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Greek Mythology #9: PANDORA by Joy Journeyay

During what is known as the Golden Age, humans were an all-male society, respecting the gods, working *hard and living off the abundant fruits of the land*. The Golden Age comes to a close when Prometheus steals fire from the gods on Olympus and shares it with mankind.

When mankind received fire, Zeus was very angry, punishing Prometheus and commanding Hephaestus to make a woman. Pandora was the first mortal woman created by the gods.

Zeus wanted her to be a “beautiful evil” whose descendants would torment men throughout time. She was built of clay and the four winds breathed life into her. All the goddesses of Olympus adorned her and each god gave her special gifts. Athena taught her needlework and weaving. Aphrodite gave her grace and the longing and care that wearies the soul. Hermes gave her a shameful mind and deceitful nature, plus the power of crafty words and lies. Athena clothed her.

Zeus had two urns in his palace, one with evil gifts and one filled with good gifts. He gave Pandora an urn filled with gifts, and sent her as a gift to mankind, specifically to Epimetheus, Prometheus’ brother. In popular tales, the urn has become Pandora’s “box.”

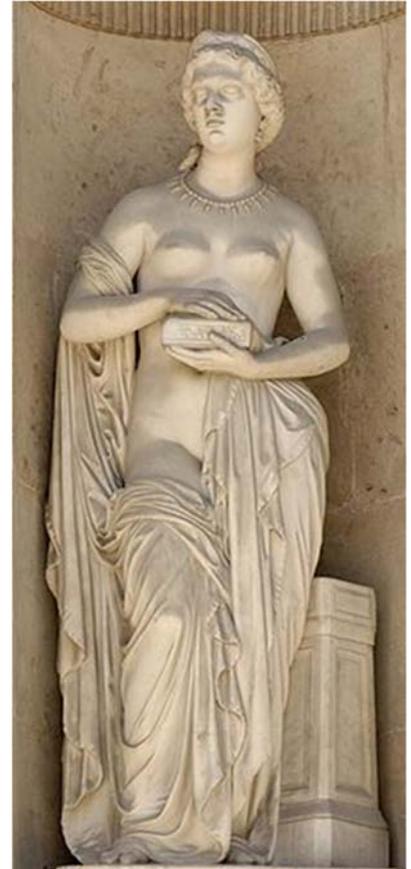
Prometheus had warned his brother to accept no gifts from Zeus, but to no avail. Pandora could not leave the urn alone, but opens it, losing all the items within. Only Hope stayed in the urn.

The introduction of Pandora, and womankind, is the start of the Silver Age. Humans were now subject to the cycle of birth and death.

From Homer’s Iliad:

Only Hope was left within her unbreakable house, she remained under the lip of the jar, and did not fly away. Before [she could], Pandora replaced the lid of the jar. This was the will of aegis-bearing Zeus the Cloudgatherer. Hesiod (96–9)

**Pandora contemplating the fateful urn.
Basalt (charcoal jasperware). Large.
Collection of Joy Journeyay.**



**Pandora, 1861.
Pierre Loison**

