The Gift of Pandora

Prometheus was mankind's benefactor. The king of the gods wasn't crazy about us and didn't want us to have, among other things, fire. Prometheus, on the other hand, wanted good things for us, so stealthily, he brought us the gift of fire. In return, Zeus presented man with a "gift," Pandora, the first woman. While Prometheus may have crafted man, woman was a different sort of creature. [She came from the forge of Hephaestus](http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa113099a.htm), the deformed God of blacksmiths, beautiful as a goddess and beguiling, thanks to traits given by Athena and Zeus. Zeus presented her as a bride to Prometheus' brother Epimetheus. *Pro*metheus had the gift of thinking ahead, but *Epi*metheus was only capable of afterthought, so Prometheus, expecting retribution for his audacity, had warned his brother against accepting gifts from Zeus.

Zeus gave the gods-crafted Pandora as bride to Epimetheus, along with a box with a warning label telling the couple never to open it. Epimetheus was dazzled by his bride, Pandora. Perhaps he forgot the advice of his prescient brother. Perhaps he thought they were supposed to hold the box in safe-keeping for Zeus against his return -- that it wasn't a gift, at all.

Epimetheus insisted that his wife obey the letter of the label. Unfortunately, one day Pandora's husband left her side for a few hours. Pandora was gifted with curiosity as much as the other attributes given her by the gods. For her the box was a gift, not something to be kept in trust. What business had Zeus to tell her not to open it? Perhaps she'd listened to her brother-in-law's tales of tricking the king of the gods. Perhaps she saw nothing to fear. Maybe if she just took a quick peak.... Looking around to make sure no one was watching, she opened the box Zeus had given them just a crack. As Pandora did so, ghostly forms gushed forth from the crack. Pandora had unleashed all the evils now known to man. No longer could man loll about all day, but he would have to work and would succumb to illnesses.

At the very bottom of the container was the last thing to come out. It was something that wasn't evil. We call the good that Pandora unleashed by the name of hope.