

Pandora's Box

Greek Myth Retold by Louis Untermeyer

Loo-Wit, the Fire-Keeper

Native American Myth Retold by Joseph Bruchac

VIDEO TRAILER



KEYWORD: HML8-474

Why do we **WANT** what we don't have?

COMMON CORE

RL 1 Cite the textual evidence that most supports inferences drawn from the text. **RL 2** Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development. **RL 9** Analyze themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths.

She's in the school chorus, but she wishes she could be in the band. He has plenty of shoes, but he still wants a pair like his friend has. Why does it seem like we always want what we don't have? In the myths you're about to read, people who aren't satisfied with what they've got make trouble for everyone.

DISCUSS When you want what you don't have, what problems might that cause? What, if any, benefits might result? Discuss these questions with your group. Try to come up with at least one positive and one negative effect of desiring things that are out of reach.



Meet the Authors

● TEXT ANALYSIS: THEME

Writers often share with their readers messages about life or human nature—for example, love may come when you least expect it. This type of message is called a **theme**. Writers can either state a theme directly or allow readers to figure it out on their own. To infer the theme of the myths you're about to read, look at important details or symbols.

● READING STRATEGY: READING A MYTH

Thousands of years ago, before anyone had microscopes or even books, people explained the world through stories called **myths**. Most myths

- were passed along through word of mouth
- feature gods or other supernatural beings who often show such human characteristics as anger and love
- reveal the consequences of human errors
- explain how something came to be

Although myths from various cultures share these basic features, they often differ in detail, style, or purpose. As you read, use a chart like the one shown to compare and contrast the ancient Greek myth “Pandora’s Box” with the Native American myth “Loo-Wit, the Fire Keeper.”

	<i>Pandora's Box</i>	<i>Loo-Wit, the Fire-Keeper</i>
<i>What qualities does the supreme god have? What role does he play?</i>		
<i>What does the myth explain?</i>		

▲ VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The boldfaced words help tell the story of Pandora. Using context clues, try to figure out what each word means.

1. The gods **adorn** her with special gifts.
2. She could no longer **restrain** her curiosity.
3. Zeus' **subtle** punishment was not immediately obvious.
4. Her beauty and charm helped **ensnare** his attention.

Louis Untermeyer

1885–1977

Jeweler and Writer

For years Louis Untermeyer worked in his family's jewelry business, only turning to writing, lecturing, and teaching in his late 30s. Untermeyer edited many poetry anthologies that became popular textbooks in schools. He also became a respected translator, adapting myths and stories for the contemporary American audience.

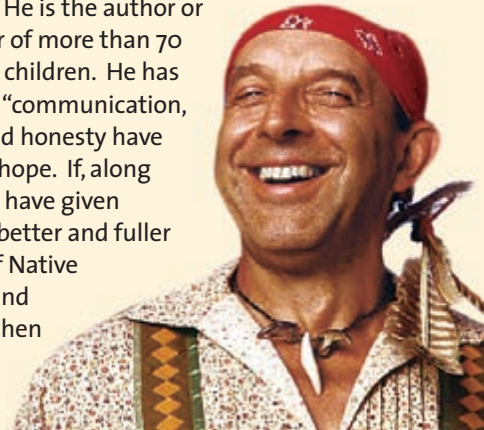


Joseph Bruchac

born 1942

Native American Storyteller

Joseph Bruchac is a poet, writer, storyteller, and musician whose works reflect his Native American ancestry. He is the author or co-author of more than 70 books for children. He has said that, “communication, clarity, and honesty have been my hope. If, along the way, I have given people a better and fuller picture of Native peoples and cultures then I am very pleased.”



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.


Authors Online



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Pandora's BOX

Retold by Louis Untermeyer

 Prometheus had thought about mankind with such sympathy that he had dared to steal the needed fire from Olympus,¹ and for this he was grievously punished by Zeus.² But the lord of Olympus did not think this cruelty was enough. Prometheus had a brother, Epimetheus, and though he was harmless and slow-witted, Zeus extended his displeasure to him. He did not punish Epimetheus as brutally as he had done his brother; he had a more **subtle** plan. It was a scheme which would not only affect Epimetheus but also the whole race of human beings whom Prometheus had dared to help and who were living happily and untroubled. **A**

10 Zeus ordered Hephaestus, the smith and artisan of the gods, to make a woman out of the materials of earth. Hephaestus took some river clay that had flakes of gold in it and began to make a lovely girl. In with the clay he mixed the fragrance of a river rose, the sweetness of Hymettus³ honey, the smoothness of a silver dolphin, the voices of larks and lake-water, the color of sunrise on snow, the warmth of a sunny morning in May. Then he summoned

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1. **Olympus** (ə-lym'pəs): home of the mythical Greek gods.
 2. **Zeus** (zōōs): father of the Greek gods; ruler of the heavens. **Prometheus**, a lesser god, gave humans fire against Zeus's will. Furious, Zeus condemned Prometheus to be chained to a rock for eternity.
 3. **Hymettus** (hī-mēt'əs): a mountain ridge near Athens, Greece.

Analyze Visuals ▶

Based on the woman's expression and body language, what can you **infer** about her attitude toward the box?

subtle (sūt'l) *adj.* slight; difficult to detect

A READING A MYTH

What human characteristics does Zeus have? Add this information to your chart.

Pandora, Helen Stratton. From *A Book of Myths*
by Jean Lang. © Edwin Wallace/Mary Evans
Picture Library.



the Four Winds to breathe life into the new creation. Finally he called upon the goddesses to complete the work and grant the glowing figure a touch of their own powers.

“Hephaestus has given her beauty,” said Aphrodite,⁴ “but I shall make her more beautiful by adding the spark of love. It will shine in her eyes, and everyone that looks on her will be enchanted.”

“I shall make her wise,” said Athene.⁵ “She shall be able to choose between false and true, between what men value and what she must know is worthless.”

“I shall make her a woman, a puzzle to every man,” said Hera, the wife of Zeus. “I shall make her a real woman, for I shall give her the gift of curiosity.” **B**

Smiling, the goddesses **adorned** her, and when Zeus beheld her grace, her garland of gold, and the glory of her endowments, he was as charmed as though he had been a mortal. “We will call her Pandora,” he said, “Pandora, the All-Gifted. She shall become the bride of Epimetheus. But she shall not go empty-handed. She shall bring with her a casket, a box of magic as her dowry.⁶ And Hermes, my messenger, shall conduct her to earth.”

Epimetheus could not understand why the gods had become concerned about him. He was dazzled by Hermes, and it was some time before he could believe that the exquisite creature brought by the messenger god was meant for him. Even after Hermes departed in a flashing cloud and Pandora stood blushing beside him, he was perturbed. He remembered how often his brother Prometheus had warned him, “Do not trust the gods. And beware especially of Zeus and anything he may send you.” However, when Pandora looked in his eyes and smiled, he was, as Aphrodite had predicted, enchanted and **ensnared**. Yet, even as he took her in his arms, he cautioned her.

“We have reason to fear the gods,” said Epimetheus, “and also their gifts,” he added, pointing to the casket.

“But this is my dowry,” murmured Pandora. “Zeus himself filled it with magic as a present for us. See how beautifully it is carved and painted. Look at the silver hinges and the great gold clasp that fastens it.” **C**

“Keep it well fastened,” said Epimetheus, “otherwise I shall never rest easy. I do not know what the casket may contain, and I do not want to know. Promise me one thing. Never open the box. It is, I grant, a beautiful thing, too beautiful to destroy, and we will keep it. But hide it. Put it not only out of your sight but out of your mind. Then we shall both be content.”

Happy that she could keep her dowry, Pandora put it under the bed and turned to her husband with love. And so for a long time nothing disturbed their married life and their continual joy in each other.

But, though Pandora benefited from the goddesses’ gifts of beauty and wisdom, the gift of Hera had not been given in vain. For quite a while,

B READING A MYTH

What supernatural beings were involved in the creation of Pandora?

adorn (ə-dôrn') v. to enhance or decorate

ensnare (ĕn-snâr') v. to take or catch in something

C THEME

What can you infer about the contents of the box based on Zeus’ desire for revenge?

4. **Aphrodite** (ăf'rə-dī'tē): Greek goddess of love and beauty.

5. **Athene** (ə-thĕ'nē): Greek goddess of wisdom; sometimes spelled *Athena*.

6. **dowry** (dou'rē): money or property a bride brings to a marriage.

Pandora **restrained** her curiosity about the wonderful casket. But with the passing of time she could not help wondering what it might contain. After all, it was *her* dowry, and she had a right to see what the greatest of the gods had conferred upon her. Then, ashamed of her weakness, she put the idea from her, and thought only of her delight in her home with Epimetheus.

One day, however, the curiosity, so long stifled, overmastered her. “I shall only lift the lid,” she said to herself, “and snatch a moment’s glimpse of what may be inside. No matter what I see, I won’t touch a thing. Surely there can be no harm in that.” **D**

Anxiously, as though she were being watched, she tiptoed to her room. Gently getting down on her hands and knees, she drew the casket from under the bed. Half fearfully and half eagerly she lifted the lid. It was only a moment and the lid was up only an inch, but in that moment a swarm of horrible things flew out. They were noisome,⁷ abominably colored, and evil-looking, for they were the spirits of all that was evil, sad, and hurtful. They were War and Famine, Crime and Pestilence, Spite and Cruelty, Sickness and Malice, Envy, Woe, Wickedness, and all the other disasters let loose in the world.

Hearing Pandora’s scream, Epimetheus rushed in. But it was too late. He and Pandora were set upon and stung, and the evil spirits flew off to attack the rest of mankind. **E**

“It is all my fault,” cried Pandora. “If I had thought more about your warning and less about my own desires, I could have controlled my curiosity.”

“The fault is mine,” said Epimetheus. “I should have burned the box.” Then he added, for the poison of Malice was already taking effect, “After all, you are what you are—only a woman—and what else could one expect of a woman.”


Disconsolate⁸ that she had brought so harmful a dowry to Epimetheus as well as to all other men and women, Pandora wept. It was hours before she let her husband comfort her. Finally, after she grew quiet, they heard a faint sound inside the box.

“Lift the lid again,” said Epimetheus. “I think you have released the worst. Perhaps something else, something better, is still there.”

He was right. At the bottom of the box was a quivering thing. Its body was small; its wings were frail; but there was a radiance about it. Somehow Pandora knew what it was, and she took it up, touched it carefully, and showed it to Epimetheus. “It is Hope,” she said.

“Do you think it will live?” asked Epimetheus.

“Yes,” answered Pandora. “I am sure it will. Somehow I know that it will outlive War and Sickness and all the other evils. And,” she added, watching the shining thing rise and flutter about the room, “it will never leave us for long. Even if we lose sight of it, it will be there.” **F**

She was no longer downhearted as Hope spread its wings and went out into the world. 

restrain (rĭ-strān') v.
to hold back; to control

D READING A MYTH
What prompts Pandora to look inside the box?

 **COMMON CORE** RL 9

E READING A MYTH
Recall that one purpose of a **myth** is to explain how something came to be. A myth might explain a natural occurrence, such as a tidal wave; a physical landmark, such as a mountain or river; or a part of the human condition, such as falling in love. In your chart, note what this myth explains. In which of the above categories does the explanation fit?

F THEME
How does the winged creature relate to the other things in the box?

7. **noisome** (noi'səm): offensive.

8. **disconsolate** (dĭs-kŏn'sə-lĭt): gloomy.

Loo-Wit, THE Fire-Keeper

Retold by Joseph Bruchac

When the world was young, the Creator gave everyone all that was needed to be happy.

The weather was always pleasant. There was food for everyone and room for all the people. Despite this, though, two brothers began to quarrel over the land. Each wanted to control it. It reached a point where each brother gathered together a group of men to support his claim. Soon it appeared there would be war.

The Creator saw this and was not pleased. He waited until the two brothers were asleep one night and then carried them to a new country. There a beautiful river flowed and tall mountains rose into the clouds. He woke them
10 just as the sun rose and they looked out from the mountaintop to the land below. They saw what a good place it was. It made their hearts good.

“Now,” the Creator said, “this will be your land.” Then he gave each of the brothers a bow and a single arrow. “Shoot your arrow into the air,” the Creator said. “Where your arrow falls will be the land of you and your people, and you shall be a great chief there.” **G**

The brothers did as they were told. The older brother shot his arrow. It arched over the river and landed to the south in the valley of the Willamette River.¹ There is where he and his people went, and they became the Multnomahs.² The younger brother shot his arrow. It flew to the north of the
20 great river. He and his people went there and became the Klickitats.³

Then the Creator made a Great Stone Bridge across the river. “This bridge,” the Creator said, “is a sign of peace. You and your peoples can visit each other by crossing over this bridge. As long as you remain at peace, as long as your hearts are good, this bridge will stand.”

1. **Valley of the Willamette River:** a 30-mile-wide valley in Oregon, home today to a majority of Oregon’s people.
2. **Multnomahs** (mult - no’ mes): Native American group who lived in the area where Portland, Oregon, currently stands.
3. **Klickitats:** Native American group whose ancestral lands were situated north of the Columbia River in Washington.

Analyze Visuals ▶

What do you notice when you **compare** the two people?

COMMON CORE RL.1

G READING A MYTH

You can infer the personalities of mythical gods by looking at what they do, what they say, and what others say about them. What does the Creator’s response to the humans’ quarrels tell you about him? Compare and contrast his attitude toward humans with Zeus’s.

Illustrations by Eili-Kaija Kuusniemi/i2i art.



For many seasons the two peoples remained at peace. They passed freely back and forth across the Great Stone Bridge. One day, though, the people to the north looked south toward the Willamette and said, “Their lands are better than ours.” One day, though, the people to the south looked north toward the Klickitats and said, “Their lands are more beautiful than ours.”
30 Then, once again, the people began to quarrel. **H**

The Creator saw this and was not pleased.

The people were becoming greedy again. Their hearts were becoming bad. The Creator darkened the skies and took fire away. Now the people grew cold. The rains of autumn began and the people suffered greatly.

“Give us back fire,” they begged. “We wish to live again with each other in peace.”

Their prayers reached the Creator’s heart. There was only one place on Earth where fire still remained. An old woman named Loo-Wit had stayed out of the quarreling and was not greedy. It was in her lodge only that fire still burned. So
40 the Creator went to Loo-Wit.

“If you will share your fire with all the people,” the Creator said, “I will give you whatever you wish. Tell me what you want.”

“I want to be young and beautiful,” Loo-Wit said.

“That is the way it will be,” said the Creator. “Now take your fire to the Great Stone Bridge above the river. Let all the people come to you and get fire. You must keep the fire burning there to remind people that their hearts must stay good.” **I**

The next morning, the skies grew clear and the people saw the sun rise for the first time in many days. The sun shone on the Great Stone Bridge and there the people saw a young woman as beautiful as the sunshine itself. Before
50 her, there on the bridge, burned a fire. The people came to the fire and ended their quarrels. Loo-Wit gave each of them fire. Now their homes again became warm and peace was everywhere.

One day, though, the chief of the people to the north came to Loo-Wit’s fire. He saw how beautiful she was and wanted her to be his wife. At the same time, the chief of the people to the south also saw Loo-Wit’s beauty. He, too, wanted to marry her. Loo-Wit could not decide which of the two she liked better. Then the chiefs began to quarrel. Their peoples took up the quarrel and fighting began.

When the Creator saw the fighting he became angry. He broke down the Great Stone Bridge. He took each of the two chiefs and changed
60 them into mountains. The chief of the Klickitat became the mountain we now know as Mount Adams. The chief of the Multnomahs became the mountain we now know as Mount Hood.⁴ Even as mountains, they continued to quarrel, throwing flames and stones at each other. In some places, the stones they threw almost blocked the river between them. That is why the Columbia River⁵ is so narrow in the place called the Dalles today. **J**

H THEME

The Creator says the Great Stone Bridge is a sign of peace. Do the people stay peaceful? Explain why or why not.

I THEME

Do you think the people’s hearts will “stay good”? Explain why or why not.

J READING A MYTH

What does this myth explain? Note the answer in your chart. Tell why this myth might have been told by people who live in the area that is now Oregon and Washington.

4. **Mount Adams:** the second highest mountain in the state of Washington; **Mount Hood:** the highest mountain in Oregon. Both mountains are volcanoes and part of the Cascade Volcanic Arc.

5. **Columbia River:** the largest river in the Pacific Northwest. It forms much of the border between Washington and Oregon.



Loo-Wit was heartbroken over the pain caused by her beauty. She no longer wanted to be a beautiful young woman. She could no longer find peace as a human being. The Creator took pity on her and changed her into a mountain also, the most beautiful of the mountains. She was placed so that she stood
70 between Mount Adams and Mount Hood, and she was allowed to keep the fire within herself which she had once shared on the Great Stone Bridge. Eventually, she became known as Mount St. Helens⁶ and she slept peacefully. **K**

Though she was asleep, Loo-Wit was still aware, the people said. The Creator had placed her between the two quarreling mountains to keep the peace, and it was intended that humans, too, should look at her beauty and remember to keep their hearts good, to share the land and treat it well. If we human beings do not treat the land with respect, the people said, Loo-Wit will wake up and let us know how unhappy she and the Creator have become again. So they said long before the day in the 1980s when Mount St. Helens
80 woke again. ☞

K **READING A MYTH**
According to this myth, how did Mount St. Helens come to be?

6. **Mount St. Helens:** an active volcano in Washington that erupted in 1980, killing 57 people and destroying hundreds of homes, bridges, highways, and railways.

Comprehension

- Recall** In “Pandora’s Box,” why does Zeus punish Epimetheus?
- Represent** Create a drawing that represents what happens when Pandora opens the box.
- Clarify** In “Loo-Wit, the Fire-Keeper,” why is Loo-Wit the only person on Earth whose fire still burns?

Text Analysis

- Interpret a Line** Reread lines 25–26 of “Pandora’s Box.” Why does having curiosity make Pandora “real”?
- Draw Conclusions** According to the myth “Loo-Wit, the Fire-Keeper,” what might have caused Mount St. Helens to erupt in the 1980s?
- Identify Themes** What is the theme of each myth? Write your answer in a chart like the one shown. Then list details or specific quotations that helped you identify each myth’s message about life or human nature.

<i>Theme of “Pandora’s Box”:</i>	<i>Details:</i>
<i>Theme of “Loo-Wit, the Fire-Keeper”:</i>	<i>Details:</i>

- Compare and Contrast Myths** Review the chart you made as you read. Based on the information you collected, identify one or more elements the myths have in common. Explain one or more significant differences between the myths.

Extension and Challenge

- SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION** The phrase “Pandora’s box” is widely used in the English language to describe an action that can have many negative consequences. Research why the atomic bomb developed by the United States has been called a “Pandora’s box,” and explain the connection to the myth. Present your findings to the class.



A mushroom cloud rises into the sky after a 1954 test of a nuclear device.

COMMON CORE

RL 1 Cite the textual evidence that most supports inferences drawn from the text. **RL 2** Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development. **RL 9** Analyze themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths.

Why do we what **WANT** we don’t have?

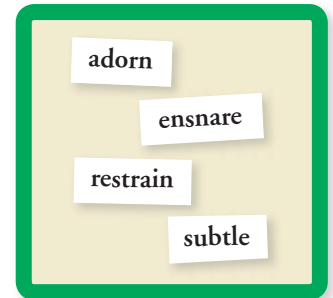
The Creator gave each chief plenty. Why do you think each man wanted what the other had?

Vocabulary in Context

▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Choose the word from the list that makes the most sense in each sentence.

1. Zeus had a ____ plan for Epimetheus.
2. The goddesses wanted to ____ Pandora with gold garlands.
3. Aphrodite predicted that Pandora would ____ Epimetheus.
4. Epimetheus warned Pandora to ____ her interest in the casket.



ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING

- comment
- community
- criteria
- perspective
- technique

In a paragraph, **comment** on whose punishment was more just, Zeus's punishment of Epimetheus and all men and women or the Creator's punishment of the two brothers and their people. Use at least one Academic Vocabulary word in your response.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: USING REFERENCE AIDS

Synonyms are words with similar meanings. For example, a synonym for *restrain* is *stifle*. When you're writing, you can use the following reference aids to help you find a more precise or powerful word to express an idea:

- a **thesaurus**—a book that lists words related to each other in meaning. An electronic thesaurus tool is also found on many word processing programs.

restrain *verb* check, detain, stifle, suppress

- a **dictionary**—a book that lists words in alphabetical order and gives their definitions, syllabifications, pronunciations, and parts of speech. Synonyms are listed after the definition of some words.

re•strain (rĭ-strān') *v.* **-strained, -strain•ing, -strains** to hold back or keep in check; control: *couldn't restrain the tears.* **syn** CHECK, DETAIN, STIFLE, SUPPRESS

PRACTICE Use a reference aid to find a synonym for each word. Note the synonym as well as the reference aid you used to find it. Then use each synonym in a sentence that matches its shade of meaning.

1. frail
2. methodical
3. scheme
4. invigorate

COMMON CORE

L4c-d Consult general reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, thesauruses) to clarify a word's precise meaning; verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase.

Interactive Vocabulary



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KEYWORD: HML8-485