Name _____ Date _____

Pandora's Box

Myth or legend · 3rd–5th grade

In the earliest days of the world, the ancient Greeks said, people lived without sickness, worry or hard work. Then the god Zeus created a woman named Pandora and sent her to Earth with a gift: a beautiful box, carved with flowers and closed with a golden latch.

"This box is yours to keep," said Zeus. "But you must never, ever open it." Pandora promised. She lived happily with her husband, Epimetheus, and for a while she hardly thought about the box.

But the box sat in the corner of their home, and every day it seemed to call to her. Sometimes she thought she heard tiny voices inside, whispering, "Let us out, Pandora. Just one peek." She walked past it, then stopped and stared at it, then touched the golden latch with one finger.

One afternoon, when she was alone, Pandora could not stand it any longer. "One little look can't hurt," she said. She lifted the lid just a crack.

Out rushed a dark, buzzing cloud, like a swarm of angry insects. Out flew sickness, sadness, jealousy and greed, anger, worry and every kind of trouble. They stung Pandora's hands, then zoomed out the window and spread across the whole world.

Pandora slammed the lid shut and sank to the floor, crying. Then she heard a soft voice from inside the box. "Please let me out too. I can help." Pandora was afraid, but the voice was so gentle that she opened the lid once more.

Out fluttered a small, shining creature with wings like a butterfly. Its name was Hope. It touched Pandora's stings, and the pain faded. Then it flew out into the world after the troubles. Ever since, the Greeks said, people have had troubles, but they have also always had hope.

Questions

1. What did Zeus tell Pandora about the box?

2. Why did Pandora open the box?

3. What came out of the box last?

4. What does this myth try to explain?

5. What is the theme?

6. Is curiosity a good thing or a bad thing? Can it be both?

7. Why do you think hope was the last thing in the box?

The lesson in my own words

Answer Key

1. She must never open it.
2. She was too curious to resist.
3. Hope.
4. Why there are troubles in the world, and why people still have hope.
5. Even when troubles come, hope remains.
6. Answers will vary.
7. Answers will vary.

Lesson: Even when troubles come, hope remains.