

ONCE UPON A PINE: THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO

A one-act dramedy
by Tommy Jamerson

Inspired by and adapted from the stories of Carlo Collodi

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE NARRATORS, a Greek Chorus comprised of Italian Narrators. They not only guide the audience through the world of the play, but heighten the action as well.

GEPPETTO, the childless toymaker who dreams of having a son. Well-intentioned and kind, but a bit of a bumbler.

PINOCCHIO, a simple marionette brought to life through the power of magic.

THE BLUE HAIRED FAIRY, an eternal, blue haired child, youthful and generous. A granter of wishes that lives in a far off, secluded cabin.

CARNIVAL BARKER, a swindler; tricks Pinocchio into giving up his prized primer for admission to his second-rate puppet show.

CARABINIERI, a crooked officer of the King who misuses his authority to take advantage of others.

DAVEY CRICKET, the Fairy's delivery bug. Crustier than toast, with a wicked sense of humor.

SOLDIER, the Carabinieri's partner in crime!

THE PASSERSBY, may be played by the Narrators.

THE PERFORMERS, may be played by the Narrators.

THE BIRDS, may be played by the Narrators.

VOICE OF THE DOGFISH

SETTING

A tiny village just outside of Tuscany, during a time when animals still talked to adults, adults still believed in magic, and magic kept everything in balance.

NOTES

Narrators preferably double with the characters in the show (Soldier, Carnival Barker, Davey Cricket, etc.), but if a larger cast size is needed, they can simply be shapeless beings that slink on and offstage only when needed. In the original production, the Narrators were also utilized to conjure up bits of scenery and props (Geppetto's mirror, the forest, etc.). Their possibilities are endless; use them as you see fit.

The ideal number of narrators for this production is five, but the director may choose to use as many as desired. If that is the case, just divvy up the lines accordingly.

In the original production, Pinocchio was played by a female actor. I personally prefer this interpretation, but feel free to cast any gender you like.

As is the case with most of my plays, ad-libbing is not only suggested, but encouraged.

Regarding the massive dog fish who appears near the end of the play: many directors have asked me how best to stage him. In the original production, he was a large, three-person puppet that could literally swallow Pinocchio whole and still have room for leftovers. Another, smaller production, nixed the puppet idea completely and instead opted for two large red eyes suspended from the rafters, and a sizable semicircle covered in white, felt teeth. Lastly, a third production chose neither option and decided to let the Narrator's descriptions and the audience's imaginations do all the heavy lifting. However, you choose to stage this Mediterranean Monstrosity is up to you, I simply request that it fit with the rest of your production's aesthetic.

DEDICATION

For Alpha Psi Omega and their unwavering generosity; I am forever in your debt.

SCENE 1: A Bare Stage/Geppetto's Toyshop

(A bare stage swathed in mist and anticipation. Paper stars glisten, dangling from long sapphire threads. Suddenly, a musical chord is struck, and a bell rung. Then two chords, echoed by two bells. Then three chords, and three bells, and so on and so forth, until the air is filled with a cacophony of noise – similar to that of an orchestral tune-up. Finally, as the miscellaneous notes reach individual crescendos, the NARRATORS appear, bells in hand.)

NARRATORS: *(In unison:)* Once upon a pine, and long ago,

NARRATOR 1: When animals still talked,

NARRATOR 2: And magic kept everything in balance,

NARRATOR 3: There was, of all things,

NARRATORS: *(In unison:)* ...A simple piece of wood.

(A blue hue shines down, illuminating the piece of wood.)

NARRATOR 4: How all that happened, actually happened, we cannot say.

NARRATOR 5: But the fact is that one day, in a tiny village just outside of Tuscany –

NARRATOR 1: This piece of wood appeared –

NARRATOR 2: In the shop of a jolly, old toymaker –

NARRATOR 3: Whose name was...

NARRATORS: *(In unison:)* Geppetto.

(Lights rise on GEPPETTO, who is adorned in a bright yellow jacket.)

GEPPETTO: *(As if caught off guard:)* That's me! Geppetto! Did someone call my name?! Does *anyone* ever call my name?

NARRATOR 4: Geppetto was lonely,

NARRATOR 5: For he'd spent so much of his life building dolls for other families,

NARRATOR 1: That he never got around to building a family of his own.

NARRATOR 2: And it was because of this he wanted, more than anything,

GEPPETTO: ...*A son.*

NARRATOR 3: But since that was not possible,

NARRATOR 4: He decided instead to fashion together a puppet.

GEPPETTO: A puppet! Yes! A marionette, I think. One who could dance, and fence! One who could leap and jump! And one who could help me pass the time, which I have far too much of. A fanabla! In order to do that, I'd have to find the perfect—

(Taking a step forward, he clumsily stubs his toe on the log. Hopping on one foot in pain:)

Ow! Log!? But how did *you* get here? You couldn't have just walked in here by yourself. What's your story, little nuisance? It's almost as if you appeared by...*magic.*

(At the utterance of "magic," the sound of wind chimes intermingling with a child's laughter is heard. It lingers for a moment under the following dialogue:)

But what other explanation is there for this log? And what a log indeed! Come, we've got work to do!

(Geppetto hauls the block of wood over to his carving station and begins working on it immediately. As he does this, the Narrators encircle him, concealing the toymaker along with the fruits of his labor, behind a large sheet. The silhouette of Geppetto building his puppet can be seen, and the sounds of hammering and

sawing heard. Maybe we even see bits of the puppet's body as it's described.)

NARRATOR 5: Geppetto took his tools and began to work with great determination.

NARRATOR 2: He carved its head in less than a day,

NARRATOR 3: Its stomach, hands, and legs the next afternoon,

NARRATOR 4: And before he knew it, he had—

(As Geppetto utters his next line, the Narrators stand back, dropping the curtain to reveal the PUPPET.)

GEPPETTO: Finished! Voila!

(He pulls out a tiny paint brush and begins applying the finishing touches:)

Just look at you: thick wavy hair, beautiful blue eyes, and no voice to talk back to me with—you really are the perfect child! If only you were alive. Eh, but I'm more likely to get swallowed by a Dogfish than have that happen. Still, as Nona used to say: if you want something badly enough, and dream of it day and night, eventually that "want" will have no other choice but to become a wish, and in turn that wish will come true.

(A moment passes as Geppetto rests his hand on the puppet's shoulders:)

I suppose I'd better clean up.

(Forlornly, Geppetto begins cleaning his workstation, turning his back on the Puppet.)

NARRATOR 1: As Geppetto turned away from his puppet, something began to stir from within it.

(The faint toll of chimes is heard as the Puppet's right arm moves by itself. Geppetto, hearing the chime, walks over to his

Puppet, examines it, and places the arm down, restoring it to its original position. As he turns to walk away...another chime dings, this time moving the Puppet's left arm. Then another, causing the Puppet's right leg to kick out. Another chime, and the Puppet's left leg flails. Soon all of the bells begin ringing at once as the Puppet springs to life!

GEPPETTO: Jumpin' Jehoshaphat! You're real! You're moving! You're —

PUPPET: Aaaaaaaalive!

(Maybe the Narrators make a "TA-DA" sound, encouraging the audience to applaud. The Puppet jumps about for joy. Geppetto claps his hands in amazement.)

GEPPETTO: Indeed! And what an amazing puppet you are!

PUPPET: ...Puppet?

GEPPETTO: Sì, a... *(Imitating a puppet, however that is done:)* puppet. A marionette.

PUPPET: And are you a... *(Imitating Geppetto's imitation:)* puppet too?

GEPPETTO: Me? No, I'm a person. I carved you. You're made of wood, but I'm flesh. *(Shows his own arm:)* See, this is flesh. Well not *this*, *this* is a liver spot, but this right *here*, it's called skin.

PUPPET: *Skin?*

GEPPETTO: Yes, and that's hair, and a vein, and ouch! *(The Puppet accidentally pinches him.)* That's a pinch!

PUPPET: And what am I called?

GEPPETTO: That's a good question. Ahh, I know! Because you're made of pine, you shall be called *Pinocchio*, which means —

(The Narrators, in assembly-line fashion, pass a tiny item wrapped in tissue from one to another until eventually it reaches Geppetto. Geppetto unwraps it to reveal a –)

GEPPETTO/NARRATORS: *Pine seed.*

PUPPET: Pine seed?

GEPPETTO: *Correggere!* That way, no matter *where* you go, or *what* you do, you'll always remember *what* you came from. *(Hands the seed to the Puppet.) A Pinocchio.*

PINOCCHIO: *A Pinocchio.* I like it!

(Geppetto threads a piece of string through a tiny opening in the seed and ties it around PINOCCHIO's neck:)

But what shall I call you?

GEPPETTO: Well...I did create you, and clothe you, and if you eat, I'll put food in your belly...so I suppose it'd be only customary for you to call me *Papa*. That is, if you want to.

PINOCCHIO: *Papa?* I like the sound of that.

GEPPETTO: So do I... *(Extending his hand:) Son.*

(A beat. The lights shift. It is now night.)

NARRATOR 2: That evening as they readied for bed,

NARRATOR 3: Pinocchio asked Geppetto the one question that him been bothering him all day.

NARRATOR 4: It's the one question that all parents fear.

NARRATOR 5: And the one all children – even those made of pine – *ask*.

PINOCCHIO: Papa, may I ask you a question before we go to bed?

GEPPETTO: *(Wishing he wouldn't, but trying not to discourage him:)* 'Course you can. You can ask me anything at all. Anything you like.

PINOCCHIO: Where do babies come from?

GEPPETTO: ...Anything but that! Look, it's late, and you're—

PINOCCHIO: Not human babies, but puppet babies. And not really puppet babies but...*me*. Where did I come from? And why am I alive and other puppets aren't?

GEPPETTO: That's a very tricky, and complicated question, and it requires and even trickier and more complicated answer. But I think the best way to put it is you're alive because I *wished* for you to be.

PINOCCHIO: So when someone wishes for something, does that automatically mean it'll come true?

GEPPETTO: Sometimes yes, but mostly wishes have to be earned. You have to prove yourself worthy of them. And if you do, then your wish will be granted by the Blue Haired Fairy.

(As Geppetto tells this story, the Narrators hum in unison, ring bells, or illuminate the stage with twinkling lights – anything to give the audience the illusion of magic. Suddenly, the FAIRY floats on.)

(Under the following dialogue, the Narrators lift the Fairy up and stylistically move her about the air, giving her the effect of flying:)

Not much is known about her but legend has it, she lives in a cottage deep in the heart of a dark and gnarled wood. It's also said that her hair gets its blueish hue from all the stardust tangled inside it. And it's that very stardust that she uses to brew all of her potions and make our dreams come true.

(Before the Fairy dances offstage, she takes a mound of stardust in her hand and blows it in Pinocchio's direction.)

PINOCCHIO: Wow! You know, if I were to make a wish, it'd be to become a human! I'd have real hair like you, and eyes – and even real liver spots!

GEPPETTO: (*Yawns:*) What a dreamer you are. And speaking of dreams, it's time for you to make some. Tomorrow you go to school.

PINOCCHIO: But Papa –

GEPPETTO: Now no more questions, just close your eyes and sleep... (*Drifting off to sleep.*) Yes, sleep...sleep...sleep...

PINOCCHIO: Psst, Papa – I would go to sleep, but I don't know what *sleep* is.

GEPPETTO: *Mamma Mia.*

(The Narrators blow out the candle on Geppetto's nightstand, causing a blackout.)

SCENE 2: Geppetto's Toyshop, The Next Morning

(Lights rise. It is the following morning. One of the Narrators begins the scene by crowing like a rooster. Pinocchio merrily leaps out of bed.)

NARRATOR 1: Pinocchio quickly awoke the following morning, ready to begin his first day of school.

(Geppetto enters from the "outside", shivering and rubbing his hands together:)

NARRATOR 2: To commemorate the occasion, Geppetto gifted him with a shiny new hat,

NARRATOR 3: One that he had fastened together out of glue and bread crumbs.

PINOCCHIO: (*Trying it on:*) Oh! How does it look?

GEPPETTO: (*Holding up a mirror:*) Only one way to find out.

PINOCCHIO: I look exactly like a gentleman!

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NARRATORS: *(In unison. Making a gonging sound:) Ding Dong! Ding Dong!*

PINOCCHIO: The bell! I'd better get going!

GEPPETTO: Not yet you're not!

PINOCCHIO: But I'll be late!

GEPPETTO: Better you be late, then show up without this.

(Geppetto pulls a primer out from behind his back.)

PINOCCHIO: A book?

GEPPETTO: Not just any book, a primer—one with more facts 'n figures than you could learn in five lifetimes!

PINOCCHIO: Thank you! Thank you so much.

GEPPETTO: You're welcome.

NARRATORS: *(In unison:) Ding Dong! Ding Dong!*

GEPPETTO: You'd better hurry up!

PINOCCHIO: Yes, Papa. *(Begins to exit. Stops:) Papa...*

GEPPETTO: Yes?

PINOCCHIO: I'm confused. I thought you said we were poor.

GEPPETTO: We are.

PINOCCHIO: And that we don't have any money.

GEPPETTO: We don't.

PINOCCHIO: Then where did this come from? How did you afford it? It's just, it's such a fine book, with its golden pages. Pages that are almost as yellow as the coat you're always...*wearing*. Wait, where is your coat? The one with the purple buttons. You had it when you left a few moments ago, but now it's gone. The book's here but your coat...*isn't*.

NARRATOR 1: Even though his head was filled with sawdust,

NARRATOR 2: Pinocchio understood the answer instantly.

PINOCCHIO: (*Hugging his father:*) Don't worry, I'll make you proud. I promise.

GEPPETTO: I know you will, son!

NARRATORS: (*In unison:*) **DING!!! DONG!!!**

GEPPETTO: Off with you, now! Go!!

(And with one quick gesture, he plops a satchel in Pinocchio's hands and sweeps him out the door.)

SCENE 3: The Town Square, A Few Moments Later

NARRATOR 3: Using the chimes as his guide, Pinocchio made his way to class,

NARRATOR 4: All the while using his imagination to build a thousand castles in the air,

NARRATOR 5: Each one more beautiful than the next.

PINOCCHIO: In school today I shall learn to read, and tomorrow I'll learn to write, and the day after that, I'll learn all my figures. And to think, it'll only have taken me (*Attempting to do math with his fingers, holding up two:*) ...Five days! Five days to become a genius.

NARRATOR 5: As he said this, he realized that the chimes of the bells—

NARRATOR 1: Began to intertwine with the sound of something he'd never heard before.

(Music underscores. Perhaps a flute player appears, and Pied Piper-like, lures Pinocchio toward him. A little puppet theatre with a sign outside of it reads: BIG SHOW TODAY! MAGIC, MUSIC, AND MARIONETTES!)

PINOCCHIO: What kind of magic is this? It must be music! Papa told me it was wonderful...but he didn't say it was this

wonderful! It makes me wanna jump! And move! (He inadvertently does a little dance step:) And – and –

(Under the music's spell, Pinocchio breaks out into a full, and highly exaggerated dance. He kicks his legs here, spins there, and does not once pay attention to where he's going. Suddenly...SMACK! He crashes right into a few PASSERSBY, going about their business. Music comes to screeching halt.)

FIRST PASSERBY: Hey! Watch it!

PINOCCHIO: Oh! Sorr –

(Slamming into another one.)

SECOND PASSERBY: Look where you're going!?!)

PINOCCHIO: I beg your –

(And another.)

THIRD PASSERBY: Move it or lose it, kid!

PINOCCHIO: Sorry! Sorry, I –

(And another!)

FOURTH PASSERBY: Outta my way, buddy!

PINOCCHIO: I didn't mean to, I just got all turned –

(And ANOTHER!!)

FIFTH PASSERBY: Ouch!

PINOCCHIO: ...around.

FIFTH PASSERBY: Watch it, blockhead! Jeez, you'd think you was made of wood or somethin'!

(Fifth Passerby mutters to himself/herself as they exit in a huff.)

PINOCCHIO: Sorry...again. I didn't mean to act like a blockhead, but unfortunately...I am one. Oh, if only I knew where that music was coming from.

NARRATOR 2: Just then, as luck would have it...

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(Lights shift. CARNIVAL BARKER enters. Music resumes.)

CARNIVAL BARKER: Ladies! Gentlemen! Girls and boys of all ages! Would you like to know where all that marvelous music is coming from!?

PINOCCHIO: Would I!?!

CARNIVAL BARKER: Then look no further! Step right up, step right up and come see my newest spectacular! A brand new show! One day only. MUSIC! MAGIC! MARIONETTES!

PINOCCHIO: Music *and* marionettes?! I've gotta see this! And I bet my father will want to see it too. Yes, my – My father! Oh no! What time is it? I'll be late for school. But...the music. What am I to do?

CARNIVAL BARKER: *(Approaching Pinocchio:)* Say kid, you're lookin' a little down in the mouth. What's the matter?

PINOCCHIO: Nothing, sir. It's just...I'd love to see your show. It looks amazing –

CARNIVAL BARKER: *(Bumptiously:)* Of course it does!

PINOCCHIO: It's just, unfortunately I can't, on account I gotta get to school.

CARNIVAL BARKER: School?! SCHOOL?!?! YUCK! The only thing school's good for is teaching ya reading, writing, and 'rithmetic – three things ain't nobody needs.

PINOCCHIO: But my father says it's important for me to get an education.

CARNIVAL BARKER: Please! You can get one of those any ol' time. But this show, it's in town for one day, and one day only.

PINOCCHIO: That's true.

CARNIVAL BARKER: Besides, what's one day absent from school gonna hurt anyways? Heck, I cut class all the time when I was a kid, and I turned out okay.

(He belches or spits – take your pick.)

PINOCCHIO: You're right! You did! Okay then – I'll do it!

CARNIVAL BARKER: Fantastico! *(Escorting him towards the tent:)* Now follow me, little buddy, right this way – and prepare yerself – a world of excitement awaits!

PINOCCHIO: Oh boy! Oh boy!

CARNIVAL BARKER: *(Stopping Pinocchio just as he's about to enter:)* But before you can enter – you first gotta pay my fee.

PINOCCHIO: Fee?

CARNIVAL BARKER: That'll be two gold coins, please and grazie.

PINOCCHIO: *(Checking his pockets:)* Oh. Uh...uh...

CARNIVAL BARKER: C'mon, kid. I don't got all day.

PINOCCHIO: I'm sorry, mister. I don't have any money. In fact, the only thing that I have of value is... *(He pulls out his primer.)* This. But I couldn't possibly part with it...no matter how wonderful your show may be.

CARNIVAL BARKER: Ya sure about that?

(The Carnival Barker peels the flap of the tent back, allowing all the merriment and music going on inside to seep out and tantalize Pinocchio's ears.)

NARRATOR 1: Pinocchio was sitting on horns.

NARRATOR 2: He was ready to make an unspeakable offer, but all he could think of was his poor, coatless father and his steadfast generosity.

NARRATOR 4: He was about to say no, and continue on the way to school, when again, (*A musical note, or two, is struck. Again the Pied Piper figure appears.*) the music lulled him into submission.

PINOCCHIO: Here. My new primer for admission to the show.

CARNIVAL BARKER: Wonderful! (*Showing him in:*) Go on in, kid – and enjoy!

(Pinocchio disappears behind the tent flap. The Barker exits, shouting out:)

Step right up! Step right up and see the greatest show around! One night only...

(The action shifts...)

SCENE 4: Inside the Puppet Spectacular/The Street Corner

(A light rises on Pinocchio as he watches the PERFORMERS, a few giant windup dolls dressed in frilled collars and harlequin jumpsuits, dance about. He laughs and cheers as carnival music plays under the following bits of dialogue.)

NARRATOR 1: When Pinocchio entered the tent, he was greeted with more revelry and merriment than he ever thought possible.

NARRATOR 2: The audience was laughing so ferociously, that their cheeks soon turned as red as the balloons that were floating about.

(Mystical tones play. A red balloon floats Pinocchio's way. Mesmerized, he nimbly reaches out and grabs it by the string.)

PINOCCHIO: *Woah!*

NARRATOR 3: The puppet knew he should leave, but every time he attempted to tear himself away...

(He begins to exit:)

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NARRATOR 4: Another act would start, even more fantastical than the one preceding it!

PINOCCHIO: (*Laughing:*) It's getting late, but I'm sure Papa won't mind. As long as I'm having fun, what else matters?

(The Performers begin hurling cream pies, smacking each other in the face with them, and generally making a huge, slippery mess. Laughter bellows from the audience as the scene fades out...)

NARRATOR 5: And so there he stayed, all day –

NARRATOR 1: Enjoying himself, and not thinking at all about his father or his responsibilities.

NARRATOR 2: Speaking of Geppetto –

(Geppetto enters at the opposite end of the stage.)

GEPPETTO: (*Calling out:*) Pinocchio! Pinocchio?! Where have you gone? Pinocchio!!

NARRATOR 3: He was about to have an experience of his own...

GEPPETTO: (*To audience:*) Has anyone seen my son? Have you? What about you?! Oh, Pinocchio! PINOCCHIO!

(A CARABINIERI – a kind of police officer – enters, his crony, SOLDIER, at his side.)

CARABINIERI: Shhh! Silenzioso! Whoever you are! Can't you see that the sun's going down and the entire town is getting ready for bed?!

SOLDIER: Yeah! What's the matter with you?

GEPPETTO: Forgive me, Signore Carabiniere! It's just I –

CARABINIERI: (*Eyes Geppetto:*) Oh, Geppetto! It's only you! What seems to be the trouble here?

GEPPETTO: It's my son! He left this morning for school, and no one has seen him since! I checked with his teachers, I checked with his classmates – no one knows where he is!

CARABINIERI: Geppetto, that's awful!

SOLDIER: Awful!

CARABINIERI: Terrible!

SOLDIER: Terrible!

CARABINIERI: We'll help look you at once!

SOLDIER: Indeed!

CARABINIERI: (*Pulls out a notebook and a pen:*) Tell us, what's your boy's name?

SOLDIER: And what does he look like?

GEPPETTO: Well, his name is Pinocchio –

CARABINIERI & SOLDIER: (*Taking notes:*) Uh-huh...

GEPPETTO: He's about yay high.

CARABINIERI & SOLDIER: Yay...

GEPPETTO: With bright blue eyes.

CARABINIERI & SOLDIER: Blue...

GEPPETTO: Thick wavy hair.

CARABINIER & SOLDIER: Wavy...

GEPPETTO: And a body made entirely out of wood.

CARABINIERI & SOLDIER: (*Confused by this development:*) Wood. (*Beat.*) WOOD???

GEPPETTO: He's a puppet. It sounds silly, I know. But Pinocchio is a puppet who talks, and walks, and he's my son.

(After a beat, the Carabinieri and Soldier laugh at this. Perhaps Geppetto laughs too.)

CARABINIERI: You're joking, right?

SOLDIER: Right?

(Geppetto stops laughing, shakes his head "no." Beat.)

SOLDIER: Oh boy.

CARABINIERI: Look, uh, Geppetto we've known you a long time.

SOLDIER: *Mmmhmm.*

CARABINIERI: You're the most honest man in town—

SOLDIER: Indeed.

CARABINIERI: And if you say that you have a living son made of wood, well, then we believe...

CARABINIERI & SOLDIER: *...that's what you believe.*

CARABINIERI: And we have no other choice but...to arrest you!

GEPPETTO: What?

SOLDIER: *(Slapping cuffs on him:)* And declare you insane!

CARABINIERI: 'Twas bound to happen. Anyone reduced to a life of puppet and doll making is sure to lose a screw...

SOLDIER: ...Or seven.

GEPPETTO: But I'm not crazy!

CARABINIERI: *Sure.* You're not crazy...and I'm really a *(age and gender of the actor playing the Carabiniere)* in a costume, acting in a silly play. *(Laughs in unison with the Soldier.)* C'mon, Geppetto.

SOLDIER: You've got an audience with the King.

GEPPETTO: *(As he's begin dragged off:)* But I'm innocent, I tell you! Innocent!

CARABINIERI & SOLDIER: That's what they all say!

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CARABINIERI: To the palace we go!

(Blackout.)

SCENE 5: Geppetto's Toy Shop, The Following Morning

NARRATOR 4: Poor, poor Geppetto. While the toy maker was...

NARRATORS: *(In unison:)* Away,

NARRATOR 4: Pinocchio ran home.

NARRATOR 5: But when he arrived, he soon discovered –

(Pinocchio enters carrying a single red balloon on a string.)

PINOCCHIO: There isn't anybody here. Hello? Where'd my Papa go?

NARRATOR 5: Suddenly, out of the darkness, a little voice cried out:

DAVEY: *(Voiceover:)* Yes, where did your father go?

PINOCCHIO: That's what I'm asking.

DAVEY: *(Voiceover:)* And that's why I'm surprised; it's not like you to care for anyone but yourself!

PINOCCHIO: That's not true! I do care!

DAVEY: *(Voiceover:)* Could've fooled me. If you care so much for him, then why didn't you go to school? And why did you stay out all night? And why did you listen to –

PINOCCHIO: It was an accident! I wasn't planning on – hey, who's saying this?

DAVEY: *(Voiceover:)* I am, course! And I'm over...*here.*

(Pinocchio looks right. A cricket chirping can be heard – perhaps made by one of the Narrators.)

No...*here.*

(Pinocchio looks left. More cricket chirping – perhaps made by another Narrator.)

No...here.

(DAVEY, a crotchety old cricket, hops onstage.)

PINOCCHIO: *(Startled:)* Jiminy Crickets!

NARRATORS & DAVEY: No, no, no, no!

(Perhaps one Narrator utters the phrase "copyright!")

DAVEY: Actually, it's Davey. Davey Cricket. And you'd better watch where you're steppin'!

PINOCCHIO: I will! Gee, I didn't know crickets could talk.

DAVEY: Puppet, what you don't know could fill a library! And speaking of books, I see that yours has gone missing.

PINOCCHIO: Well, it was...wait, how did you know that?

DAVEY: We crickets know everything; and what we don't know, we're told – by the Blue Haired Fairy, no less! Sent me to check on you, she did. Unfortunately for you, I don't think she's going to be too happy when I report back. Antennas crossed she doesn't punish you too severely. Only one way to find out.

(Begins to hop away.)

PINOCCHIO: Wait! Please don't go! And don't tell her what you found – or didn't find! I'm sorry! I didn't mean to be bad!

DAVEY: Ya didn't, huh? Well, hate to burst your bubble, kid – *(A Narrator pops Pinocchio's balloon:)* But life don't work like that! Saying "I'm sorry" doesn't fix all yer problems. Especially not after things have gone wrong – and my, have they gone terribly, terribly wrong.

PINOCCHIO: I'm so confused. When will my Papa return so I can fix this?

DAVEY: It's not so much a question of when he'll return, but if. Geppetto's been...arrested!

PINOCCHIO: What?! When?!

DAVEY: Last night, while he was out lookin' fer you. He ran into a couple of wise guys and before you could say "mussels marinara," they hauled him off to the big house. No tellin' what they'll do to him there. I'd tell ya where they're keeping him, but yer just a selfish little puppet, and at the end of the day, what can a puppet do?

PINOCCHIO: (*A few tears escape him:*) You're right! This is all my fault! And I am just a selfish puppet. Oh, my poor Papa! Why did I ever listen to that carnival barker? And why did I misbehave? Why? Why? Why?!

(He begins to cry for a moment. A long, awkward moment.)

DAVEY: (*Dryly:*) Oh brother. *Awkward...*

PINOCCHIO: (*Wiping his tears away:*) Sorry for...leaking...or whatever this is I'm doing. It's just, if only there was someone who could help me, and believe in me, and make me more than what I am.

(Pinocchio reaches around his neck... The wind chimes and laughter return.)

NARRATOR 1: As luck would have it, Pinocchio touched his splintery neck,

NARRATOR 2: And feeling something beneath the pattern of his shirt,

NARRATOR 3: He discovered the seed that his father had presented him with only yesterday.

NARRATORS: (*In unison:*) A seed that would soon grow into an idea!

PINOCCHIO: (*Gasping:*) The Blue Haired Fairy! She'll help me! I can go to her and—and ask her to turn me into a real boy.

DAVEY: Say what now?

PINOCCHIO: I'll explain everything to her, and if she makes me a human, then I can go to the jail and...trade places with my papa. After all, I caused all these problems, the least I can do is take the punishment I deserve.

DAVEY: You mean that, Pinocchio?

PINOCCHIO: Really and truly. A puppet may not be able to solve this problem, but a real boy certainly can! And that's what I'll be!

NARRATOR 4: The cricket, who by nature was crustier than toast,

NARRATOR 5: Was so touched by Pinocchio's concern for his father,

NARRATOR 3: That he reached under his crumpled old wing, and pulled out—

DAVEY: (*Clapping his hands, the Narrators unfurl a large map. It glows with promise:*) A map! Follow it to the letter and you'll find what you seek.

PINOCCHIO: Thank you!

DAVEY: Don't thank me yet! The cottage is almost a day's walk from here, in the darkest part of the deepest forest, and is guarded by the scariest of creatures!

PINOCCHIO: (*Hesitant a first, but then:*) Scary, huh? Well scary or not, my father needs me! It's time for me to stop stallin' and start haulin'! (*He takes the map.*) ...You comin' with?

DAVEY: And what, act as your conscience and cute little sidekick? Sorry Woody, wrong toy story. You're on your own with this one.

PINOCCHIO: Don't worry, Papa – I'm on my way!!

(He exits.)

DAVEY: Good bye! Nice kid. 'Bout as sharp as wet ravioli, but nice none the less. He's doomed.

(Davey exits, making the cricket sound as he does so.)

SCENE 6: A Ferocious Forest, Sometime Later

(The sound of drums tapping out a soft, uniform, military-like rhythm plays under the following dialogue. Pinocchio enters, walking in place.)

NARRATOR 1: Pinocchio began his quest. He trudged, and trampled, and allowed the map and sunlight to guide him.

NARRATOR 2: But as misfortune would have it, just as he entered the ferocious forest, the sun went down,

NARRATOR 3: And it became so dark that he had to grope his way about.

PINOCCHIO: What do I do? I can't even find my nose, let alone the fairy's cottage. How am I supposed to –

(Suddenly, a rustling sound is heard, cutting Pinocchio's words short.)

...What was that?

(A Narrator, holding a tree branch, rustles it behind Pinocchio a second time.)

What's going on?

(They rustle it again. To audience:)

What's behind me? Only one way to find out.

(The music shifts. It's more foreboding now. Ominous. Pinocchio, bracing himself for the worst, turns his body to discover – nothing at all. A Narrator rustles the tree branch again. The music stops.)

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Phew. Just the wind. There's a relief for —

(BAM! An explosion of sound, noise, and color!)

BIRDS: *(Perhaps played by the Narrators:)* Ca-caw! Ca-caw!!

PINOCCHIO: Holy cannoli!

NARRATOR 1: Suddenly, a flock of ravenous birds flew out of the bushes!

(Pinocchio makes a mad dash in the opposite direction, but more BIRDS fly out, encircling him. A chase ensues!)

PINOCCHIO: No! No!

NARRATOR 3: The greedy scavengers had sniffed out the puppet's bread hat

NARRATOR 4: And set their sights upon obtaining it!

NARRATOR 5: They lunged at him this way —

PINOCCHIO: *(Dodging their attacks:)* Oh!

NARRATOR 5: And that!

PINOCCHIO: No!

NARRATOR 1: Brushing across his nose, frightening him greatly!

PINOCCHIO: Go away, birds! Go away!

(Pinocchio and the Birds run amok on stage; lunging here, leaping there — all the while music underscores. The Birds caw and screech continually as the scene progresses.)

Where am I headed? I can't see a thing! What's in front of me?!

NARRATOR 2: Blinded by the darkness, all the puppet could do was feel the snap of branches as they smacked his face,

NARRATOR 3: The hot sting of the beaks as they pecked his forehead, and the parchment map in his —

BIRDS: Ca-caw!! CA-CAW!!!!

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(One of the birds latches onto the map with its beak and begins tugging.)

PINOCCHIO: Not my map! I need that! Let go!

(But it's too late, the bird scoops up the map and soars off with it, ensnared between its talons.)

Noooo!

BIRDS: Ca-caw! Ca-caw!

NARRATOR 4: Deeper into the thicket he ran.

NARRATOR 5: Finally, just as few streaks of moonlight made their way through the foliage,

NARRATOR 2: And just when he thought he could outrun the birds and find shelter –

NARRATORS: *(In unison:)* SMACK! BAM! CRASH!

NARRATOR 3: He ran right into the trunk of a tree and –

(Pinocchio does just this!)

NARRATORS: *(In unison:)* COLLAPSED!

(They clap their hands together, causing us to – blackout! The screeching and cawing of the birds can still be heard in the distance as we transition into the next scene.)

SCENE 7: The Fairy's Cottage, The Next Morning

(We shift. Sunlight shines through a large window, bathing the room in warmth and springtime. Next to the window, and snoozing peacefully in a large, comfy bed, is none other than our hero himself, Pinocchio. A few snores escape him. Suddenly, a HOODED FIGURE appears just outside doorway. The figure glides into the room, carried on cloud of laughter and wind chimes...)

HOODED FIGURE: Rise and shine, Pinocchio! Pinocchio...
(Another snore.) Pinocchio... *(Another snore.)* Time to get up
 now, Pinocchio, Time to get up.

*(She shakes him gently, but to no avail. Nothing on heaven or
 earth is going to get him out of that bed.)*

Poor little puppet, whatever am I going to do with you? I
 know you're alive, I can hear your heartbeat. But—

(She feels his forehead.)

Your head's on fire! Only one option left, I suppose.

*(The figured reaches into her cloak, grabs a large mound of
 shimmering sparkle dust, and sprinkles a few droplets over
 Pinocchio. Bells jingle in the distance.)*

Now awaken!

(She kisses his forehead and steps back. Pinocchio begins to stir.)

PINOCCHIO: *(Coming to:)* My head. I—I—

HOODED FIGURE: ...Yes?

PINOCCHIO: *(Startled:)* Ahhh! Where am I? What is this
 place?! And who are you?!? Are you a phantom!? Ohh!! Don't
 eat me, phantom! Don't eat me!!!!

(He attempts to hide under the covers.)

HOODED FIGURE: *(She giggles at this.)* A phantom?! Oh,
 Pinocchio. Come now. Do I look like a phantom to you?!

*(She pulls the hood of her cloak back, revealing herself to be none
 other than the Blue Fairy.)*

PINOCCHIO: I dunno. It's hard to see your face with all those
 blue sparkles, and curls, and—ravioli mostaccioli! It's you!
 You're the fairy!

FAIRY: The one and only!

PINOCCHIO: And here I thought I'd never find you! I thought my life would end before I got the chance!

FAIRY: (*Giggles:*) You certainly were screaming like your life was over. (*Imitating him – in a motherly tone:*) "Help me! Help me!" And all over a little cloak and some birds too. Oh, Pinocchio, you are a funny one.

PINOCCHIO: Stop laughing at me. It wasn't just the birds that frightened me. There was also...um...a monster.

FAIRY: ...A monster?

PINOCCHIO: A big monster! Twice as large as this room, and covered in scales and...and a thousand tentacles!

FAIRY: How...*interesting.*

(The Fairy snaps her fingers, causing something to stir from within the puppet's nose. With each fib he tells, and with the aid of the Narrators – who are perhaps using an overly long broom stick – Pinocchio's nose grows longer and longer.)

FAIRY: Tell me, what happened to the monster?

PINOCCHIO: (*Reacting to his nose, then moving on:*) It was eaten...uh...

(As Pinocchio continues to lie, a high-pitched sound, reminiscent of a slide whistle is heard.)

By another monster...

(It grows again – and the whistle again blows.)

Yeah! That's it! Another monster that looked like a giant lizard, with green eyes (...*And again:*) green skin, (...*And again:*) and a great big green beard made out of spider webs!

(And AGAIN! His nose has grown so long that it's practically out the door and down the hall. He looks down at it:)

Wait a second—my nose! Why is it growing? And why are you laughing at it?

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FAIRY: *(Through more giggles:)* I'm not laughing at your nose, but at your lies. Lies are easily recognized, and yours are as obvious as the nose on your face.

PINOCCHIO: I'm sorry I lied, Fairy! I guess I was just embarrassed.

FAIRY: Being afraid is nothing to be embarrassed of, for it's in fear that we learn the most about ourselves. But lying, that only conceals us from our own truth.

PINOCCHIO: That's exactly what I did. But how do I fix this?

FAIRY: Only one way that I know of: are you sincerely remorseful for not telling the truth?

PINOCCHIO: I am!

FAIRY: And do you promise to never tell another lie, as long as you live?

PINOCCHIO: I do! Truly, I do!

FAIRY: And I believe you! And more importantly, so does your nose.

(The Fairy pulls out a ridiculously large ostrich feather and begins tickling the puppet's nose with it – prompting Pinocchio to sneeze a rather large sneeze.)

PINOCCHIO: Ah-Ah-CHOO!

(As a result, his nose shrinks back to its normal size.)

That's amazing!

FAIRY: *(Smiling proudly:)* I know. *(Placing the feather in his wooden hand:)* Here. Keep it. You never know when a sneeze or an oversized feather will come in handy.

PINOCCHIO: *(Placing the feather in his back pocket. Spoken mostly to himself:)* If you're able to do that with a lie, imagine what you'll do with my wish! See, I want you to turn me into a real boy.

FAIRY: I beg your pardon?

PINOCCHIO: It's why I'm here. My Papa says that if you want something badly enough then that want will become a wish, and that wish will come true.

FAIRY: I see.

(The Fairy pulls out a velvet bag and begins filling it with all sorts of contraptions.)

And is that all your father says?

PINOCCHIO: No. He also says that wishes have to be earned.

FAIRY: He's right. And do you feel that you've done enough to have earned yours?

PINOCCHIO: I came all this way, didn't I? Besides, my wish is really important. Probably more important than everyone else's. With my wish, I'll be able to free my Papa and help him out!

FAIRY: That's a bold statement, and a commendable one too; but unfortunately, lots of people make bold statements when they want something, and while words are wonderful, it's actions that speak volumes.

PINOCCHIO: I'm confused.

FAIRY: I'll put it another way; if you can show yourself to be noble, kind, and selfless, then I shall grant your wish and give you all that your heart desires.

PINOCCHIO: But I'm just a puppet. I need to be a real boy to prove myself, yet you want me to prove myself before you'll turn me into a real boy! How does that work?

FAIRY: That part you'll have to figure out on your own. And now, my dear Pinocchio, I must be off. *(She waves her newly filled bag in front of him.)* I have lots of other wishes to grant and not a lot of time to grant them in. Maybe if you're lucky, one of them will be yours.

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PINOCCHIO: Wait! You can't go yet! I need you!

FAIRY: Arrivederci! And good luck!

(She exits.)

PINOCCHIO: *(Chasing after her:)* Fairy, no! Not yet! Come back, Fairy! We need to discuss this! Come back! Please come—

(As he reaches out to touch her cape—POOF! She disappears. Leaving only the cloak behind.)

back. She's vanished.

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