

Pandora's Box

When the world was first created, people were content with no troubles or concerns. It was **idyllic**. The people of Earth had been moulded out of clay by the giant Prometheus and the King of the Gods, Zeus, breathed life into them. Prometheus was the teacher of mankind and the most important lesson he imparted was that man must always respect the gods.

The Earth was **harmonious** until one day when Prometheus tricked Zeus. Zeus was so enraged at being duped that in revenge he **extinguished** every heat source on Earth leaving mankind both cold and hungry. With no fire, Zeus' special gift, humans truly suffered, shivering in the dark and eating raw meat.

Prometheus was deeply troubled and upset by the way his creation struggled every day and so, **furtively**, crept up to Mount Olympus and broke off a blazing beam of the sun for his people. This would allow man to cook again, keep warm and make metal tools to **cultivate** the land.

To Zeus, this was the final straw and, enraged, he shackled Prometheus to a rock with unbreakable chains and ordered a vulture to claw and rip at his liver. Because the giant was immortal, Prometheus' liver regrew every night and he endured continual pain with the vulture returning at the crack of dawn every day.

But Zeus had not finished there. He punished mankind too for accepting the Gift of Fire from Prometheus. He asked the God Hephaestus, the blacksmith, to **forge** a beautiful woman into which the King of the Gods breathed life. Her name was Pandora - the most **inquisitive** woman ever.

"What's this? Why's that? Who's this? How do you?" On and on and on she went - her curiosity knew no bounds.

She was sent to Earth and to Prometheus' brother, Epimetheus. With Pandora, Zeus gave her a beautiful locked pithos, a jar, which she was expressly asked not to open.

"Take this box and keep it safe. Be warned, you must NEVER open it otherwise **grievous** things will occur."

Pandora's eyes twinkled and her fingers twitched.

Prometheus had forewarned his brother never to accept anything from Zeus. However, the day when Pandora knocked on Epimetheus' door and he opened it, his brother's words floated from his mind. Captivated by her beauty, he asked her name.

"My name is Pandora," she replied. "The God Zeus has sent me here to look after you. I bring a beautiful box too."

Fearful of Zeus and **allured** by her ways, Epimetheus married Pandora. This he would deeply regret as her outer beauty did not replicate within her. He soon learnt that his wife was vain and self-centred. She would constantly **berate**, annoy and tease her husband. She was demanding, bossy and so, so curious. And every day she would **pester** her husband to open the locked jar.

"No Pandora! It is forbidden."

"What's the point in having a beautiful jar full of wonderful things if you can't **appreciate** what's inside?" Pandora sulked.

Epimetheus went as white as a sheet.

Her husband's stubbornness made Pandora even more determined, so convinced was she that the jar contained a **bountiful** treasure of jewels.

Every day, she would gently stroke the jar and play around with the lock. She was convinced she could hear little voices inside calling, "Set us free! Set us free!"

One day, as Epimetheus slept, curiosity finally got the better of Pandora.

She would open it.

"Just one little peek won't harm anybody," she convinced herself.

Hardly able to breathe, heart beating with excitement, Pandora broke the lock and slowly lifted the lid. Before she could peek inside, there was a terrible wailing noise from within. Jumping back in terror, Pandora watched with horror as, out of the box streamed all sorts of horrendous creatures which buzzed and hissed and moaned.

Hate, greed, envy, anger, jealousy, cruelty, hunger, poverty, pain, sickness.

Pandora desperately tried to slam the lid down but to no avail. The creatures spread and flew everywhere, stinging and pricking humankind forever more.

But as the last destructive creature left the box, a dismayed Pandora noticed a tiny flicker of light from within which fluttered and flew upwards and away.

HOPE.

By Jenny Turner