

## THE STORY OF PROMETHEUS

Prometheus was a Titan. He was one of the race of giants who ruled the world before the birth of Zeus and the other gods and goddesses.

Prometheus was very wise. In fact, he was much wiser than his scatter-brained brother, Epimetheus. Epimetheus had been given the task of creating human beings. But he really blundered in doing this. Before starting to work on humans, he gave the best qualities, such as swiftness and strength, to the animals.

Prometheus loved humans and took pity on them. Risking severe punishment, he stole sacred fire from Zeus and brought it down from Mount Olympus to earth. Fire was supposed to belong to the gods alone, but Prometheus could not bear to see humans suffer.

When Zeus found out what Prometheus had done, he was furious! He ordered Prometheus to be nailed to a rock on faraway Mount Caucasus. Zeus then sent an eagle to gnaw on Prometheus' liver each day. To prolong the agony, whatever portion the eagle had eaten during the day grew back that night.

In this way, kind Prometheus suffered greatly for his generous gift to humans.



### *Discussion Questions*

The name Prometheus has come to describe any great rebel against injustice and misuse of power. What traits do you think help make Prometheus such a respected figure?

What famous person whom you know about might be described as a Prometheus? Why?

### *Writing Assignment*

Write about a time when you or someone you know risked punishment or suffering to do something right. Share your writing with the class.

## THE STORY OF PANDORA

Prometheus had warned his foolish brother, Epimetheus, never to accept a gift from Zeus. But Epimetheus forgot all about the advice when Zeus sent Pandora down from heaven to be his wife. She was the most beautiful creature he had ever seen.

Her name, *Pan-dora*, means "all gifts" because each of the gods on Mount Olympus had contributed to her beauty. But Zeus also put into Pandora's mind the irresistible trait of curiosity. When he gave her a sealed container with the warning "Never open this," he knew she would not be able to keep her promise.

One fateful day Pandora decided just to peek inside the container that Zeus had given her. When she opened the lid, out flew a storm of buzzing insects. They introduced into the world evils that had never existed before: greed, hate, envy, sorrow, sickness, and many others.

Luckily Pandora managed to put the lid back on just before the only helpful element flew away: hope. Hope remained to help humans, who now had to cope with all the evils resulting from Pandora's insatiable curiosity.



### ***Discussion Questions***

Myths have often been used to explain the origin of evil, pain, and suffering in the world. What do you think the world was like before "Pandora's box" was opened? How was it different from today's world?

### ***Writing Assignment***

Has your curiosity ever gotten you in trouble? Turn your experience into a short story with you as the central character. Share your finished story with the class.