

Pandora's Box



The house was empty. Lonely. Echoes bounced along the endless corridors and disappointment lingered in the air like a choking fog. However, Pandora – embarrassed and afraid – locked herself inside because life beyond those walls was unbearable. Once untroubled and peaceful, Earth was now battling a swarm of problems... problems for which she was entirely responsible.

As Pandora wandered the corridors of her mind, she frequently returned to the same thought. Her terrible mistake hung over her like a bleak shadow that she couldn't outrun, ignore or escape. Laughter was a distant memory; even the weakest smile refused to dance upon her lips. Staring blankly into the mirror, she didn't recognise the wretched figure gazing back. Where was the girl with shiny chestnut-brown hair and sparkling eyes? Who was this pale, downcast woman? Pandora was drowning in her own misery.

With her head hung low, the miserable woman drifted into the library, where the fateful box still sat. She despised the innocent-looking carved chest, but she would never discard it. The box symbolised the pain she had unleashed on the world, so she kept it as a reminder of her reckless error. Too late, Pandora had learned that curiosity can have devastating consequences. Once again, the memory of that disastrous day whirled around her like a blizzard.

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"Epimetheus, you've been lost and alone since I chained your brother to the rock," stated Zeus matter-of-factly. "Understand that he deserved the punishment... He gave humankind fire, which they don't deserve!" he continued, his voice rumbling with anger as he recalled how Prometheus had disobeyed him.

Epimetheus nodded respectfully.

Softening his tone, the deity pushed forward a beautiful girl, who captivated Epimetheus immediately. "Allow me to introduce the lovely Pandora," Zeus announced.

Ignoring his head – for Prometheus had warned him to be suspicious of Zeus and any gifts he might offer – Epimetheus foolishly listened to his pounding heart. Pandora was a magnet. Powerless to resist the force of her twinkling spirit, he accepted her as his bride and they married the very same day.

As they settled into their new home amongst Earth's mortals and animals, Zeus's messenger delivered a wedding gift: a box. Attached to it, there was a note which bizarrely said, 'Do not open'. This instruction proved easy for Epimetheus as he was obedient and uninquisitive. But for his wife – who was curious to the core – it was extremely exciting... tormenting... frustrating.



Pandora fluttered around the gift like a moth to a flame. “How fascinating! What do you suppose is inside?” she pondered, turning the box this way and that. “Perhaps it’s jewellery... or a food of the gods... Yes! It’s definitely ambrosia made from...”

“Now, it doesn’t matter, my dear,” Epimetheus interrupted. “We must do as we’re told... We’ll find out what’s inside when Zeus is good and ready... Until then...” He gently removed the key from Pandora’s protective grip and secured it around his neck, keeping it away from temptation.

Pandora was deaf to Epimetheus’s words; they evaporated before they reached her ears. “What harm could it do to take a tiny peek?” Pandora teased playfully, desperate for her husband to change his mind... surrender the key. “To be honest, I consider it our right to know what we’re protecting!” she huffed at his back as he left the room shaking his head.

That night, after nimbly slipping the key off its chain, Pandora crept to the box. Holding her breath in eager anticipation, she inserted the key... listened to the lock click... raised the lid.

Blinding her, the world’s evils swarmed out like angry wasps from a nest: disease, violence, greed, hate and misery. They were all free to run riot. What had she done?

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Pandora remembered the lid slamming beneath her trembling hands and was jolted back to the present. Tears of hopelessness tumbled down her cheeks, blurring her vision. Her foolishness cut deep into her soul. Her only comfort was that she’d managed to stop one flicker from escaping. Little did she know that the flicker could save humanity... It was the flicker of hope: Elpis.

