

In the Beginning and Pandora's Box (Extract from G McCaughrean)

At the beginning of the world, the gods ruled over an empty world. There were no animals, birds, nor people. Because of this Zeus asked Prometheus and Epimetheus to make living creatures. Epimetheus made animals, birds, insects and fish. He made horses and gave them tails and manes. He made anteaters and gave them long noses and longer tongues.

When all the animals were made, Prometheus took soil and made it into mud, and out of that he made Man! "I'll make him just like us gods — two legs, two arms and upright — not crawling on all fours. Prometheus was very proud of Man and gave him the gift of fire. Zeus was cross that Man had been given fire. Zeus thought that fire should be reserved for the gods alone.



Zeus tied Prometheus to a cliff for ever more. Zeus was angry with Man for accepting the gift of fire BUT decided to give Man a present! He gave Man Pandora, a woman. Venus gave her beauty and Mercury gave her a clever tongue. Zeus gave them a box as a wedding present but said "whatever you do, don't open it. In those days the world was a wonderful place to live. No one was sad. Nobody ever grew old or ill.

Pandora was too curious. She wondered what was in the box. She tried very hard to put it out of her mind. One day she heard voices coming from the box. The voices got louder and begged her to open the box. She unlocked the box. The lid flew back. A wind carrying nasty things knocked Pandora over and howled around the room. The nasty things were Disease, Cruelty, Pain, Old Age,



Disappointment, Hate, Jealousy, War and Death. Pandora shut the box shut, but very reluctantly opened it again when Hope cried out to be let out. A white flicker, small as a butterfly, flitted out and was blown this way and that by the howling winds. As it fluttered through the open window a watery sun came out and shone on the wilted garden.

So that's why today flowers shrivel, fruit on the trees grow mouldy, the sky turns yellow, and the wind howls, and that's how the story ends!