Amanda Potter, Allison Rosenblum, "Entry on: Pandora Gets Vain (Mythic Misadventures, 2) by Weng Chen (Jade), Carolyn Hennesy", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy, Elżbieta Olechowska, Lisa Maurice and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/255. Entry version as of November 06, 2026.

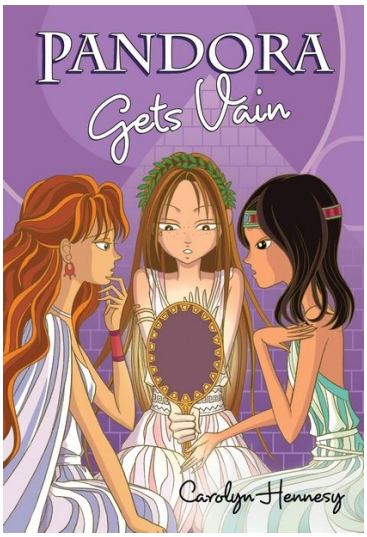
Weng Chen (Jade) , Carolyn Hennesy

Pandora Gets Vain (Mythic Misadventures, 2)

United States (2008)

TAGS: Aeolus Cleopatra VII Crete Egypt Egyptian Mythology Gladiators Hera Hermes Homer Pandora Pandora's Box Prometheus Zeus





Courtesy of Bloomsbury, publisher.

General information	
Title of the work	Pandora Gets Vain (Mythic Misadventures, 2)
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2008
First Edition Details	Carolyn Hennesy, *Pandora Gets Vain*. New York, Bloomsbury, 2008, 283 pp.
ISBN	1599902915
Official Website	carolynhennesy.com (accessed: July 31, 2018)
Genre	Action and adventure fiction, Mythological fiction, Novels, Teen fiction*
Target Audience	Children (female readers aged 8–12. Some previous knowledge of Greek mythology is required for full understanding of the text. The main character is aged thirteen.)
Author of the Entry	Amanda Potter, Open University, amanda.potter@caramanda.co.uk Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

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Creators



Weng Chen (Jade) (Illustrator)



Carolyn Hennesy , b. 1962 (Author)

Carolyn Hennesy, born June 10, 1962, is an American actress, writer and campaigner for zoos. She trained at American Conservatory Theatre and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London as well as earning a dramatic scholarship to the California State University at Northridge. She studied with the Groundlings and became a member of the Sunday Company. She also trained at the ACME Comedy Theatre and was a founding member of the all-female improv troupe, *Ovaryaction*. In 2001, she received the Natalie Schafer Award for Outstanding Comedic Actress, and the Ovation Award in 2011 from the LA Stage Alliance. She has appeared in numerous films and television series, and is best known as an actress for the part of Diane Miller on US day time soap opera *General Hospital*. She has also played recurring roles in *Cougar Town*, *Revenge*, and vampire series *True Blood*. Although she has a popular 25+ year career in film and television, Hennesy is also an author. In 2011 she published a novel based on characters from *General Hospital*, *The Secret Life of Damian Spinelli*. Her series of children's books based on the character of Pandora begins with *Pandora Gets Jealous* (2008), and continues with *Pandora Gets Vain* (2008), *Pandora Gets Lazy* (2009), *Pandora Gets Heart* (2010), *Pandora Gets Angry* (2011), *Pandora Gets Greedy* (2012) and *Pandora Gets Frightened* (2013). She is involved in "a number of causes including caring for our wounded warriors and helping those with debilitating physical issues regain their self-esteem, but chief among all causes is the issue of animal rescue"*. In

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addition, she teaches improvisational comedy, and has a flying trapeze act. In interview Hennesy says she drew on her own "notebook" from when she was thirteen in writing the novels.

* Author's official website (accessed: September 23, 2020).

Sources:

Offical website (acccessed: February 1, 2018).

Interview with Carolyn Hennesy (acccessed: February 1, 2018).

Bio prepared by Amanda Potter, Open University, amanda.potter@caramanda.co.uk and Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com

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Additional information

Summary

This is the second installment in a series of books called "Mythic Misadventures" that takes the classic story of Pandora's box and gives it a young, adventurous, partly contemporary twist – Pandora is Prometheus- thirteen-year-old daughter. Carrying on from *Pandora Gets Jealous*, the young protagonists Pandora (Pandy), Alcie and Iole travel to Alexandra to find the second evil, vanity, to be put back into Pandora's Box.

Like male Greek heroes before them, such as Heracles, Pandora is hampered by Hera and supported by Athena. Hera sends a storm as the girls sail from Greece to Egypt on board a ship named the Peacock, after Hera's symbol. However Pandora sees the face of Athena in the lightening, and remembers the gift that Athena had given her; a magic rope, that she uses to save Iole and herself from drowning. This time they are accompanied by a handsome young bodyguard, to whom Alcie is attracted. The sixteen-year-old Homer, sent by his father, the shipping agent, to look after the girls and meet his uncle to discuss a job in the import/export business. Homer had dropped out of gladiator school and wants to be a poet.

Hera goes to see Aeolus on his floating island to chastise him because the winds he had given her did not destroy the ship. He mixes some more winds kept in jars to create a tornado, which engulfs the ship and the girls and Homer end up in the water. They are saved by dolphins sent by Poseidon (reminiscent of the myth of Arion, who is rescued by a dolphin, although this story is not specifically mentioned). The dolphins drop the friends off on the shore of the Nile.

They find themselves in a country where they do not understand the language or the customs

This installment features a storm at sea, a group of talking dolphins, a pre-teen Cleopatra and a very unusual circus, before the mission is completed.

Pandora falls through a shaft underneath a temple into a pit filled with sharpened wooden stakes, dead bodies, and a huge eye. Her friends follow through a passageway, and watch from behind an invisible wall as Pandora is raised up by an invisible force, and is positioned above a

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stake, ready to be impaled. She uses her newly-found power over fire to burn the stakes. Homer, who can speak some Egyptian, is advised by Habib, a living corpse, to drink water mixed with ashes from the corpse of Calchas (the Greek seer from the Trojan War). Once they do this all the friends can understand Egyptian, as Calchas had power over languages. Habib gives Pandora the magical eye of Horus pendant that is keeping him alive, and can be used to heal.

The friends find their way to a camp of circus performers, led by an old Chinese man, Wang Chun Lo, and are taken in and fed. Meanwhile Hera is being helped by Demeter, who has taken the jar in which Pandora's mother's ashes are kept. Temporary reviving her, Hera finds out that the way to hurt Pandora is through her dog, Dido.

Wang Chun Lo helps the friends to find where Vanity is hiding; in a mirror owned by the ten-year-old queen Cleopatra. Cleopatra has gone mad with vanity, constantly staring at her own reflection, and expecting everyone to constantly praise her beauty. She refuses to eat, and kills and mutilates her servants for the slightest offence. In order to reach Cleopatra's palace quickly Pandora agrees to use Wan Chun Lo's magic crystal panels to travel through, accepting that this will cause her to age by sixty years (fifteen years for each person travelling).

At the palace, Pandora, now an old woman, with the help of a love poem Homer has written for Alcie and addressed to Cleopatra, gets Vanity (a stream of bubbles) out of the mirror and into the box, with only one bubble entering Pandora. Wang Chun Lo appears, and reveals himself to be the Egyptian god Osiris. He changes the Vanity within Pandora to self-worth, sends Cleopatra to sleep so that she can wake up back to normal, and agrees to do one thing for each of the friends. They forgo their own desires to have Pandora made young again. Osiris heals Alcie's two left feet anyway, and Iole's arm, broken when trying to take the mirror from Cleopatra, is healed by the Horus pendant. However Dido, Pandora's dog, has gone missing (the reader fears that this was through the intervention of Hera).

Pandora finds that the next evil, Laziness, is in the Atlas mountains, and Apollo lends his sun chariot and horses to the friends to take them to the mountains, allowing the sun to rise in a different way for one day.

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Analysis

This book is a reception of Greek myth in the form of an entertaining and comic story aimed at young female readers. Once again, the book is didactic, formally, in that it introduces readers to both Greek and Egyptian mythology, albeit in a rather inaccurate manner, and informally in that it teaches life lessons. The protagonists develop over the series, along with the target audience, as indicated by the fact that in this book we have a romantic aspect for the first time. Overall, the tone remains light hearted and humorous, particularly with regard to the dialogue, which is often both accurately teenage, and amusing.

In this second installment the group learns how to deal with adversity as Hera continually sets traps for them. It further emphasizes the notion of taking responsibility when Pandora steps forward to pay the price for the entire group in exchange for a quick trip to Alexandria. Pandora and her friends are established as heroes by this second book, and Pandora is described as having "cunning and curiosity" (p. 250) as well as selflessness, which enable her to complete the task of retrieving Vanity whilst protecting her friends. *Pandora Gets Vain* shows how vanity can affect perspective. It also incorporates elements of Egyptian mythology alongside the Greek, mingling Greek gods with Egyptian in this volume.

In an interview Hennesy explains: "She chooses to step up to the plate and accept her responsibility, and she accepts the quest," and so the message to young readers is "When you step up to the plate and take responsibility for your personal actions, sometimes you get to go on the best adventure of your life" (see here, accessed: July 31, 2018).

As with other books in the series, *Pandora Gets Vain* is filled with characters from and references to Greek (and Egyptian) mythology that many of the young readers would not already know without looking them up. For example, Pandora and friends are told that Calchas "translated something incorrectly and so the Greeks lost many men in the Trojan War" (p. 126) which leads him to flee to Egypt, and this will resonate with readers who know of Calchas' prophecies. There are also a number of anachronisms, for example Greek boy Homer trained as a gladiator, a Roman concept. Throughout the book a number of Greek gods appear, as either helpers or antagonists, and they are included in the five page glossary at the back of the book, with a description of key places and people,

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	and a phonetic translation of names, so that readers will know how to pronounce unfamiliar words. There is no evidence that any ancient sources have been used, as all the details included could have been obtained from modern books and encyclopedias of Greek myths.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aeolus Cleopatra VII Crete Egypt Egyptian Mythology Gladiators Hera Hermes Homer Pandora Pandora's Box Prometheus Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Authority Character traits Child, children Conflict Disobedience Emotions Friendship Heroism Knowledge Learning Magic powers Parents (and children) Teenagers
Addenda	Young female readers have enjoyed the book, see reviews on goodreads.com (accessed: July 31, 2018).

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