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GREEK
MYTHOLOGY
Edith Hamilton

These two stories of the creation, - the story of the five ages, and the story of Prometheus and Epimetheus - different as they are, agree in one point. For a long time, certainly throughout the happy Golden Age, only men were upon the earth; there were no women. Zeus created these later, in his anger at Prometheus for caring so much for men. Prometheus had not only stolen fire for men; he had also arranged that they should get the best part of any animal sacrificed and the gods the worst. He cut up a great ox and wrapped the good eatable parts in the hide, disguising them further by piling entrails on top. Beside this heap he put another of all the bones, dressed up with cunning and covered with shining fat, and bade Zeus choose between them. Zeus took up the white fat and was angry when he saw the bones craftily tricked out. But he had made his choice and he had to abide by it. Thereafter only fat and bones were burned to the gods upon their altars. Men kept the good meat for themselves.

But the Father of Men and the gods was not one to put up with this sort of treatment. He swore to be revenged, on mankind first and then on mankind's friend. He made a great evil for men, a sweet and lovely thing to look upon, in the likeness of a shy maiden, and all the gods gave her gifts, silvery raiment and a brodered veil, a wonder to behold, and bright garlands of blooming flowers and a crown of gold - great beauty shone out from it. Because of what they gave her they called her *Pandora*, which means "the gift of all." When this beautiful disaster had been made, Zeus brought her out and wonder took hold of gods and men when they beheld her. For her, the first woman, comes the race of women, who are an evil to men, with a nature to do evil.

Another story about Pandora is that the source of all misfortune was not her wicked nature, but only her curiosity. The gods presented her with a box into which each had put something harmful, and forbade her ever to open it. Then they sent her to Epimetheus, who took her gladly although Prometheus had warned him never to accept anything from Zeus. He took her, and afterward when that dangerous thing, a woman, was his, he understood how good his brother's advice had been. For Pandora, like all women, was possessed of a lively curiosity. She *had* to know what was in the box. One day she lifted the lid - and out flew plagues innumerable, sorrow and mischief for mankind. In terror Pandora clapped the lid down, but too late. One good thing, however, was there - Hope. It was the only good the casket had held among the many evils, and it remains to this day mankind's sole comfort in misfortune. So mortals learned that it is not possible to get the better of Zeus or ever deceive him. The wise and compassionate Prometheus, too, found that out.

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Pandora lifted the lid and out flew plagues
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