Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Pandora by Shoo Rayner ", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/924. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

Shoo Rayner

Pandora

United Kingdom (2018)

TAGS: Pandora





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

General information	
Title of the work	Pandora
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2018
First Edition Details	Shoo Rayner, *Pandora*. Self-published, 2018, 31 pp.
ISBN	9781908944405
Genre	Adaptations, Mythological fiction, Myths, Picture books
Target Audience	Children (5–6 (primary school age))
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com
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Creators



Shoo Rayner , b. 1956
(Author, Illustrator)

Shoo (Hugh) Rayner is an author, illustrator, and teacher of drawing. He was born in Kingston-upon-Thames, the child of a member of the British Army who moved around the world. He spent his childhood in Germany, Pakistan, Yemen, and the United Kingdom. He is a graduate of Anglia Ruskin University (formerly Cambridge College of Art and Technology). He lives in Gloucestershire, near the Forest of Dean.He has illustrated over 250 books, and has two successful Youtube sites teaching drawing (Shoo Rayner Drawing, and Draw Stuff Real Easy).

Rayner creates picture books and middle-grade fiction for children. He admits that after failing his English O level he developed a visual approach to writing and telling stories. He refers to himself as a "storyteller illustrator" (see here, accessed: December 4, 2019). His published output is prolific: he has published a large number of series of Early Readers for children, including the *Lydia* series, the *Victor* series, the *Little Horror*s series, the *Ginger Ninja* series, the *Monster Boy* series, and the *Olympia* series.

Rayner's work in these series involves simple, easy-to-read stories, aimed at readers "at the most important stage of reading development where they can be put off, or enthused for life." (*Something about the Author*, 169)

Sources:

Official website (accessed: December 4, 2019)

Official channel on You Tube (accessed: December 4, 2019)

DrawStuffRealEasy, channel on You Tube (accessed: December 4, 2019)

Profile at en.wikipedia.org (accessed: April 6, 2019)

'Hugh (Shoo) Rayner,' *Something About the Author,* Ed. Lisa Kumar.

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Vol. 151. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2004, p. 168-171.

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au and Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com

Questionnaire

Response to author's questionnaire on Author's Vimeo channel (accessed: April 4, 2019).

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Additional information

Summary

This is the story of a very curious girl named Pandora. Pandora is curious and always asks many questions about the world. She enters a room she is not allowed and then opens a box which she should never open. Evil creatures fly out from the box but also benevolent hope. Since the book is aimed at young readers, certain words are emphasized randomly, like sound effects (such as tickety, clank, bump) or words like miracle, very etc.

Analysis

Little Pandora is a curious girl. She is the center of the book. There is no mention of family, friends or the Greek gods in association with the myth. Her only illustrated companion is a cat. Since the story is aimed at young children (probably the age of the titular character), she is the main focus.

In the subtitle on the cover, the author writes, “is she very naughty or just very curious?” and inside the front page the subtitle reads: “are you just a bit curious?”. The author hence raises the question as to whether Pandora is naughty or simply a bit too curious for her own good. He wishes to portray her not as an evil girl, who did something bad on purpose and out of malice, but as a young girl who could not control her curiosity.

According to the illustrations, Pandora lives in a quasi-Greek world (there are illustrations reminiscent of wall paintings from Knossos). We do not know why she was not allowed in the room. In the illustrations, Pandora has a mischievous look, which complements her behavior. She is not innocent, but, as mentioned, not evil. Interestingly, her cat appears quite scared by her conduct, perhaps since he is aware that curiosity killed the cat? As Lisa Maurice notes, This is a joke that is played out in another Pandora book, Nancy Loewen’s *Pandora Tells All* (2014).

In the forbidden room, Pandora discovers a small wooden box with a key. This is an alteration from other versions of this myth. Usually Pandora needs to strive hard to open the box, but here the key is laid near the box, making the temptation even hade rot resist.

After Pandora opens the box, crow-like birds fly form it, despite of its small size. Hope is symbolized by a white dove (the author names

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everything that came out of the box “creatures” but the illustrations are more explicit). The author give the creatures names, such as trouble, hunger, fear etc. to denote the evil they were carrying. The choice of the dove does not appear accidentally; perhaps it echoes the biblical dove Noah released after the flood which dignified Hope and new beginning, the dove is also a universal sign for peace. In other versions of the myth, Hope is described and illustrated as a delicate butterfly or like a fairy, for example Rose Impey’s *Pandora’s Box* (2007), Joan Holub’s *Do Not Open Pandora* (2014) and many others. Perhaps due to the significant influence of Hawthorne, as noted by Lisa Maurice.

The author emphasizes the power of hope by noting that a miracle happened the day after and Pandora was no longer curious. It is an addition to the myth, since in most stories we are not told whether Pandora ceased being curious (after basically fulfilling her designated purpose to open the box). The author wishes to emphasize that Pandora learnt an important lesson form this scary experience: mind you own business and do what you are told. This message of course also meant to save as a kindly warning to the young readers – they should do as they are told in order to avoid trouble. This raises the question though as to should we not wonder about things that do not necessarily concern us? It is all a matter of good measure and finding the golden mean. One should mind his own business, but not be oblivious to anything else.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Pandora
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Conflict Emotions Good vs evil Reconciliation

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