMES TO EARTH**

Prometheus (whose name means 'forethought') had warned his brother Epimetheus ('afterthought') never to accept any gift from Zeus, knowing that the king of the Olympians bore a heavy grudge against him. However, Hermes took her by the hand and escorted Pandora down to earth, safely guiding her down the slope of Mount Olympus. When the Messenger god delivered her before Epimetheus, the foolish Titan was overwhelmed by her exquisite beauty—Indeed Pandora was the most beautiful woman ever created!

"Glorious Zeus feels sad for the sorrow and disgrace that has plagued your family," said trickster Hermes to the Titan. "To make up for it, and to demonstrate that there are no hard feelings toward you for your brother's folly, Zeus presents you with this gift -- This beautiful woman named Pandora, the fairest in all the world, is to become your wife."

Epimetheus, instantly forgetting his wiser brother's admonitions, eagerly accepted the lovely gift from Zeus and made her his wife. Pandora settled into their large home and took on the wifely duties, baking and spinning and tending the garden. She thought herself the happiest bride in the world as she played melidious tunes on the lyre and joyfully danced for her new husband.

But Pandora daily was tortured by curiosity. Hey, how would you like to receive a beautiful wedding present, shiny and inviting, only to be told you could never open it? Talk about torture! That's not fair!

At first she kept the golden box on the table and daily polished it so that visitors might admire its beauty. The brilliant sunlight sparkled from the precious box, beckoning her it seems, begging to be opened.

So inviting...so inviting...Hera's gift, curiosity, was like a cruel curse. Pandora wondered what the box contained. Her imagination created intriguing scenarios, for the box was so beautiful on the outside, how could it not hold exquisite treasures inside? Surely Hermes was kidding when he said never to open it, he's such a joker, thought Pandora.

"I bet Hermes really wanted me to open the box," she mused, "he's probably watching right now, waiting for me to look inside so that I can be delightfully surprised and thank him. Surely he's hidden a splendid surprise inside..."

But deep inside her, Pandora knew that her promise must not be broken. Her better sense finally overcame her ardent curiosity and she removed the box from the table and concealed it in a dusty hidden storeroom. This made matters worse—she found herself walking by the storeroom and pausing at the doorway, as if the mysterious golden box was calling to her. Sometimes she would enter the room and hold the box for a guilty moment, then rush out and lock the door. This was killing her!

Desperate, Pandora took the box and locked it inside a heavy wooden chest. She placed chains around the chest, dug a hole, and buried it in her garden. With great effort she rolled a huge boulder on top of the "grave", determined to forget all about this object of her obsession.

She couldn't sleep that night. No matter how she tried, her thoughts kept returning to the buried golden box. She put on her robe and went out to the garden. As if in a trance, Pandora found herself drawn to the boulder. She reached out and touched the stone and like magic it moved, revealing the hole. This must be a sign from Hermes!

"You must never open the box!" As she dug the earth to get to the box, the Messenger god's words rang in her mind. "Never open the box!"
Pandora wanted to obey the command of the gods, and she really wasn't wicked, but at last she could no longer contain her curiosity. Taking the little golden key from around her neck, she fitted it into the keyhole and gently opened the box. Just a tiny bit, so that she could have a little peek, you see, and then she was going to close it up again. Just a little, tiny peek...It was her wedding gift, after all...

Bad move. No sooner had Pandora opened the box, that she realized her mistake. A foul smell filled the air and she heard swarming and rustling inside. In horror she slammed the lid shut, but alas it was too late! The evil had been unleashed!

You see, the vindictive gods had each put something harmful inside the box. All the plagues and sorrows known to humanity were released once Pandora opened the jar. Old Age, Sickness, Insanity, Pestilence, Vice, Passion, Greed, Crime, Death, Theft, Lies, Jealousy, Famine, the list went on and on...every evil, that until then had been trapped inside the gift from the gods, was now loosed upon the earth.

First the scourges stung Pandora and Epimetheus on every part of their body, then the evils scattered throughout the world and mixed with the good, so that they were indistinguishable, and humans had a hard time telling between the two extremes. Entering a house, these monster hang from the rafters and bide their time, waiting for the perfect moment to swoop down and sting their victim, bringing pain, pestilence, sorrow and death.

Woe was Pandora! The poor girl was terror-stricken at what she had caused, and at this unexpected eruption of evil. But just as she thought all was lost, one little Sprite, a solitary good thing, hidden at the bottom of the jar, flew out.

It was **Hope**! Deep down inside the hateful jar was the only thing that has sustained humanity in times of sorrow, pain and misery - Hope. The endless Hope that things will soon get better. And it's this Hope that keeps us going to this very day, our sole comfort in times of misfortune.

But before you go blaming all of society's ills on poor lovely Pandora, the first woman and the ultimate pariah, first consider the following question: Would you have been disciplined enough to keep the jar/box shut, or would you, like Pandora, let your curiosity get the best of you?

Hey, if it was MY wedding gift, I'd be opening it! Just so I could send a Thank You note!

**EPILOGUE**

Here's an interesting aside: At a still later period, rather than all the ills of the world, the box was said to have contained **all the blessings** of the gods. These were meant to have been preserved for the future benefit of the human race. Pandora was instructed never to open the box, but once again her curiosity got the better of her, and she had a peek.

The winged blessings at once took flight and escaped, rarely to be seen again. If only Pandora had kept the box closed! Who knows what our world would be like!

http://mythman.com/
Pandora
By: Carlos Parada

Pandora, the first woman, was so called because each of the OLYMPIANS gave a gift to make her complete. Before her there was no womankind.

Modeling Pandora

This is what Zeus conceived in order to punish Prometheus, who had tricked the god for the benefit of mankind: Zeus bade Hephaestus mix earth with water, and having made the form of a sweet, lovely woman, with the face of a goddess, to put in it a human voice. When Hephaestus had moulded the clay in the likeness of a maid, Athena clothed her and provided her with fine manners, teaching her needlework, and the weaving of webs. Thereafter the other OLYMPIANS gave each a gift: Aphrodite shed grace upon her head, and Hermes put in her speech, a shameless mind, and a deceitful nature. The CHARITES and Peitho, (Persuasion) put necklaces of gold upon her, and the HORAE crowned her head with flowers. And when the work of the gods was completed, they called the lovely woman they had made Pandora, since she received gifts from all the gods.

The Jar

This living jewel, with garlands about her head and a golden crown made by Hephaestus, was sent to Epimetheus, who was notorious for having no foresight, and always think, not before but afterwards. And although he had been warned by his brother Prometheus, never to take a gift from Zeus, when Hermes came with the girl, Epimetheus accepted the gift, understanding its meaning only later. For it is told that until that time men lived free from ills, toil, and sicknesses. But Pandora, opened a jar containing all evils, and scattered them everywhere (except Hope that remained inside by the will of Zeus). And ever since those evils have afflicted mankind as a reminder that there is no way to escape the will of Zeus.

The Race of Pandora

The female race that originated with Pandora, has been called "deadly." And it is said that women live among men to their great trouble, being helpful only in wealth but not in poverty. To this evil, Zeus added a second one to cause regret regardless of the choice: For if a man refuses to marry in order to avoid the sorrows caused by women, then he reaches Old Age without anyone to tend his years, and leaves his wealth to strangers. But if marriage is chosen, then he may have mischievous children, living with unceasing grief that cannot be healed. This kind of view was shared, many years later, by Theseus' son Hippolytus, known for hating women. This young man believed that women are a curse to the human race, and that it would have been a much better heavenly plan to let men buy their sons from the gods, paying their weight in bronze, iron, or gold. For marriage, he believed, consists in supporting a stranger, who usually squanders the family fortune, spending in gowns and other beautiful items that she heaps on her hatefulness. And the more clever the woman, the worse, he thought, for the sexual urge breeds wickedness more readily in clever women. However, it is also said that Pandora was not a curse sent from heaven, but that she, endowed with all kinds of gifts, was given by the gods to men because they wished to show all mortals that they could do even better than Prometheus, who had given them fire.

http://goo.gl/VoDWb
The Greek Myth of Pandora

By Sourabh Gupta

In Greek mythology, Zeus, the king of the gods, ruler of Mount Olympus and god of the sky, ordered Hephaestus, god of craftsmanship, to make Pandora out of the earth and water, so that he could punish Prometheus. Prometheus was the brother of Epimetheus and a champion of humankind, known for his intelligence. Zeus wanted to punish him for stealing the secret of fire from him and giving it to mortals (humans). All the gods helped in making Pandora a beautiful, cunning, seductive yet deceitful woman. It is said that the gods made her nature inquisitive and curious, which is the reason why she opened a box called Pandora’s box, that released all the evils among mankind. By the time she closed it, the only thing that was left in the box was ‘hope’.

The myth first appeared in Hesiod’s epic poem Theogony but, the name of the woman was never mentioned. It is said in the poem that Zeus was angered by the annoying lights on the ground, lit up by humans at night after they had received the stolen gift of fire from Prometheus, so he decided to punish them by introducing diseases, death, sorrow and sufferings to mankind. He commanded Hephaestus to create the first woman from earth and water, whose descendants would torment the entire race of humans. After she is created, she is dressed by Athena, the goddess of heroic endeavor. However, throughout the poem, no name was mentioned of the woman.

The more famous adaptation of the myth came from another of Hesiod’s poems, Works and Days. In this adaptation, Pandora, created by Hephaestus, was not only blessed by Athena but, by many other gods and goddesses too. Athena taught her weaving and needlework; Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, blessed her with beauty; Apollo, the god of music, light and sun, gave her mastery over music; Hermes, the messenger god, gave her persuasion, a shameless mind, deceitful nature and power of words, so that she could speak lies eloquently. After Athena, dresses her up, Hermes gives her the name Pandora, meaning “all gifted” (because she has received various gifts from all the gods). Zeus gifts Pandora to Epimetheus because Epimetheus is foolish unlike his cunning brother Prometheus. Prometheus knowing the intentions of Zeus, warns Epimetheus not to accept any gift from Zeus, but Epimetheus, being foolish, accepts Pandora. She brings a jar (not a box as is commonly thought) with herself, containing myriad miseries of the world, diseases and sufferings. She opens up the jar, and all the evils spread out.

Another version of the myth says that the jar wasn’t brought by Pandora but was kept hidden by Epimetheus who did not want humankind to suffer. Pandora was in fact told not to open the jar but, she being curious, opens it. When she realizes what she has done, she immediately closes it, but by then the only thing remaining is ‘hope’.

The name Pandora doesn’t mean “all gifted” as mentioned in Works and Days, but means “all giving”. The proof comes from certain paintings of the 5th century BC that have the name Anesidora, which means ‘she who sends up gifts.’ There are numerous versions of the myth of Pandora but the most considered version is the one described above, from Hesiod’s Works and Days.

http://goo.gl/OBA2z
This is the story of how the world began, as the ancient Greeks told it.

The first thing that existed, the oldest thing of all, was chaos. No one can say what chaos looked like. It had no height, or width or depth, yet it was everywhere. And out of chaos Mother Earth emerged. Her name was Gaia. Gaia created the mountains, the plains, the rivers and the foaming seas. Then she took a husband - Uranus, the starry sky - and poured forth living creatures, the lion, the horse, the eagle and all the birds and beasts we know today. But others that she made were strange and monstrous, giants with a hundred arms or one eye in their forehead, and nymphs, the female spirits of the woods and waters. Then Gaia bore the first rulers of the earth, six sons and six daughters - the Titans.

The Titans were like their mother - strong and lawless. Cronus, their ruler, ate his children as soon as they were born, for Gaia had warned him that a powerful son would overthrow him. His precautions were useless, for not even the gods can escape their fate. It was the destiny of the Titans to be defeated by younger, nobler gods. Cronus's wife Rhea outwitted her hated husband. She hid her sixth child, a boy named Zeus, in a cave, and offered Cronus a great stone swaddled like a baby to eat instead. Cronus thrust the stone into his stomach, never dreaming that he had a son alive, cared for by the nymphs and growing stronger by the day.

One day Rhea said to Cronus 'I have got rid of that useless creature that serves you at table. This is your new cupbearer.' The new attendant, who looked tall and powerful, offered Cronus a honeyed drink. Cronus gulped it down and at once felt drowsy and rather ill. As he slid into irresistible sleep, he realized, in a befuddled way, that he had been tricked. The cupbearer was his son Zeus, who had given him a herb to make him vomit violently in his sleep. Out came the stone he had swallowed, followed
by Zeus's elder brothers and sisters, who sprang out quite unhurt. They bound their father with chains and declared Zeus master of the world.

Zeus cast the Titans to the outer ends of the earth and compelled Atlas, the brawniest, to support the sky upon his shoulders for ever. The new gods made their home on the top of lofty Mount Olympus. From his palace high above the clouds Zeus kept an eye on what went on below. His brow grew very black when he discovered the Titans befriending some creatures that were new on earth - mortal beings called men.

Some say that Mother Earth had made men spring from the rocks and soil. Others say a Titan called Prometheus took potter’s clay and modelled them. Prometheus was clever, a maker of things who taught men skills when they were new to the world. Mother Earth gave him an enormous basket of gifts and told him to share them out among all mortal creatures. ‘I have made them too hastily,’ she said, ‘and life is hard for them.’

Now Prometheus had a brother called Epimetheus who was as foolish as Prometheus was wise. When Epimetheus saw the basket he begged to be allowed to do the sharing.

‘Certainly not’ said Prometheus, ‘You’ll make a mess of it.’

But Epimetheus pleaded so much that Prometheus agreed he could start giving away the small gifts. Epimetheus gave a shell to the crab, fangs to the snake, long legs to the hare, and so on. He soon came to the end of the smaller things. Then he gave swift wings to the eagle and ferocity to the lion, and so delighted them that he could not stop. When
Prometheus returned the basket was empty.

'You didn't think I'd manage,' said Epimetheus triumphantly 'but I've done a perfect job. There was just enough to go round.' 'What did you give to men?' asked Prometheus sharply.

Epimetheus had to admit he had quite forgotten about men. Prometheus was furious, chiefly with himself for letting this happen. Men needed a gift so he decided to fetch them fire from heaven.

Now Zeus had a poor opinion of mankind, whom he suspected of plotting with the Titans. To keep men helpless, he had hidden fire on Olympus and meant to keep it from them. 'They can eat raw meat, and shiver' he said. Prometheus crept up to Olympus, into the forge of Hephaestus the god of fire, and smuggled out a glowing ember hidden in a hollow fennel stalk. From it he lit a torch and brought it flaming down from heaven to men.

This was the best gift he could have given them. With fire they had warmth and light and could forge tools to build houses and make ploughs. But Zeus was angry and revengeful. He called the gods to him and said in a deceptively mild way, 'Men are lonely in the world so I have made a companion for them - woman.' He showed them a lovely creature like a goddess. 'I have done my best,' he said 'Now each of you must give her a gift and she will be perfect - our present to mankind.' So Aphrodite, goddess of love, gave her beauty; Hermes, the gods' quick-silver messenger, filled her with liveliness and cunning; the Graces gave
her irresistible charm. Each god gave something, and she was named Pandora, which means 'all gifts', because nothing was omitted that could win men's hearts.

Zeus then commanded Hermes the messenger to lead Pandora down to earth. But at the last minute he called them back. 'This is for you' he said and he gave Pandora a box. 'But see that you never open it' he added, and smiled secretly.

Hermes brought Pandora to Prometheus, but he was suspicious and refused to have anything to do with her. Soft-hearted Epimetheus said, 'I'll look after her.'

'Don't,' Prometheus told him. 'You are a fool, Epimetheus. No good will come of anything from Zeus.'

Epimetheus did not listen. He took Pandora home and the two lived contentedly for a time. Then Pandora became restless.

'I can't think why Zeus gave me that box,' she kept saying.

'Neither can I.' Epimetheus would reply without much interest.

'He told me not to look in it.'

'Then we needn't bother about it, need we, Pandora?'

But Pandora could not leave it at that. She thought that Epimetheus was stupid to show so little curiosity. 'I'll take just one peep,' she thought. She undid the clasp.

Immediately the lid flew open and a swarm of hideous mischiefs and misfortunes shot into the air – envy and greed and sickness and old age, famine and war, deceit, lies, fear, and useless pride. Pandora shrieked as the horrid things rushed past her face and flew into the open air, scattering far and wide throughout the world, where they have been tormenting people ever since. It was too late now to close the box. There was only one thing left in it, a tiny flame that flickered as if at any moment it would go out. This too rose in the air and followed the rest. This flame was Hope. Zeus's heart had softened sufficiently to allow mankind this one comfort, which has helped it to endure a thousand ills.
In the Beginning
Pandora's Box

At the very beginning, the gods ruled over an empty world. From their home on Mount Olympus, where they lived in halls of sunlight and cloud, they looked out over oceans and islands, woodland and hill. But nothing moved in the landscape because there were no animals or birds or people.

Zeus, king of the gods, gave Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus the task of making living creatures, and he sent them down to live on earth. Epimetheus made turtles and gave them shells; he made horses and gave them tails and manes. He made anteaters and gave them long noses and longer tongues; he made birds and gave them the gift of flight. But although Epimetheus was a wonderful craftsman, he was not nearly as clever as his brother. So Prometheus watched over his brother's work and, when all the animals and birds, insects and fishes were made, it was Prometheus who made the very last creature of all. He took soil, added water, and mixed it into mud, and out of that he molded First Man.

"I'll make him just like us gods—two legs, two arms, and upright—not crawling on all fours. All the other beasts spend their days looking at the ground, but Man will look at the stars!"

When he had finished, Prometheus was very proud of what he had made. But when it came to giving Man a gift, there was nothing left to give!

"Give him a tail," said Epimetheus. But all the tails had gone. "Give him a trunk," Epimetheus suggested. But the elephant already had that. "Give him fur," said Epimetheus, but all the fur had been used up.
Suddenly Prometheus exclaimed, "I know what to give him!" He climbed up to heaven—up as high as the fiery chariot of the sun. And from the rim of its bright wheel he stole one tiny sliver of fire. It was such a very small flame that he was able to hide it inside a stalk of grass and hurry back to the earth without any of the gods seeing what he was up to.

But the secret could not be kept for long. Next time Zeus looked down from Mount Olympus, he saw something glimmering red and yellow under a column of gray smoke.

"Prometheus, what have you done? You've given the secret of fire to those ... those ... mud-men! Bad enough that you make them look like gods, now you go sharing our belongings with them! So! You put your little mud-people before us, do you? I'll make you sorry you ever made them! I'll make you sorry you were ever made yourself!"

And he tied Prometheus to a cliff and sent eagles to peck at him all day long. You or I would have died. But the gods can never die. Prometheus knew that the pain would never end, that the eagles would never stop, and that his chains would never break. A terrible hopelessness tore at his heart and hurt him more than the eagles could ever do.

Zeus was just as angry with Man for accepting the gift of fire, but you would never have thought so. He was busy making him another wonderful present.

With the help of the other gods, he shaped First Woman. Venus gave her beauty, Mercury gave her a clever tongue, Apollo taught her how to play sweet music. Finally Zeus draped a veil over her lovely head and named her Pandora.

Then, with a grin on his face, he sent for Epimetheus (who was not quite clever enough to suspect a trick).

"Here's a bride for you, Epimetheus—a reward for all your hard work making the animals. And here's a wedding present for you both. But whatever you do, don't open it."

The wedding present was a wooden chest, bolted and padlocked and
bound with bands of iron. When he reached his home at the foot of Mount Olympus, Epimetheus set the chest down in a dark corner, covered it with a blanket, and put it out of his mind. After all, with Pandora for a bride, what more could he possibly want?

In those days the world was a wonderful place to live. No one was sad. Nobody ever grew old or ill. And Epimetheus married Pandora; she came to live in his house, and everything she wanted he gave her.

But sometimes, when she caught sight of the chest, Pandora would say, “What a strange wedding present. Why can’t we open it?”

“Never mind why. Remember, you must never touch it,” Epimetheus would reply sharply. “Not touch at all. Do you hear?”

“Of course I won’t touch it. It’s only an old chest. What do I want with an old chest? . . . What do you think is inside?”

“Never mind what’s inside. Put it out of your mind.”

And Pandora did try. She really did. But one day, when Epimetheus was out, she just could not forget about the chest and somehow she found herself standing right beside it.

“No!” she told herself. “I expect it’s full of cloth—or dishes—or papers.
Something dull.” She bustled about the house. She tried to read. Then . . .

“Let us out!”
“Who said that?”
“Do let us out, Pandora!”

Pandora looked out of the window. But in her heart of hearts she knew that the voice was coming from the chest. She pulled back the blanket with finger and thumb. The voice was louder now: “Please, please do let us out, Pandora!”

“I can’t. I mustn’t,” She crouched down beside the chest.

“Oh, but you have to. We want you to. We need you to, Pandora!”

“But I promised!” Her fingers stroked the latch.

“It’s easy. The key’s in the lock,” said the little voice—a purring little voice.

It was. A big golden key.

“No. No, I mustn’t,” she told herself.

“But you do want to, Pandora. And why shouldn’t you? It was your wedding present too, wasn’t it? . . . Oh, all right, don’t let us out. Just peep inside. What harm can that do?”

Pandora’s heart beat faster.

Click. The key turned.

Clack. Clack. The latches were unlatched.

BANG!

The lid flew back and Pandora was knocked over by an icy wind full of grit. It filled the room with howling. It tore the curtains and stained them brown. And after the wind came slimy things, growling snarling things, claws and snouts, revolting things too nasty to look at, all slithering out of the chest.
IN THE BEGINNING

“I’m Disease,” said one.
“I’m Cruelty,” said another.
“I’m Pain, and she’s Old Age.”
“I’m Disappointment and he’s Hate.”
“I’m Jealousy and that one there is War.”
“AND I AM DEATH!” said the smallest purring voice.

The creatures leaped and scuttled and oozed out through the windows, and at once all the flowers shriveled, and the fruit on the trees grew moldy. The sky itself turned a filthy yellow, and the sound of crying filled the town.

Mustering all her strength, Pandora slammed down the lid of the chest. But there was one creature left inside.

“No, no, Pandora! If you shut me inside, that will be your worst mistake of all! Let me go!”

“Oh no! You don’t fool me twice,” sobbed Pandora.

“But I am Hope!” whispered the little voice faintly. “Without me the world won’t be able to bear all the unhappiness you have turned loose!”

So Pandora lifted the lid, and a white flicker, small as a butterfly, flitted out and was blown this way and that by the howling winds. And as it fluttered through the open window, a watery sun came out and shone on the wilted garden.
Chained to his cliff, Prometheus could do nothing to help the little mud-people he had made. Though he writhed and strained, there was no breaking free. All around him he could hear the sound of crying. Now that the snarling creatures had been let loose, there would be no more easy days or peaceful nights for men and women! They would be unkind, afraid, greedy, unhappy. And one day they must all die and go to live as ghosts in the cold dark Underworld. The thought of it almost broke Prometheus's heart.

Then, out of the corner of his eye, he glimpsed a little white flicker of light and felt something, small as a butterfly, touch his bare breast. Hope came to rest over his heart.

He felt a sudden strength, a sort of courage. He was sure that his life was not over. No matter how bad things are today, tomorrow may be better, he thought. One day someone may come this way—take pity on me—break these chains and set me free. One day!

The eagles pecked at the fluttering shred of light but were too slow to catch it in their beaks. Hope fluttered on its way, blowing around the world like a single tiny tongue of flame.
In the beginning of the world, the gods of Olympus created men and animals. They set the Titan brothers Prometheus and Epimetheus the task of giving to each of the new creatures of the world its own special qualities.

First of all, Epimetheus made the choices for the birds and animals. Some he made strong but not swift, others fleet of foot but timid. Some were given cunning, some armor, others winged flight or the means to make burrows in the earth. Some creatures he made large for their own safety, others tiny so that they could hide. He gave them also protection from sun, rain, and wind: thick fur or dense feathers or leathery skin or hooves to protect their feet. He made them all in such a way that every creature had the means to defend itself and no race of creatures could entirely destroy another.

Epimetheus was generous, but he did not think ahead. When he had distributed gifts to all the birds and animals of the earth, he found that there were none left for Prometheus to give to men. Men were naked, without hairy covering, without shoes, and with no means of defending themselves.
When Prometheus saw what had happened he went up to heaven and stole from the Olympians the art of making fire. This gift gave men the means to live and also mastery over all the animals. But the gods were angry with Prometheus. They planned to punish him with a gift which was also a snare.

Until that time men had lived without women. Now Zeus asked Hephaistus, the smith god, to create the first woman. Hephaistus mixed clay and water and breathed life into the form of Pandora, whose name means "all gifts". Each god gave her gifts. Aphrodite gave her grace and beauty; Athena taught her the arts of needlework and weaving, and clothed her in a wondrous embroidered veil. The Kharites decked her with golden necklaces, and the Horai crowned her with flowers. Hermes gave her the gift of speech and with it the power to lie and deceive.

The gods sent Pandora to earth as a gift to the two Titans, but Prometheus would not accept the gift, and he warned Epimetheus against Pandora.

"Be wary of any gifts the gods send," he said. "They may bring trouble."

But when Epimetheus saw the lovely Pandora he could not resist her, or believe that one so beautiful could be a danger to mankind. He took her as his wife and she made his home sweet with her womanly arts.

But Hermes had given Pandora a restless, inquisitive mind. In the
storeroom of Epimetheus' house was a great stone jar set into the floor. It was quite plain, with no markings on it, and was closed tightly with a stone stopper.

"What is in the jar?" Pandora asked her husband.

Epimetheus did not know. "The gods gave it to me for safekeeping at the beginning of the world. They warned me not to open it."

Pandora stared at the closed jar. "But don't you want to see inside?"

"No doubt it contains some gifts or powers that were never required," said Epimetheus. He had no curiosity. The world, it seemed to him, was a good place, and whatever was in the jar, he had no need of it.

But Pandora could not leave the jar alone. She came back to it day after day and puzzled over what it might contain. She listened at the jar; she sniffed it; she knocked with her knuckles on the side. She would have shaken it, except that it was too big and was wedged firmly in the earth floor.

Gradually all her attention became centered on the lid. This was a heavy stone stopper that had been dropped in place to fit closely into the neck of the jar. It was neither sealed nor locked. All she had to do to see inside was to lift it.

At first she pestered her husband. "Just a quick peek!" she begged. "The gods won't know." But when she realized that he would not agree to open it, she became secretive. She would get up in the dead of night and light a lamp and go and look at the jar and wonder, and sometimes
close her hand around the knob on the lid to feel its weight and almost, almost, begin to lift it.

One night the temptation became too much for her. She put her hand on the lid, thinking, *I'll raise it a little, just enough to peek, and then quickly put it back.* And slowly, with a scrape of stone on stone, she lifted the stopper up until it cleared the rim of the jar. She was about to peer in when out of the darkness inside came a rush of wings, a shrill shrieking, a beating and buffeting and howling. Pandora dropped the lid and screamed in terror as the lamp was blown out and the dark room filled with noise and movement. Unseen things brushed past her, things that stung and scratched and tore at her hair and howled to be let out.

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Epimetheus came running, woken by her scream, and the lamp in his hand lit up the whirling creatures: winged spirits with cruel faces and sharp claws. He tried, with Pandora, to gather and sweep them back into the jar, but the task was impossible. The spirits flew out of the open door into all the rooms of the house and out through the windows into the world outside. As the sun came up, Epimetheus and Pandora saw the creatures she had released winging their way across the world.

Until then people had lived like the gods, free of pain, old age, and death. The spirits that Pandora had set free were all the ills that have since plagued humankind: sickness, suffering, poverty, strife, discord, envy, war, and despair.

Now Epimetheus understood how foolish he had been in accepting a gift from the gods. Pandora had brought harm to humankind. But when the two of them returned to look at the jar, they found it was not empty after all. One spirit remained—a gentle, sweet-faced one. This was Hope.

Hope stayed in the world of men, bringing comfort to people when the troubles of their lives became too hard to bear—and she remains in our world to this day.