Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Pandora's Box by Julia Golding [Eve Edwards, Joss Stirling] , J. Solomon", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/944. Entry version as of November 19, 2026.

Julia Golding [Eve Edwards, Joss Stirling] , J. Solomon

Pandora's Box

United Kingdom (2017)

TAGS: Aphrodite Athena Epimetheus Hephaestus Hermes Pandora Prometheus Zeus

We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Pandora's Box
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom, United States of America
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2017
First Edition Details	Julia Golding, *Pandora's Box: Band 15/Emerald*. Collins Big Cat Tales, London: Collins (HarperCollins imprint), 2017, 49 pp.
ISBN	9780008179441
Genre	Adaptations, Myths, Retelling of myths*
Target Audience	Children (8–9 years)
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com
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Creators

Courtesy of the Author.

Julia Golding [Eve Edwards, Joss Stirling] , b. 1969 (Author)

Born in Ilford, Essex, in the vicinity of an area of ancient woodland called Epping Forest, she studied English literature at the University of Cambridge. Later, after working as a diplomat for the British Foreign Office in Poland, she resumed her studies at Oxford obtaining a PhD in English literature. She then worked for the international charitable organization Oxfam, as a lobbyist on the impact of conflicts. She now lives in Oxford and writes full time: from 2006, the date of her first novel, she has written over thirty books, among them *The Companions Quartet* (2006-2007), a cycle of novels with numerous references to Greek mythology. In 2011, she published a sequel to the *Quartet*, entitled *Water Thief*, labelled as *Universal Companions* 1; as of June 10, 2017, it remains the only volume of the new series.

Golding writes also historical romance for adolescents under the pseudonym Eve Edwards and romance novels for teens as Joss Stirling.

Literary Awards:

- 2006 – Waterstone's Children's Book Prize, Nestle Children's Book Prize,
- 2007 – Waterstone's one of the "Twenty-five authors for the future",
- 2008 – An honor book medal of the Green Earth Book Award for *The Secret of the Sirens (The Companions Quartet 1)*,
- 2012 – Beehive Book Award, Young Adult Division, awarded by the Children's Literature Association of Utah,
- 2015 – Romantic Novel of the Year (*Struck* by Joss Stirling).

She was also nominated or shortlisted for a number of the same and other awards.

Sources:

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Official website (accessed: May 29, 2018),

Profile at the literature.britishcouncil.org (accessed: July 3, 2018),

Profile at the www.goodreads.com (accessed: April 9, 2018).

Bio prepared by Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com

J. Solomon (Illustrator)

J. Solomon is an illustrator who specialises in children books.

Profile at sylviepoggio.com (accessed: January 29, 2020)

Bio prepared by Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com

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Additional information

Summary

This is a retelling of the tale of Pandora's Box. The uniqueness of this book is that Pandora is the first-person narrator who tells her own story from the moment she was created and was taught from the gods, to the time she married Epimetheus and opened the cursed box. The book is aimed at advanced readers and in the last pages there are suggestions for reading comprehension and exercises provided by Dr. Clare Dowdall, lecturer and primary literacy consultant from the University of Plymouth Institute of Education.

Analysis

Many books have been written on Pandora's Box; it is a popular theme especially in children's literature, due to its moral lesson. The story is repeated in anthologies as well as in stand-alone stories (see for example various examples in OMC survey). Nancy Loewen also used a similar approach in her book *Not the Curious Kind: Pandora Tells All* (2014).

In the present book, we first meet Pandora when she opens her eyes for the first time and meets Hephaestus. Pandora wakes up as an adult woman who can speak and communicate with her surroundings. Interestingly, it takes time for her to understand that she was just recently created. She looks at her hands and thinks: "I realised that I'd never seen them before. Everything about me was new." Perhaps since she was created by a god, she was born with all these communication skills from the start. The author does not equate her with a new-born baby who must slowly learn about the world. Quite the contrary, Pandora appears smart and resourceful.

We also get a more detailed account of her appearance: it is noted that she has light brown skin (perhaps an attempt to think of olive-toned skin for some Mediterranean people?), acorn-coloured hair and bright green eyes. While not simply stating she is beautiful, the author emphasizes her physical features which also appear in the illustrations. Hephaestus tells her she was created in the mould of his wife, Aphrodite. Therefore we may assume what the author believes constitute good looks in a woman, and the fact that Aphrodite has brown hair, is not trivial since in many stories she is described as having a blonde hair. This is an interesting addition since in many myth adaptations Aphrodite appears with a blonde hair. In this book it

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is specified she has brown hair. Therefore the suggestion might be that there is no one criterion of beauty but beauty can come in many colours.

In this tale, we share Pandora's views on the world and the gods she meets on Olympus. She is frightened by Zeus' presence but feels more comfortable with Athena. We learn what each god taught her: Athena taught her to weave and showed her the story of Prometheus (who is described as a mere man and not a Titan) on a tapestry. Athena hints at something ominous regarding Pandora's role in Zeus' plan but she does not disclose what it is. Hermes takes her to the world to learn how to choose words carefully. She hears people arguing and threatening each other. It is an intriguing twist since usually the pre-Pandora world is described as quiet and peaceful since the evils were not released on the world.

When Pandora meets Aphrodite, she is apprehensive about her teachings. Aphrodite tells her: "I'm always and only myself. I never listen to the opinions of others." She tells her it's the secret for being loved, yet Pandora is not so sure. However, this lesson will prove crucial later on when Pandora decides to ignore the warnings and open the box.

Pandora is next taken by Zeus to meet her new husband, Epimetheus, and Zeus warns them both about opening the box. Pandora feels embarrassed meeting Epimetheus. To have her feel uncomfortable suddenly being someone's wife when she is not sure about the world or relations between people, especially men and women. She becomes lonely and tries to find solace in the box; following Aphrodite's teaching, she decides to do what she pleases and so opens the box. Evils then fly out of the box and encircle it in smoke. She realizes then that Zeus tricked her and deliberately gave her too much curiosity and not enough caution.

The author makes Pandora atone for her actions. Even though she was tricked by the gods, she tells herself that she cannot blame them and needs to solve this trouble herself. This is an empowering message, teaching that one must take responsibility for one's actions, even if they were caused due to some kind of foul play. Pandora must find the answer to undo what she did.

In another alteration from ancient versions of the myth, Pandora hears the voice of hope form the box, yet Hope does not fly out. Hope tells

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	her that all the evils left but she will remain with Pandora and humankind to help them. Therefore we may infer that evils have left, caused harm and disappeared and Hope remains and does not follow them. At the end of the story we have a two-page note, supposedly from Pandora's diary. In the diary she explains how the box torments her and why she must open it. It gives us another glimpse at Pandora's state of mind and emotions. She is not simply a slave of her curiosity but contemplated long and hard about the box prior to opening it.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aphrodite Athena Epimetheus Hephaestus Hermes Pandora Prometheus Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Conflict Emotions Good vs evil

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