I. HOW FIRE WAS GIVEN TO MEN

In those old, old times, there lived two brothers who were not like other men, nor yet like those Mighty Ones who lived upon the mountain top. They were the sons of one of those Titans who had fought against Jupiter and been sent in chains to the strong prison-house of the Lower World.

The name of the elder of these brothers was Prometheus, or Forethought; for he was always thinking of the future and making things ready for what might happen to-morrow, or next week, or next year, or it may be in a hundred years to come. The younger was called Epimetheus, or Afterthought; for he was always so busy thinking of yesterday, or last year, or a hundred years ago, that he had no care at all for what might come to pass after a while.

For some cause Jupiter had not sent these brothers to prison with the rest of the Titans.

Prometheus did not care to live amid the clouds on the mountain top. He was too busy for that. While the Mighty Folk were spending their time in idleness, drinking nectar and eating ambrosia, he was intent upon plans for making the world wiser and better than it had ever been before.

He went out amongst men to live with them and help them; for his heart was filled with sadness when he found that they were no longer happy as they had been during the golden days when Saturn was king. Ah, how very poor and wretched they were! He found them living in caves and in holes of the earth, shivering with the cold because there was no fire, dying of starvation, hunted by wild beasts and by one another—the most miserable of all living creatures.

“If they only had fire,” said Prometheus to himself, “they could at least warm themselves and cook their food; and after a while they could learn to make tools and build themselves houses. Without fire, they are worse off than the beasts.”

Then he went boldly to Jupiter and begged him to give fire to men, that so they might have a little comfort through the long, dreary months of winter.

“Not a spark will I give,” said Jupiter. “No, indeed! Why, if men had fire they might become strong and wise like ourselves, and after a while they would drive us out of our kingdom. Let them shiver with cold, and let them live like the beasts. It is best for them to be poor and ignorant, that so we Mighty Ones may thrive and be happy.”

Prometheus made no answer; but he had set his heart on helping mankind, and he did not give up. He turned away, and left Jupiter and his mighty company forever.

As he was walking by the shore of the sea he found a reed, or, as some say, a tall stalk of fennel growing; and when he had broken it off he saw that its hollow center was filled with a dry, soft
pith which would burn slowly and keep on fire a long time. He took the long stalk in his hands, and started with it towards the dwelling of the sun in the far east.

“Mankind shall have fire in spite of the tyrant who sits on the mountain top,” he said.

He reached the place of the sun in the early morning just as the glowing, golden orb was rising from the earth and beginning his daily journey through the sky. He touched the end of the long reed to the flames, and the dry pith caught on fire and burned slowly. Then he turned and hastened back to his own land, carrying with him the precious spark hidden in the hollow center of the plant.

He called some of the shivering men from their caves and built a fire for them, and showed them how to warm themselves by it and how to build other fires from the coals. Soon there was a cheerful blaze in every rude home in the land, and men and women gathered round it and were warm and happy, and thankful to Prometheus for the wonderful gift which he had brought to them from the sun.

It was not long until they learned to cook their food and so to eat like men instead of like beasts. They began at once to leave off their wild and savage habits; and instead of lurking in the dark places of the world, they came out into the open air and the bright sunlight, and were glad because life had been given to them.

After that, Prometheus taught them, little by little, a thousand things. He showed them how to build houses of wood and stone, and how to tame sheep and cattle and make them useful, and how to plow and sow and reap, and how to protect themselves from the storms of winter and the beasts of the woods. Then he showed them how to dig in the earth for copper and iron, and how to melt the ore, and how to hammer it into shape and fashion from it the tools and weapons which they needed in peace and war; and when he saw how happy the world was becoming he cried out:

“A new Golden Age shall come, brighter and better by far than the old!”

II. HOW DISEASES AND CARES CAME AMONG MEN

Things might have gone on very happily indeed, and the Golden Age might really have come again, had it not been for Jupiter. But one day, when he chanced to look down upon the earth, he saw the fires burning, and the people living in houses, and the flocks feeding on the hills, and the grain ripening in the fields, and this made him very angry.

“Who has done all this?” he asked.

And some one answered, “Prometheus!”

“What! That young Titan!” he cried. “Well, I will punish him in a way that will make him wish I had shut him up in the prison-house with his kinsfolk. But as for those puny men, let them keep their fire. I will make them ten times more miserable than they were before they had it.”

Of course it would be easy enough to deal with Prometheus at any time, and so Jupiter was in no great haste about it. He made up his mind to distress mankind first; and he thought of a plan for doing it in a very strange, roundabout way.

In the first place, he ordered his blacksmith Vulcan, whose forge was in the crater of a burning mountain, to take a lump of clay which he gave him, and mold it into the form of a woman. Vulcan did as he was bidden; and when he had finished the image, he carried it up to Jupiter, who was sitting among the
clouds with all the Mighty Folk around him. It was nothing but a mere lifeless body, but the great blacksmith had given it a form more perfect than that of any statue that has ever been made.

“Come now!” said Jupiter, “let us all give some goodly gift to this woman;” and he began by giving her life.

Then the others came in their turn, each with a gift for the marvelous creature. One gave her beauty; and another a pleasant voice; and another good manners; and another a kind heart; and another skill in many arts; and, lastly, some one gave her curiosity. Then they called her Pandora, which means the all-gifted, because she had received gifts from them all.

Pandora was so beautiful and so wondrously gifted that no one could help loving her. When the Mighty Folk had admired her for a time, they gave her to Mercury, the light-footed; and he led her down the mountain side to the place where Prometheus and his brother were living and toiling for the good of mankind. He met Epimetheus first, and said to him:

“Epimetheus, here is a beautiful woman, whom Jupiter has sent to you to be your wife.”

Prometheus had often warned his brother to beware of any gift that Jupiter might send, for he knew that the mighty tyrant could not be trusted; but when Epimetheus saw Pandora, how lovely and wise she was, he forgot all warnings, and took her home to live with him and be his wife.

Pandora was very happy in her new home; and even Prometheus, when he saw her, was pleased with her loveliness. She had brought with her a golden casket, which Jupiter had given her at parting, and which he had told her held many precious things; but wise Athena, the queen of the air, had warned her never, never to open it, nor look at the things inside.

“They must be jewels,” she said to herself; and then she thought of how they would add to her beauty if only she could wear them. “Why did Jupiter give them to me if I should never use them, nor so much as look at them?” she asked.

The more she thought about the golden casket, the more curious she was to see what was in it; and every day she took it down from its shelf and felt of the lid, and tried to peer inside of it without opening it.

“Why should I care for what Athena told me?” she said at last. “She is not beautiful, and jewels would be of no use to her. I think that I will look at them, at any rate. Athena will never know. Nobody else will ever know.”

She opened the lid a very little, just to peep inside. All at once there was a whirring, rustling sound, and before she could shut it down again, out flew ten thousand strange creatures with death-like faces and gaunt and dreadful forms, such as nobody in all the world had ever seen. They fluttered for a little while about the room, and then flew away to find dwelling-places wherever there were homes of men. They were diseases and cares; for up to that time mankind had not had any kind of sickness, nor felt any troubles of mind, nor worried about what the morrow might bring forth.

These creatures flew into every house, and, without any one seeing them, nestled down in the bosoms of men and women and children, and put an end to all their joy; and ever since that day they have been flitting and creeping, unseen and unheard, over all the land, bringing pain and sorrow and death into every household.

If Pandora had not shut down the lid so quickly, things would have gone much worse. But she closed it just in time to keep the last of the evil creatures from getting out. The name of this creature was...
Foreboding, and although he was almost half out of the casket, Pandora pushed him back and shut the lid so tight that he could never escape. If he had gone out into the world, men would have known from childhood just what troubles were going to come to them every day of their lives, and they would never have had any joy or hope so long as they lived.

And this was the way in which Jupiter sought to make mankind more miserable than they had been before Prometheus had befriended them.\textsuperscript{Q7}

The Story of Prometheus and Pandora’s Box by James Baldwin is in the public domain.

\textbf{Notes}

1. The “Mighty Ones” is a reference to the gods and goddesses of Greek mythology who lived atop Mount Olympus, led by Zeus (or, in Roman mythology, Jupiter), god of sky and thunder and king of the gods.

2. In classical Greek mythology, the Titans were members of the second order of divine beings, born from the first god and goddess Gaia and Uranus. The Titans were giants of incredible strength who ruled during the legendary Golden Age.

3. Jupiter (also called Jove) is the god of sky and thunder and king of the gods in Ancient Roman religion and mythology.

4. This is a reference to Tartarus, a deep abyss in ancient Greek mythology that is used as a dungeon of torment and suffering for the wicked. Zeus/Jupiter sent most of the Titans there after he and the other gods of Olympus defeated the Titans in a power struggle.

5. In mythology, the Lower World – also known as the Underworld – is an otherworld where souls go after death.

6. \textbf{Idleness} (noun):

a state of inactivity; not doing anything productive

7. Nectar and ambrosia are the food and drink of the “Mighty Folk” in Greek mythology.

8. “Saturn” is the Roman name for the Greek god Cronus (also spelled Kronos), the leader and youngest of the first generation of Titans. He overthrew his father and ruled during the mythological Golden Age, until he was overthrown by his own son Zeus/Jupiter and imprisoned in Tartarus.

9. a kind of plant

10. the white strings inside a plant or fruit like an orange

11. \textbf{Tyrant} (noun):

an unjust or oppressive ruler

12. \textbf{Hasten} (verb): to hurry

13. In this context, “rude” means roughly made or done; lacking subtlety or sophistication

14. These are skills used in farming.
15. a type of rock used to create iron
16. family; relatives
17. a blacksmith's workshop
18. **Toil** (verb):
   to work extremely hard and continuously
19. a small box
20. **Gaunt** (adjective):
   excessively thin, especially because of suffering or hunger
21. hearts

**Text-Dependent Questions**

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. **PART A:** Which of the following best identifies a central theme of this myth?
   A. Abuse of power
   B. The necessity of curiosity
   C. Violence and war
   D. Beauty and art

2. **PART B:** Which TWO phrases from the text best support the answer to Part A?
   A. “Prometheus did not care to live amid the clouds on the mountain top. He was too busy for that.” (Paragraph 3)
   B. “It is best for them to be poor and ignorant, that so we Mighty Ones may thrive and be happy.” (Paragraph 8)
   C. “let them keep their fire. I will make them ten times more miserable than they were before they had it.” (Paragraph 20)
   D. “Then they called her Pandora, which means the all-gifted, because she had received gifts from them all.” (Paragraph 24)
   E. “Pandora was so beautiful and so wondrously gifted that no one could help loving her.” (Paragraph 25)
   F. “‘She opened the lid a very little, just to peep inside.’” (Paragraph 32)
3. How does the way Prometheus describes Jupiter differ from the way the narrator describes Jupiter?

   A. Prometheus thinks Jupiter is disloyal while the narrator sees him as just
   B. Prometheus does not understand Jupiter while the narrator knows Jupiter is evil
   C. Prometheus reveres the king of the gods while the narrator treats Jupiter like any other character
   D. Prometheus sees Jupiter as an unjust tyrant while the narrator calls him a “Mighty One” without judgment

4. How does the language and word choice in Paragraph 2 contribute to the tone of this myth?

   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

5. Would it have been better if Prometheus never came and gave the people fire? Was humanity better off because it had fire and civilization, or worse off because the cost was misery and disease?

   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
ICARUS AND DAEDALUS
by Josephine Preston Peabody 1897

Josephine Preston Peabody (1874-1922) was an American poet and dramatist. In the following story, Peabody retells the classic myth of Icarus and Daedalus, in which a skilled inventor creates wings for him and his son, Icarus, so they can escape King Minos of Crete. Overcome by his newly acquired freedom, Icarus flies too close to the sun, resulting in his tragic end. In Old Greek Folk Stories Told Anew, Peabody brings new life to this ancient story, as well as countless others.

Among all those mortals who grew so wise that they learned the secrets of the gods, none was more cunning than Daedalus.

He once built, for King Minos of Crete, a wonderful Labyrinth of winding ways so cunningly tangled up and twisted around that, once inside, you could never find your way out again without a magic clue. But the king’s favor veered with the wind, and one day he had his master architect imprisoned in a tower. Daedalus managed to escape from his cell; but it seemed impossible to leave the island, since every ship that came or went was well guarded by order of the king.

At length, watching the sea-gulls in the air—the only creatures that were sure of liberty—he thought of a plan for himself and his young son Icarus, who was captive with him.

Little by little, he gathered a store of feathers great and small. He fastened these together with thread, molded them in with wax, and so fashioned two great wings like those of a bird. When they were done, Daedalus fitted them to his own shoulders, and after one or two efforts, he found that by waving his arms he could winnow the air and cleave it, as a swimmer does the sea. He held himself aloft, wavered this way and that with the wind, and at last, like a great fledgling, he learned to fly.

Without delay, he fell to work on a pair of wings for the boy Icarus, and taught him carefully how to use them, bidding him beware of rash adventures among the stars. “Remember,” said the father, “never to fly very low or very high, for the fogs about the earth would weigh you down, but the blaze of the sun will surely melt your feathers apart if you go too near.”

For Icarus, these cautions went in at one ear and out by the other. Who could remember to be careful when he was to fly for the first time? Are birds careful? Not they! And not an idea remained in the boy’s head but the one joy of escape.

The day came, and the fair wind that was to set them free. The father bird put on his wings, and, while the light urged them to be gone, he waited to see that all was well with Icarus, for the two could not fly hand in hand. Up they rose, the boy after his father. The hateful ground of Crete sank beneath them; and the country folk, who caught a glimpse of them when they were high above the tree-tops, took it for a vision of the gods—Apollo, perhaps—with Cupid after him.

At first there was a terror in the joy. The wide vacancy of the air dazed them—a glance downward made their brains reel. But when a great wind filled their wings, and Icarus felt himself sustained, like a halycon-bird in the hollow of a wave, like a child uplifted by his mother, he forgot everything in the world but joy. He forgot Crete and the other islands that he had passed over: he saw but vaguely that winged thing in the distance before him that was his father Daedalus. He longed for one draught of flight to quench the thirst of his captivity: he stretched out his arms to the sky and made towards the highest heavens.
Alas for him! Warmer and warmer grew the air. Those arms, that had seemed to uphold him, relaxed. His wings wavered, drooped. He fluttered his young hands vainly—he was falling—and in that terror he remembered. The heat of the sun had melted the wax from his wings; the feathers were falling, one by one, like snowflakes; and there was none to help.

He fell like a leaf tossed down the wind, down, down, down, with one cry that overtook Daedalus far away. When he returned, and sought high and low for the poor boy, he saw nothing but the bird-like feathers afloat on the water, and he knew that Icarus was drowned.

The nearest island he named Icaria, in memory of the child; but he, in heavy grief, went to the temple of Apollo in Sicily, and there hung up his wings as an offering. Never again did he attempt to fly. Q4 Icarus and Daedalus by Josephine Preston Peabody is in the public domain.

Notes

1. In Greek mythology, “mortals” refers to individuals in Greek mythology who do not have God-like powers; they are mere humans.
2. a maze
3. approval; support; respect
4. “Winnow” means to drive or blow away by fanning.
5. A “fledgling” is a young bird that has just become able to fly.
6. Rash (adjective):
acting without thinking carefully first; careless
7. Apollo is a prominent god in Greek and Roman mythology known for commanding many things, including light, truth, prophecy, healing, and more.
8. Reel (verb): to lose one's balance or move about in an unsteady way
9. to support from below; to keep from falling or sinking
10. A “halcyon” is a mythical bird that nests at sea and calms the waves.
11. Vainly (adverb):
without success or results
Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. Which of the following best identifies a theme of the story?
   A. Love can cause people to do dangerous and foolish things.
   B. Education is the most valuable part of a person’s life.
   C. Many risks come with youth and freedom.
   D. Family relationships must be protected at all costs.

2. Which of the following statements best describes the relationship between Daedelus and King Minos?
   A. Minos imprisoned his best architect, Daedalus, on an island for no particular reason.
   B. Daedalus is the only person that Minos thinks is smart enough to take his kingdom away from him.
   C. Daedalus designed an island for Minos that could serve as a prison for all the people the king does not trust.
   D. Minos exiled Daedalus to an island because he did a poor job designing a castle for the king.

3. PART A: What does the word “cleave” most closely mean as it is used in Paragraph 4?
   A. bring back
   B. submerge
   C. split apart
   D. lift

4. PART B: Which phrase from paragraph 4 best supports the answer to Part A?
A. “by waving his arms”
B. “as a swimmer does the sea”
C. “held himself aloft,”
D. “like a great fledgling”

5. How does the figurative language in paragraph 8 contribute to the meaning of the story?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________