



Carlo Collodi

The Adventures of Pinocchio

Translated by P. M. D. Panton

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THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO

Traduzione integrale inglese di *Le Avventure di Pinocchio. Storia di un burattino*, di Carlo Collodi
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Chapter 1

How it happened that Master Cherry, the carpenter, found a piece of wood that wept and laughed like a child.

There was once upon a time...

"A king!" my little readers will say all at once.

No, children, you are mistaken. Once upon a time there was a piece of wood. No, it was not an expensive piece of wood. Far from it. Just a common piece of firewood, one of those thick, solid logs that are put into stoves and fireplaces in winter to make rooms cosy and warm.

I don't know how this really happened, but the fact remains that one fine day this piece of wood turned up in the shop of an old carpenter. His real name was Master Antonio, but everyone called him Master Cherry, for the tip of his nose was so round and red and shiny that it looked like a ripe cherry.

As soon as Master Cherry saw that piece of wood, he was filled with joy. Rubbing his hands together happily, he muttered to himself:

"Oh, this has come at exactly the right moment. I shall use it to make a nice table-leg."

Without hesitating a moment, he grasped his sharp axe to strip off the bark and shape the wood. But as he was about to give it the first blow, he stood still with his arm in the air, for he heard a wee, tiny voice say pleadingly: "Please be careful! Don't hit me so hard!"

You can't imagine how surprised old Master Cherry was!

Wide-eyed he looked all around the room to see where that little voice had come from and he saw nobody! He looked under the bench—nobody! He peeped inside the cupboard that was always closed—nobody! He looked in the basket of sawdust and shavings—nobody! He opened the shop door to look up and down the street—and still nobody!

"Oh, I see!" he then said, laughing and scratching his wig. "It must be that I only imagined that tiny voice! Well, well—back to work once more."

He raised his axe again and struck a most solemn blow upon that piece of wood again.

"Ouch! You hurt me!" cried the same tiny voice.

Master Cherry was completely dumbfounded, his eyes stood out of his head with fright, his mouth wide-open, and his tongue hung out over his chin, like those you see on fountain masks.

As soon as he could speak he said, trembling and stuttering from fright:

"What, what! Where did that tiny voice come from, when there's not a living soul around? Might it be that this piece of wood has learned to weep and cry like a child? I can hardly believe it. But, just look at it—a piece of common firewood, good only to burn in the stove, the same as any other and if you put it onto the fire, it'll cook a kettle of beans. Yet—might someone be hidden in it? If so, if he's hidden there, the worse for him. I'll fix him right away!"

With these words, he grabbed the log with both hands and started to beat it unmercifully against the walls of the room.

And then he stopped to listen, to hear if there was a tiny moaning voice. He waited two minutes—nothing; five minutes—nothing; ten minutes—nothing!

"Oh, now I understand," he said, trying bravely to laugh and ruffling up his wig with his hand. "It's easy to see I only imagined I heard a tiny voice that said 'ouch' Oh, well, well—back to work once more!"

The poor fellow was scared half to death, so he tried to sing a gay song in order to give himself a little courage.

And meanwhile, he'd put down the axe and picked up the plane and he began planning so as to make the wood smooth and even, but as he drew it to and fro, he heard the same tiny voice. And this time it giggled as it spoke:

"Stop it! Oh, stop it! Ha, ha, ha! You're tickling my stomach."

This time poor Master Cherry fell down as if he had been struck by a bolt of lightning. When he opened his eyes, he was sitting on the floor.

His face had changed; fright had turned even the tip of his nose from red to the deepest purple.

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Chapter 2

Master Cherry gives the piece of wood to his friend, Geppetto, who plans to make himself a magnificent puppet that will dance, fence, and turn somersaults in the air.

At that very moment, somebody knocked on the door. "Come in," said the carpenter, not having enough strength left with which to stand up.

And the door opened and in came a jolly little old man. His name was Geppetto, but to the boys of the neighbourhood, especially when they wanted to make him mad, he was Corntuft, on account of his yellow wig which looked very much like a dish of cornmeal polenta.

Geppetto was very short-tempered. Woe betide anyone who called him Corntuft! He simply went wild, just like a beast, and nobody could hold him back.

"Good day, Master Antonio," said Geppetto. "What are you doing lying on the floor?"

"I'm teaching the ants how to read."

"Much good may it do you!"

"Well, what brought you here, friend Geppetto?"

"My legs. And it may flatter you to know, Master Antonio, that I've come to beg a favour of you."

"Oh, here I am, at your service," answered the carpenter, getting up onto his knees.

"I had a brainwave this morning."

"Let's hear it."

"I thought of making myself a beautiful wooden puppet. It must be marvellous, one that will be able to dance, fence, and turn somersaults in the air. And with this puppet I intend to go around the world, to earn a crust of bread and a glass of wine. Now, what do you think about it?"

"Bravo, Corntuft!" cried the same tiny voice which came from nobody knew where.

On hearing himself called Corntuft, Master Geppetto went the colour of a red pepper and, turning to the carpenter, he said to him in a furious rage:

"Why do you insult me?"

"Who's insulting you?"

"You called me Corntuft."

"No, I did not!"

"I suppose you think it was me! I KNOW it was you!"

"No!"

"Yes!"

"No!"

"Yes!"

And growing angrier each moment, they went from words to blows, and began to fight and scratch and bite and slap each other.

And when the fight was over, Master Antonio found Geppetto's yellow wig in his hands and Geppetto found the carpenter's curly wig in his mouth.

"Give me back my wig!" said Master Antonio.

"You give me mine and let's be friends again."

The two little old men, each taking back his own wig, shook hands and swore to be good friends for the rest of their lives.

"Well then, Master Geppetto," said the carpenter, as a sign of newly-made peace, "what can I do for you?"

"Well, I'd like some wood to make myself a puppet. Will you give me some?"

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Master Antonio, very happy indeed, went straight over to his bench to get the piece of wood which had frightened him so much. But just as he was about to give it to his friend, with a violent jerk it slipped out of his hands and with a thud hit against poor Geppetto's frail shins.

"Ah! Is this the gentle way, Master Antonio, in which you make your gifts? You have almost made me lame!"

"Upon my honour, I didn't do it!"

"Ah!" So I did it then!"

"No, it's the fault of this piece of wood."

"I know it's the fault of the piece of wood; but it was you who threw it at my legs!"

"I did not throw it at you!"

"Liar!"

"Geppetto, don't insult me! If you do, I'll call you Corntuft."

"Donkey."

"Corntuft!"

"Ass!"

"Corntuft!"

"Ugly monkey!"

"Corntuft!"

On hearing himself called Corntuft this third time Geppetto, blind with rage, threw himself at the carpenter. And then and there they gave each other a sound thrashing.

And when this fight was over, Master Antonio had two more scratches on his nose, and Geppetto had two buttons missing from his coat. Considering the fight a draw, they shook hands and swore again to be good friends for the rest of their lives.

Then Geppetto took his fine piece of wood, and thanked Master Antonio, and went limping away home.

Chapter 3

Geppetto, home again, immediately sets about working on the puppet and calls him Pinocchio. The puppet gets into mischief.

Geppetto's home was a little ground-floor room which was lit from under the stairway. The furniture couldn't have been simpler: a very old chair, a rickety old bed, and a broken-down table. On the rear wall one could see a fireplace, with the fire lit; but the fire was painted, and next to the fire was a painted kettle that kept boiling merrily away, sending up a cloud of steam or what looked just like real steam.

As soon as he arrived home, Geppetto took out his tools and began to carve and shape the wood into a puppet.

"What shall I call him?" he said muttering to himself. "Yeah, I think I shall call him Pinocchio. That name will bring him good luck. I once knew a whole family of Pinocchios: Pinocchio the father, Pinocchia the mother, and Pinocchi the children, and they all did very well. The richest of them begged for a living."

Having chosen a name for his puppet, Geppetto seriously set about working in earnest and began with his hair, then his forehead, then his eyes. And having finished making his eyes just imagine his bewilderment when he noticed that these eyes were moving and were staring fixedly at him.

Geppetto, seeing that he was being stared at by two wooden eyes, felt really uneasy and said rather angrily:

"Naughty wooden eyes, why are you staring at me?"

There was no answer.

So, after making the eyes, he made the nose; but no sooner was it finished that it began to grow. It grew, and grew and it grew and in only a few minutes it became so long that it seemed endless.

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Poor Geppetto found it hard work to shorten it; but the more he cut, the longer that impertinent nose grew!

Well after the nose, he made the mouth.

But before he finished it, it began to laugh and poke fun at him.

"Stop laughing!" said Geppetto annoyed; but he might as well have spoken to the wall.

"Stop laughing, I say!" Geppetto shouted rather angrily.

The mouth stopped laughing, but it stuck out a long tongue.

Not wishing to mess up his carving Geppetto pretended not to see anything and went on with his work.

After the mouth, he made the chin, and then the neck, and the shoulders, the stomach, the arms, and the hands.

As soon as the hands were finished, Geppetto felt his wig being snatched from his head. He glanced up and what did he see? His saw his yellow wig in the puppet's hands.

"Pinocchio, give me back my wig at once!"

But Pinocchio, instead of giving back the wig, put it on his own head, and was almost hidden under it.

This cheeky and mocking behaviour made Geppetto very sad and downcast, more so than he had ever been in his entire life.

Turning to Pinocchio he said: "You wicked boy!" "You're not even finished, and you are already beginning to show no respect towards your poor old father. It's very bad, my son, very bad!"

And he wiped away a tear.

The legs and the feet still had to be made. And when Geppetto had finished making the feet, he felt a sharp kick on the tip of his nose.

"Now I deserve it!" he said to himself. "I should have thought of this before I made him. And now it's too late!"

He took hold of the puppet under the arms and put him down on the floor to teach him to walk.

Pinocchio's legs were so stiff that he couldn't move them, and Geppetto held his hand and showed him how to put out one foot before the other.

When the stiffness went out of his legs, Pinocchio started walking all by himself and ran all around the room; until he slipped out through the open door, leapt out onto the street and began to run away!

Oh, poor Geppetto ran after him but was unable to catch him, for Pinocchio ran in leaps and bounds just like a hare, his two wooden feet, clattering on the stones of the street, making as much noise as twenty pairs of peasants' wooden clogs.

"Catch him! Catch him!" cried Geppetto; but the people who were in the street, seeing a wooden puppet running as fast as a racehorse, stood still and stared at him, and they laughed and laughed like you wouldn't believe.

At last, by sheer luck, a Carabinieri happened along, who, hearing all that racket, and believing it to be a runaway colt, stood bravely in the middle of the street, legs wide apart, firmly resolved to stop it and prevent any further trouble.

Pinocchio saw the Carabinieri from afar and tried his best to escape between the legs of the big fellow, but without any success.

The Carabinieri, without budging, grabbed him by the nose (it was an extremely long one and seemed made on purpose to be caught by the Carabinieri) and he returned him to Master Geppetto.

The little old man wanted to pull Pinocchio's ears to punish him for his naughtiness. Think how he felt when, upon searching for them, he discovered he couldn't find any ears! And do you know why? Because he had carved him in such a hurry that he had forgotten to make them!

All he could do was to seize Pinocchio by the nape of his neck and, as they walked back home, he said with a menacing shake of his head said:

"We're going straight back home now and when we get there we'll settle this matter!"

Pinocchio, on hearing this, threw himself on the ground and refused to take another step. One person after another gathered around the two.

Soon a crowd of idlers and busybodies were there, making comments. Some would say one thing, some another:

"Ah, poor puppet," said one of them. "I am not surprised he doesn't want to go home! Who knows how unmercifully that bad Geppetto might beat him!"

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"Ah, yeah, Geppetto seems to be a good man," said another, "but with boys he's a real tyrant. If we leave that poor puppet in his hands he may tear him to pieces!"

In short, they made such a fuss that, finally, the Carabinieri ended matters by setting Pinocchio free and dragged Geppetto off to prison. The poor old fellow didn't know how to defend himself, but wept and wailed like a little calf and on his way to prison muttered between sobs:

"Wretched son! To think I tried so hard to make you into a well-behaved puppet! I deserve it, however! I should have given the matter more thought."

What happened after this is an almost unbelievable story, but I'll tell you about it in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 4

The story of Pinocchio and the Talking Cricket, in which we see that naughty children do not like to be corrected by those who know more than they do.

Well, I'll tell you children, while poor old Geppetto was being taken, through no fault of his own, to prison, that rascal Pinocchio, free from the clutches of the Carabinieri, rushed home, across the fields. In a great hurry, he leaped over tall hedges and thorny brambles and ditches full of water, just as if he were a goat or a hare being chased by hunters.

When he arrived home, he found the door ajar. Pushing it open he went in, locked the door, and threw himself down on the floor, heaving a heavy sigh of relief.

But his relief didn't last very long, because he heard somebody in the room crying:

"Cri-cri-cri-cri-cri!"

"Who's calling me?" asked Pinocchio, extremely frightened.

"It's me!"

Pinocchio turned around and saw a large cricket creeping slowly up the wall.

"Tell me, cricket, who may you be?"

"I'm the Talking Cricket and I've been living in this room for more than one hundred years."

"Today, however, this room is mine," said the puppet, "and if you wish to do me a great favour, you get out right now, and don't ever think of turning around."

"I refuse to leave this spot," answered the cricket, "until I have told you a great truth."

"Well, tell me then, and get a move on!"

"Woe to those children who rebel against their parents and run away from home! They will never be happy in this world, and sooner or later they will bitterly repent."

"Ha ha, go on, sing, my cricket, just as you please. But, as for me, what I know is that tomorrow, at sunrise, I'm going to leave this place forever. For if I stay here the same thing will happen to me which happens to all other boys and girls. I mean, they will send me off to school, and whether I want to or not, I will have to study. Well as for me, let me tell you in complete and utter confidence, I hate to study! It's much more fun chasing butterflies, climbing trees, and stealing birds from their nests."

"You poor silly fool! Don't you know that if you spend your time like that, you'll grow up to be a perfect donkey and you'll be the laughingstock of everyone"

"Oh, shut up, miserable old cricket!" shouted Pinocchio.

But the cricket, who was a patient, and wise philosopher, instead of being offended by such impudence, continued unruffled:

"If you don't like going to school, why don't you at least learn a trade, so that you may earn your bread honestly?"

"Shall I tell you something?" said Pinocchio, who was beginning to lose his patience. "Of all the trades in the world, there is only one that really appeals to me."

"And what might that be?"

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"It is to eat, drink, sleep, play, and lead the life of a vagabond from morning till night."

"Let me tell you, for your own good, Pinocchio," said the Talking Cricket as calm as ever, "those who follow that trade always end up in the hospital or in prison."

"Careful, cricket of ill omen! If you make me angry, you'll be sorry!"

"Poor Pinocchio, how I pity you!"

"Why do you pity me?"

"Because you're a puppet and, what's worse, you have a wooden head."

At these words, Pinocchio completely lost his temper, he took a hammer from the bench, and he threw it at the Talking Cricket.

Perhaps he did not mean to hit him, but, sadly, he did hit the cricket, right on his head and the poor cricket barely had enough breath to let out his final "cri-cri-cri" and the cricket remained as dead as a doornail and stuck squashed flat against the wall!

Chapter 5

Pinocchio is hungry, and looks for an egg to make himself an omelette; but, just when the omelette is ready, it flies out of the window.

Meanwhile it was growing dark, and Pinocchio, remembering that he hadn't eaten anything, felt a twinge in his tummy that greatly brought on an appetite.

But a boy's appetite grows very fast, and in fact, a few minutes later, his appetite turned to hunger, and in no time his hunger, made him as hungry as a wolf. His hunger was unbearable.

Poor Pinocchio ran quickly over to the fireplace, where a kettle was boiling and was just about to take the lid off, to see what was inside, but the kettle was only painted on the wall! Just imagine how he felt! His long nose, which was already long, became at least three inches longer.

And then he began to run about the room, digging into all the drawers and all the cupboards, searching for a piece of bread, even a little dry bread or a crust. A dog's leftover bone, a little mouldy polenta, a fish bone, a cherry stone. In short, anything to chew on! But he found nothing, just nothing at all, absolutely nothing!

And in the meanwhile, he grew hungrier and hungrier and poor Pinocchio's only relief was to yawn; and he certainly did yawn, and his yawns were so big that sometimes his mouth reached the tip of his ears. And after yawning he spat, it felt as though his stomach was disappearing.

And then he began to cry desperately, and he said to himself:

"The Talking Cricket was right. It was wrong of me to rebel against my father and to run away from home. If my father were here now, I wouldn't be yawning myself to death! Oh, what a dreadful illness hunger is!"

Just then and there he thought he saw something white and round on top of the rubbish heap, it looked very much like a hen's egg. No sooner seen he pounced on it. It really was an egg.

Ah, the puppet's joy knew no bounds, it would be impossible to describe, you can only imagine it. Thinking he was dreaming, he turned the egg over and over in his hands, fondled it, kissed it, and kissing it he said:

"Ah, how shall I cook you? Hey, shall I make an omelette? No, it would be better to poach it! Or wouldn't it be better to fry it in a frying-pan. Or simply boil it or have it raw? No, the quickest way of all would be to poach it or fry it in a small pan. Oh, I'm dying to eat it."

No sooner said than done. He placed a little pan on a brazier of red hot coals. In the pan, instead of oil or butter, he poured a little water. And as soon as the water started to boil, tac! he cracked the egg-shell and was ready to pour the contents into the pan. But instead of the white and the yolk of the egg, a happy, little chick, jumped out. Bowing politely to Pinocchio, he said:

"A thousand thanks, Mr. Pinocchio, for having saved me the trouble of breaking my shell! Goodbye, and take good care and give my love to the family!"

With these words he spread out his wings and, darting to the open window, he flew away till he was out of sight.

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The poor puppet stood there as if he were in a trance, eyes wide open his mouth gaping, the empty halves of the egg-shell in his hands. When he came to himself, however, from this first shock, he began to cry and scream and stamp his feet on the floor, out of desperation, and as he sobbed he said:

"Indeed, the Talking Cricket was right! If I hadn't run away from home and if my father were here now, I shouldn't be dying of hunger. Oh, what a dreadful illness hunger is!"

And as his stomach kept grumbling more and more than ever before, and not knowing how to quieten it, he decided to go for a walk to the near-by village, in the hope of finding some charitable soul who might give him a piece of bread.

Chapter 6

Pinocchio falls asleep with his feet on the brazier, and awakens the next morning with his feet burnt off.

On top of everything, it was a horrible winter night. There were loud thunder claps and lightning bolts seemed to set the sky on fire, the freezing wind whistled angrily, raising enormous clouds of dust, making all the trees in the countryside creak a groan.

Pinocchio was terribly afraid of thunder and lightning, but his hunger was far greater than his fear. So leaving the door ajar, he rushed out, and in a dozen leaps and bounds he reached the village, with his tongue hanging out and panting for breath, just like a hunting dog.

But he found the whole place dark and deserted. The shops were closed; the doors of the houses closed, the windows closed, and not even a dog was in the street. It looked like a ghost town.

However, Pinocchio, driven by hunger and desperation, ran up to a house and took hold of the bell, and began pulling it wildly, saying to himself: "That will make somebody look out!"

And indeed, a little old man with a nightcap on his head peered out of a window and shouted angrily:

"What do you want at such an hour?"

"Will you be so kind as to give me some bread?"

"Wait there, I'll be right back" said the little old man, thinking he had to deal with one of those madcap street urchins who have fun at night by ringing people's doorbells when they're peacefully asleep.

And after a minute or two, the window opened again, and the same voice of the little old man cried out to Pinocchio:

"Get underneath the window, and hold out your hat!"

Pinocchio quickly pulled off his funny hat, but just as he held it out, an enormous basin of water was poured down over him, drenching him from head to foot, just as if he had been a dried-up pot of geraniums.

He returned home like a wet chicken, exhausted with fatigue and hunger; as he no longer had any strength left with which to stand, he sat down, and put his wet and muddy feet up on a brazier full of burning embers.

And there he fell asleep, and while he was asleep, his feet which were wooden, caught fire and began to burn. And little by little they became charred and turned to ashes.

And Pinocchio continued to sleep and snore, as if his feet belonged to somebody else. And finally, around daybreak, he awoke because someone was knocking at the door.

"Who is it?" he asked, yawning and rubbing his eyes.

"It's I," answered a voice.

Ah! That voice was the voice of Geppetto!

Chapter 7

Geppetto returns home, makes new feet for the puppet, and gives him the food that the poor fellow had brought for himself.

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Poor Pinocchio, who was always half asleep, hadn't yet noticed that his feet were burnt off. Therefore, as soon as he heard his father's voice, he jumped off his stool to run and open the latched door. But, as he did so, he staggered a few times and fell flat on the floor.

In falling, he made as much noise as a bag of wooden ladles falling from a fifth storey building.

"Open the door for me!" shouted Geppetto from the street.

"My dear father, I can't," answered the puppet, crying and rolling over and over on the floor.

"Why can't you?"

"Because somebody has eaten my feet."

"Who's eaten them?"

"The cat," said Pinocchio, seeing the cat playing joyfully with some wooden shavings in its forepaws.

"Open the door! I tell you" shouted Geppetto again, "or when I get in, I'll show you the cat, I will!"

"I can't stand up, please believe me. Oh, poor me! Poor me! I'll have to crawl on my knees for the rest of my life."

Geppetto, thinking all this whining was only another of the puppet's pranks, decided to put an end to it all, and, climbing up the wall of the house, went in through the window.

He was very angry at first, but when he saw his Pinocchio stretched out on the floor, really without any feet, he felt very moved. He took him in his arms, and began to kiss and lovingly caress him and say thousands of things to him, and with tears running down his cheeks, and he said sobbing:

"My little Pinocchio! How did you burn your feet?"

"I don't know, father, but believe me, it was a hellish night, one I shall remember for as long as I live. It thundered and lightning flashed, and I was very hungry. And then the Talking Cricket said to me, "It serves you right; you were bad and you deserve it" and I said to him, "Careful, cricket;" and he said to me, "You are a puppet and you have a wooden head;" and I threw a hammer at him and killed him. It was his own fault, for I didn't want to kill him. So I put a little pan on the burning coals in the brazier, but a little chick said, "I'll see you again, and remember me to your family!" and flew away, and I got hungrier and hungrier, and when the little old man in his nightcap looked out of his window and shouted down to me: "Come underneath the window and hold out your hat," I got drenched with a basin full of water thrown over me, even though asking for some bread isn't a shameful thing to do, is it? I hurried right back home, because I was still very hungry, and I put my feet up over the brazier to dry. And then you came home and I discovered that my feet were burnt off, but anyway I'm still very hungry and I no longer have any feet! Oh! oh! oh! Oh!" And poor Pinocchio began to cry and wail so loudly that he could have been heard five miles away.

Geppetto, had understood nothing of all about that jumbled account, except one thing, that the puppet was famished, so he pulled out three pears from his pocket, and giving them to him, he said:

"These three pears were for my breakfast, but I gladly give them to you. Eat them and may they do you good!"

"If you want me to eat them, be kind enough to peel them for me."

"Peel them?" said Geppetto, terribly astonished. "I would never have thought, my dear lad, that you were so refined and fussy about your food. Bad, that's very bad! In this world, even as children, we must get used to eating everything, because we never know what life may hold in store for us!" There are so many examples!

"Well, you may be right," retorted Pinocchio, "but I'll never eat fruit that isn't peeled. I just can't stand the peel."

So good old Geppetto pulled out a little knife, and with the patience of a saint, he peeled the three pears, and put the peeling in a heap on the table.

Having eaten the first pear in two mouthfuls, Pinocchio was about to throw away the core, but Geppetto caught hold of his arm, and said to him:

"Oh, no, don't throw it away! Everything in this world may be of some use!"

"But I'm never going to eat the core!" shouted the puppet, turning on him like a viper.

"Who knows?" repeated Geppetto, without losing his temper.

So, as you can imagine, instead of getting thrown out of the window, the three cores were placed on the corner of the table alongside the peelings.

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Well having eaten the three pears, or rather devouring them, Pinocchio yawned lengthily, and said wailingly:

"I'm still hungry!"

"But, my boy, I've got nothing else to give you!"

"Really, nothing, nothing at all?"

"I only have these peelings and these three pear cores."

"Never mind!" said Pinocchio, "if there is nothing else I'll eat a peel."

And he began to chew, at first making faces, but, one after another, the peels disappeared; and after the peels, so did the cores, and when he had eaten everything, he happily patted his hands against his stomach and said gloatingly:

"Ah! Now I really feel much better!"

"So you see," observed Geppetto, "I was right when I told you one shouldn't be so refined or too fussy about food. My dear boy, we never know what life may have in store for us in this world!" There are so many examples!

Chapter 8

Geppetto makes Pinocchio new feet, and sells his coat to buy him a spelling- book.

No sooner had the puppet satisfied his hunger, than he started to grumble and cry because he wanted a new pair of feet. But Master Geppetto, in order to punish him for his mischief, let him cry and despair for half a day. And then he said to him:

"Why should I make your feet all over again? Just to see you run away from home once more?"

"I promise you," answered the puppet, sobbing, "from now on I'll be good."

"Ah, all children, when they want something, tell the same old story" said Geppetto.

"I promise you I'll go to school, and study, and make you proud of me."

"Yeah, all children, when they want something, tell the old same story."

"But I'm not like other boys! I'm better than all of them, I always tell the truth. I promise you, father, I'll learn a trade, I'll be the staff and comfort of your old age."

Well Geppetto, though trying to look very stern, felt his eyes fill with tears and his heart soften when he saw Pinocchio so unhappy. He said no more, but taking his tools and two pieces of well-seasoned wood, he set to work diligently.

In less than an hour the feet were finished, two slender, nimble little feet, strong and quick, carved as if by a great artist's hands.

Geppetto then said to the puppet: "Close your eyes and sleep!"

Pinocchio closed his eyes and pretended to be asleep, while Geppetto, with a bit of glue melted in an eggshell, stuck the two feet back on in place, and on doing his work so well one could hardly see where they were joined together.

No sooner had the puppet discovered his new feet were back on again, he leapt down from the table he had been lying on, and began to skip and do thousands of somersaults, as if he had gone mad with joy.

"In return for all you have done for me," said Pinocchio to his father, "I will go to school at once."

"What a good boy."

"But to go to school I must have some clothes."

Well, Geppetto, who was poor and didn't have a penny in his pocket, made his son a little suit of flowered paper, and a pair of shoes from the bark of a tree, and a tiny cap made from bread dough.

Pinocchio immediately ran to look at himself in a basin of water, and he felt so pleased with what he saw that he said boastfully:

"I look quite like a gentleman."

"Yes, indeed," answered Geppetto. "But, bear this in mind, it's not a fine suit that makes a gentleman, but rather it's a clean suit."

"Oh, by the way," answered the puppet, "in order to go to school something is always missing: in fact I still need the most important thing."

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"What's that?"

"An A-B-C spelling-book."

"Oh, you're right, yeah! But how shall we get one?"

"Well it's very easy. We've only to go to the bookseller's and buy one."

"And the money?"

"Well I've got none."

"Neither have I," sighed the good old man sadly.

Even though Pinocchio was a happy boy he became sad too. Because poverty, when it's real poverty, is understood by everybody: even little boys understand what it really means.

"Ah, well, let it be!" called Geppetto rising to his feet, and putting on his old corduroy coat that was full of darns and patches, and he suddenly rushed out of the house.

And after a while he returned, carrying in his hands the A-B-C spelling-book for his son, but the old coat was gone. The poor fellow was in his shirt sleeves and it was snowing outside.

"Oh, where's your coat, father?"

"I sold it."

"Why did you sell it?"

"Because I felt too warm."

Pinocchio understood this answer in a twinkling, and, being unable to restrain the impulse of his good heart, he jumped up and, throwing his arms around his father's neck he began kissing his face over and over again.

Chapter 9

Pinocchio sells his A-B-C spelling-book so that he can go and see the puppet-show.

When it stopped snowing, Pinocchio, with his fine new A-B-C spelling-book under his arm, hurried off down the road that lead to the school! And on the way, he began to imagine thousands of things in his little brain, and to built thousands of castles in the air, each one more beautiful than the other.

Talking to himself, he said:

"At school today, I want to learn how to read at once, and then tomorrow to write, and the day after tomorrow I'll learn arithmetic. And then, as clever as I am, I'll earn a great deal of money. And with the first money I have in my pocket, I'll buy father a really nice cloth jacket. Cloth, but what am I saying? I'll have it made all of silver and of gold, and with diamond buttons. That poor man certainly deserves it; after all, to buy me books, give me an education, he's been left in his shirt sleeves... in this cold weather too! Only fathers are capable of making such sacrifices!"

As he was saying this with great emotion he thought he heard the sounds of pipes and drums coming from a distance: fi-fi-fi, fi-fi-fi; zum, zum, zum, zum.

He stopped and listened. Those sounds came from the end of a very long cross street that led to a small village on the seashore.

"Ah, what can that music be? What a nuisance, I've got to go to school! Otherwise. . ."

And he remained there bewildered. Anyway, he felt he had to make up his mind. Should he go to school, or should he listen to the pipes?

"Today I'll listen to the pipes, and tomorrow I'll go to school. There's always plenty of time to go to school," said the little rascal at last, shrugging his shoulders.

And no sooner said than done, he scampered down the street. The faster he ran, and louder grew the sounds of pipes and beating of the big bass-drum: fi-fi-fi, fi-fi-fi, fi-fi-fi, zum, zum, zum, zum.

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Suddenly, he found himself in a large square, full of people crowded around a big wooden framed canvas building painted a thousand colours.

"What's in that big tent?" Pinocchio asked, turning to a little village boy standing nearby.

"Read what's written on the placard and you'll know."

"I'd like to, but it so happens that I somehow I can't today."

"What a nincompoop you are! Then I'll read it to you. Let me tell you then, that the writing on that placard, in letters as red as fire, says:

GREAT PUPPET THEATRE.

"Has it been long since the show started?"

"No, it's beginning now."

"And how much does one pay to get in?"

"Four pennies."

Pinocchio, was wild with curiosity, lost all his pride and said shamelessly to the little boy to whom he was talking:

"Will you lend me four pennies until tomorrow?"

"I'd give them to you gladly," he answered, poking fun at him, "but it so happens that I can't give them to you."

"For the price of four pennies, I'll sell you my jacket," said the puppet.

What do you think I would do with a little flowery paper jacket? If it rained there would no way of getting it off!"

"Do you want to buy these shoes?"

"They'd be good enough only to light a fire with."

"What will you give me for my cap?"

"Fine bargain, indeed! A cap made of dough! Mice might come and nibble it right off my head!"

Pinocchio was on tenterhooks. He was just about to make one last offer, but he lacked the courage to do so. He hesitated, he dillydallied, he suffered. And then at last he said:

"Will you give me four pennies for this new spelling-book?"

"I'm a boy and I don't buy from boys," said the little fellow with far more common sense than he had.

"I'll give you four pennies for your A-B-C spelling-book," said a hawker of old clothes who had overheard the conversation.

And the book changed hands then and there. And to think that poor old Geppetto had remained at home, shivering with cold in his shirt sleeves, in order to buy a spelling-book for his son!

Chapter 10

The puppets recognize their brother Pinocchio, and make a great fuss over him; but at the height of the excitement, Fire-Eater, the puppeteer, comes out and Pinocchio risks coming to a bad end.

When Pinocchio entered the little puppet theatre, something occurred that almost caused a minor revolution. You must now understand the curtain had gone up, the performance had just begun.

On stage you could see Harlequin and Pulcinella who were quarrelling with each other as usual, threatening, from one moment to the other, to slap and beat each other with sticks.

The audience, completely absorbed, laughed until it hurt, to see those two puppets quarrelling and gesticulating, calling each other names, just as if they were two reasoning beings, two real people

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When, all of a sudden, out of the blue, Harlequin stops acting and turning toward the audience, he points at somebody at the rear of the stalls, and begins to yell dramatically:

"Heavens above! Am I dreaming or am I awake? Yet, over yonder that must be Pinocchio!"

"Ah, it really is Pinocchio!" cried Pulcinella.

"It's him alright! shrieked Signora Rosaura, peeking out from the back of the stage.

"It's Pinocchio! It's Pinocchio!" shouted all the puppets in chorus, and leaping out from the wings. "It is Pinocchio. It is our brother Pinocchio! Hurrah for Pinocchio!"

"Pinocchio, come up here to me!" shouted Harlequin. "Come into the arms of your wooden brothers!"

Well at such a loving invitation, Pinocchio, with one leap from the back of the stalls, finds himself in the expensive front seats. Then with another leap, from the expensive seats he lands on top of the head of the conductor of the orchestra, and from there he darts right onto the stage.

Ha, it's impossible to describe the hugging, the embraces, the friendly pinches, and the sincere brotherly knocks on the head, that Pinocchio received amidst all the commotion from the actors and the actresses of that wooden drama company. Undoubtedly, it was a heart-rending sight, but the audience, noticing that the show had been interrupted, grew impatient and started yelling:

"We want the play, the play, we want the play!"

Well, it was a complete waste of breath. Because the puppets, instead of going on with their act, made twice as much racket as before with their shouts, and, hoisting Pinocchio on their shoulders, they carried him triumphantly up to the stage footlights.

At that very moment, the puppeteer came out. He was a huge ugly man, and to look at him would fill you with horror. His beard was as black as a blot of ink, and it was so long that it reached from his chin down to the ground: let it be said, that when he walked, he trampled on it with his feet. His mouth was as wide as an oven, his eyes looked like two red glass lanterns, with a flame lit from the inside. In his hand he held a long whip, made of snakes and foxes' tails, twisted together.

At the unexpected apparition of the puppeteer, everyone feel silent, nobody dared to breathe. One could almost hear a fly going by. Those wretched puppets, male and female, trembled like a pile of leaves.

"Why have you come here to cause havoc in my theatre?" the puppeteer asked Pinocchio, with the voice of an ogre suffering from a bad cold.

"Oh, believe me, Your Honor, the fault wasn't mine."

"Enough of that! We shall settle our accounts tonight."

In fact, as soon as the show was over, the puppeteer went into the kitchen, where he had prepared a large ram for his supper and it was slowly turning on the spit. Because he needed more wood to finish cooking it, he called for Harlequin and Pulcinella and he said to them:

"Bring that puppet to me, you'll find him hanging on a nail. Yes, he looks as if he were made of well-seasoned wood and I feel certain that when he's thrown into the fire, he'll make a fine flame for my roast."

Harlequin and Pulcinella hesitated at first, but terrified by the look their master gave them, and they obeyed and a little later they went back into the kitchen, carrying poor Pinocchio, who was wriggling and squirming about like an eel out of water. He screamed desperately:

"Oh father, save me! I don't want to die! I don't want to die!"

Chapter 11

Fire-Eater sneezes and forgives Pinocchio, who saves his friend, Harlequin, from death.

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Fire-Eater, the puppeteer (this was his name) had a frightening appearance, there can be no doubt about it, particularly with his horrid black beard covering the whole of his chest and all his legs,

but deep down inside he wasn't such a bad man. Proof of this is that, when he saw poor Pinocchio being brought before him, struggling frantically and yelling, "I don't want to die! I don't want to die!" he felt immediately moved and sorry for him. After having resisted for quite a while, in the end he couldn't control himself any longer and he sent forth a very loud sneeze.

At that sneeze, Harlequin, who until then had been downhearted and bent over like a weeping willow, became cheerful and leaning towards Pinocchio, he whispered to him:

"It's good news, brother! The puppeteer has sneezed and this is a sign that he has compassion towards you and now you are saved!"

For let it be known, that, while everyone else who feels pity for another person, either weeps or at least pretends to wipe away a tear, Fire-Eater, on the other hand, had the strange habit of sneezing each time he took pity on someone. It was a way as good as any other, to let people know about the kindness of his heart.

After sneezing the puppeteer, still acting like a grumpy old man, called out to Pinocchio:

"Stop crying! Your wailing has given me a funny feeling down here in my stomach... it's a sort of pang, that very nearly... Achoo! Achoo! Achoo! Achoo! And he sneezed two more times.

"Bless you!" said Pinocchio.

"Thanks! Are your father and mother still alive?" asked Fire-Eater.

"My father, yes. My mother I have never known."

"Who knows how sorry your old father would be if I were to throw you among those burning coals! Poor old man! I pity him! Achoo! Achoo! Achoo! Achoo! And he sneezed three more times

"Bless you!" said Pinocchio.

"Yes, thank you! However, you ought to feel sorry for me, too, because, as you see, I haven't got enough wood to finish roasting that mutton, and you, I'm telling you the truth, in this situation you would have been of great use to me!

But now, I have pity on you so I must be patient. In your place I'll burn some other puppet from my Company on the spit. Hey, constables!"

At this command, two very tall, very gaunt wooden officers appeared, wearing their three-cornered hats and holding their sabres unsheathed.

And the puppet-master said to them:

"Get Harlequin over there, tie him well, and then throw him on the fire to burn. I want my mutton well roasted!"

Oh, think how poor Harlequin felt! His fear was so great that his legs buckled under him and he fell flat onto the ground.

Pinocchio, at that heartbreaking sight, threw himself at the puppeteer's feet and, weeping so bitterly he bathed his very long beard with tears, he began to implore:

"Have pity, Mr. Fire-Eater!"

"There are no misters here!" replied the puppeteer harshly.

"Have pity, I beg of you, Sir!"

"There are no sirs here!"

"Have pity, My Lord!"

"There are no lords here!"

"Have pity, Excellency!"

On hearing himself addressed as Excellency, the puppet-master's tone mellowed, and all of a sudden he became kind and compassionate and said to Pinocchio:

"Well, what do you want from me?"

"I beg for mercy for my poor friend, Harlequin."

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"There is no room for mercy here, Pinocchio. I have spared you. Harlequin must burn in your place, because I want my mutton to be roasted properly."

"In that case," cried Pinocchio proudly, as he stood up and flinging aside his cap of dough, "in that case, my duty is clear. Come, forward constables! Tie me up and throw me on those flames. No, it is not fair that poor Harlequin, my true friend, has to die in my place!"

These brave words, said in a piercing voice, made all the other puppets cry. Even the constables, who were made of wood also cried like new-born lambs.

Fire-Eater at first remained as hard and cold as a piece of ice; but then, little by little, he began to soften up and he began to sneeze. And after four or five sneezes, he affectionately spread out his arms and said to Pinocchio:

"You are a good boy! Come here and give me a kiss!"

Pinocchio ran to him and scurrying like a squirrel up the long black beard, he gave Fire-Eater a loving kiss on the tip of his nose.

"Has pardon been granted to me?" asked poor Harlequin with a voice that could hardly be heard.

"Clemency has been granted!" answered Fire-Eater; and then sighing and shaking his head, he added: "Well, never mind! Tonight I shall resign myself to eating the mutton half raw. But the next time the unlucky one had better watch out!"

At the news that clemency had been granted, the puppets rushed up onto the stage and, turning on all the lights as if for a gala evening, they all began to jump about and dance and they were still dancing at dawn.

Chapter 12

Fire-Eater gives Pinocchio five gold coins to take to his father, Geppetto; but Pinocchio allows himself to be tricked by the Fox and the Cat and goes away with them.

The next day Fire-Eater took Pinocchio to one side and asked him:

"What is your father's name?"

"Geppetto."

"And what's his trade?"

"He's a poor man."

"Does he earn much?"

"He earns so much that he never has a penny in his pocket. Just think that, in order to buy me an A-B-C spelling-book for school, he had to sell his only coat he owned, a coat so full of darns and patches, it was all in ribbons."

"Poor devil! I feel almost sorry for him. Here, take these five gold coins. Now, hurry up and take them to him and give him my very best wishes."

Well Pinocchio, as may easily be imagined, thanked the puppeteer a thousand times. He embraced all the puppets in the company, one by one, even the constables, and, beside himself with joy, he set out on his homeward journey.

He had gone barely half a mile when he met a Fox who was lame in one foot and a Cat who was blind in both eyes, walking together like two good companions in misfortune. The Fox, who was lame, leaned on the Cat, and the Cat, who was blind, was guided by the Fox.

"Good morning, Pinocchio," said the Fox, greeting him politely.

"How do you know my name?" asked the puppet.

"I know your father well."

"Where did you see him?"

"I saw him yesterday standing at the door of his house."

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"And what was he doing?"

"Well, he was in his shirt-sleeves trembling with cold."

"Poor father! But, God willing, from today he'll shiver no longer."

"Why?"

"Because I've become a true gentleman."

"You, a true gentleman?" said the Fox, and he began to laugh in a disagreeable, mocking way, and the Cat laughed too, but to conceal this she stroked her whiskers with her forepaws.

"There is nothing to laugh about," cried Pinocchio annoyed. "I am very sorry to whet your appetite, but if you know anything about such things, these here, are five lovely gold coins."

And he pulled out the gold coins which Fire-Eater had given him.

At the pleasing clink of the coins, the Fox unconsciously held out his paw the one that was supposed to be lame, and the Cat opened both eyes wide, making them look like green lanterns, but closed them again quickly so Pinocchio didn't notice anything.

"And now," inquired the Fox, "what you are going to do with these coins?"

"First of all," replied the puppet, "I want to buy a lovely new coat for my father, all made of gold and silver and with diamond buttons; and after that, I want to buy an A-B-C spelling-book for myself."

"For yourself?"

"Yes, of course, because I want to go to school and start studying hard."

"Look at me, look at me" said the Fox. "It was for the same foolish passion to study that I lost a paw."

"Look at me," said the Cat. "It was for the same foolish passion to study that I lost the sight of both eyes."

At that moment, a white blackbird, perched on the fence along the road, squawked in his usual way and said:

"Pinocchio, don't listen to the advice of those evil characters or you'll be sorry!"

Poor blackbird! If only he hadn't said anything! In one great bound, without giving him time to say *Ah*, the Cat pounced on him, and ate him up in one gulp, feathers and all.

And having eaten, he wiped his whiskers, closed his eyes, and pretended to be blind as before.

"Poor Blackbird!" said Pinocchio to the Cat. "Why did you treat him so badly?"

"Oh, I did it to teach him a lesson. So next time he'll learn not to interrupt other people's conversations."

They had gone more than half way when the Fox stopped suddenly in his tracks and said to the puppet:

"Do you want to double your gold coins?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, do you wish to turn your miserable five coins into a hundred, a thousand, two thousand?"

"Well, I'd love to, how?"

"It's very easy. Instead of returning home, you ought to come with us."

"And where will you take me?"

"To the land of barn owls."

Pinocchio thought for a while and then he said firmly:

"No, I don't want to go. Home is very near now, and I'm going home where my father is waiting for me. I mean, who knows how unhappy the poor old man must have been when I didn't return home! Unfortunately I've been a bad son, and the Talking Cricket was right when he said: Disobedient children never do any good in this world. I have learned this at my own expense because so many terrible things have happened to me and even last night at Fire-Eater's house, I ran into real danger, when Fire-Eater... Brrrr! It makes me shudder at the mere thought of it."

"Oh, well, then," said the Fox, "if you really want to go home, go ahead, so much the worse for you."

"So much the worse for you," echoed the Cat.

"Think it over, Pinocchio, because you are turning your back on a fortune!"

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"On fortune," echoed the Cat.

"Your five gold coins, from today to tomorrow, would have become two thousand!"

"Two thousand!" echoed the Cat.

"But however can they possibly grow to become so many?" asked Pinocchio, his mouth gaping in wonder.

"Well, let me explain," said the Fox. "I must tell you that, just outside the land of barn-owls, there is a sacred ground, which everyone calls the Field of Miracles, you see. And in this field you dig a little hole and you bury a gold coin, for example. And then you cover up the hole with a little earth and you water it with two pails of fountain water, and you sprinkle it with a pinch of salt, and in the evening you go quietly to bed. Then, during the night, the gold coin sprouts and blossoms, and next morning, when you get up, and return to the field, what do you find? You find a beautiful tree laden with lots of gold coins, like the many grains an ear of corn can have in the month of June.

"Suppose" said Pinocchio, more bewildered than ever, "Suppose I were to bury my five gold coins, next morning how many gold coins would I find?"

"Oh, that's is a very simple calculation," answered the Fox. "An amount you can figure out on your fingers! Ah, well let's suppose that each coin gives you a cluster of five hundred coins: multiply five hundred by five and the next morning you will find two thousand five hundred shining and clinking gold coins in your pocket."

"Oh, how very lovely!" shouted Pinocchio, dancing with joy. "As soon as I have harvested these coins, I'll keep two thousand for myself, and the other five hundred left over I shall give to you two as a gift."

"A gift for us?" cried the Fox with indignation, pretending to be offended. "God forbid!"

"God forbid!" echoed the Cat.

"We," the Fox continued. "do not work for vile interest: we work solely to enrich others."

"To enrich others!" echoed the Cat.

"What good people!" thought Pinocchio to himself. And then and there forgetting about his father, the new coat, the A-B-C spelling-book, and all his good resolutions, he said to the Fox and to the Cat:

"Let's set off at once. I am coming with you."

Chapter 13

The Red Shrimp Inn

They walked, and walked, and walked, until finally, toward evening, they arrived dead tired at the Red Shrimp Inn.

"Let's stop here for a while," said the Fox, "just to have a bite to eat and a rest for a few hours and then at midnight we'll set off again, for at dawn tomorrow we must be at the Field of Miracles."

And having gone into the Inn, all three sat down to table: but none of them had an appetite.

The poor cat, who had an extremely upset stomach, could eat nothing except thirty-five mullets in tomato sauce and four portions of tripe, Parmesan style; and as the tripe didn't seem seasoned enough, he treated himself to three more helpings of butter and grated cheese.

The Fox, too, would have willingly nibbled on something, but as the doctor had put him on a strict diet, he had to make do with a plain hare in strong, sweet sauce with a very light garnish of plump pullets and tender cockerels. And after the hare, wanting a change of taste, he ordered an omelette of pheasants, partridges, frogs and lizards and paradise grapes; and then he didn't want anything else. He was so sick of food he said he could put nothing else in his mouth.

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The one who ate least of all was Pinocchio. He asked for a bit of a walnut and a crust of bread and left everything on his plate untouched. The poor little boy had his mind fixed on the Field of Miracles, he was suffering from an advance form of gold coin indigestion.

Having finished eating, the Fox said to the Innkeeper:

"Give us two good rooms, one for Mr. Pinocchio and the other for me and my companion. Before starting out again, we'll take a little nap. But remember we wish to be woken up at midnight, for we must continue on our journey."

"Oh, yes, sir," answered the Innkeeper, winking in a knowing way at the Fox and the Cat, as if to say, "I've caught on, and it's a deal!"

No sooner had Pinocchio got into bed, and he fell fast asleep and began dreaming. In his dream he thought he was in the middle of a field, and this field was full of little trees, the branches of which were laden with clusters of gold coins that clinked in the breeze they went ting, ting, ting, just as if they wanted to say, "Whoever wants us, come and take us!"

But just when Pinocchio reached the best part, that is, when he stretched out his hand to take a handful of all those beautiful coins and put them in his pocket, he was suddenly awakened by three very violent knocks on his bedroom door. It was the Innkeeper who had come to tell him that midnight had struck.

"Are my companions ready?" the puppet asked him.

"More than ready! They left two hours ago."

"Why in such a hurry?"

"Because the Cat received a message which said that his first-born kitten was suffering from chilblains and was in danger of death. He could not even wait to say good-bye to you."

And did they pay for the supper?

"Oh, how could they do such a thing? Being people of great refinement, they did not want to offend by not allowing you the honour of paying the bill."

"That's too bad! That offense would have been more than pleasing to me," said Pinocchio, scratching his head and then he said:

"And where did my good companions say they would wait for me?"

"At the Field of Miracles, tomorrow, at the crack of dawn."

Pinocchio paid for his supper and that of his companions with a gold coin and then went on his way.

But it must be said that he left groping his way out of the Inn because it was pitch dark, he couldn't see a hand's breadth in front of himself. In the countryside, all around, not a leaf stirred. Only a few night-birds, flying across the road from one hedge to another, brushed against Pinocchio's nose, making him jump back with fright and scream, "Who goes there?" and the surrounding hills echoed back to him, "Who goes there? Who goes there? Who goes there?"

Then, while he was walking along, he noticed a tiny insect on the trunk of a tree, glowing with a pale, soft light, like a night light inside a transparent porcelain lamp.

"Who are you?" asked Pinocchio.

"I am the Talking Cricket's shadow," answered the tiny insect, in a very faint voice that sounded as if it came from another world.

"What do you want of me?" said the puppet.

"I want to give you some advice. Turn back and take the four gold coins you have left to your poor old father who is weeping, and in despair because he has not seen you again."

"Tomorrow my father will be a rich gentleman, for these four gold coins will turn into two thousand."

"My boy, don't trust those who promise to make you rich overnight. As a rule, they are either fools or swindlers! Listen to me and go back home."

"On the contrary, I want to go on!"

"The hour is late!"

"I want to go on."

"The night is very dark."

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"I want to go on."

"The road is dangerous."

"I want to go on."

"Remember that children who do as they please, and want to have their own way, sooner or later regret it."

"Always the same old stories. Good night, cricket."

"Good night, Pinocchio, and may Heaven preserve you from dangers and from assassins."

The moment he had spoken these last words, the Talking Cricket disappeared suddenly, just as if someone had snuffed out a candle flame, and the road became darker than ever before.

Chapter 14

Pinocchio, for not having heeded the good advice of the Talking Cricket, falls into the hands of the Assassins.

"Really!" said the puppet to himself, as he set out again on his journey, "how unfortunate we poor children are! Everybody scolds us, everybody tells us off, everybody gives us advice. If we were to allow it, everyone would try to be father and mother to us; everybody, even the Talking Cricket. There you are, just because I would not listen to that bothersome cricket, who knows how many misfortunes, according to him, may be awaiting me! I am even to meet with assassins! It's just as well that I don't believe in assassins, and I never did! As far as I am concerned, I think assassins have been invented by fathers and mothers to frighten children who want to go out at night. And then, even if I were to meet them on the road, would they worry me? Not in the slightest. I'd look them straight in the eyes, and shout: "Mr. Assassins, what do you want of me? Remember you can't fool with me! Run along and mind your own business, and be quiet." If I were to make such a speech in earnest, I can almost see those poor Assassins running away like the wind. But in case they were so badly brought up as not to run away, then I would run away and that would be the end of it. . ."

But Pinocchio didn't have time to finish his reasoning, for at that moment he thought he heard a slight rustling of leaves behind him.

He turned round to have a look, and in the darkness saw two terrible black figures, wrapped from head to foot in coal-sacks. The two figures darted after him by leaps and bounds and on tiptoe, like a pair of ghosts.

"They're really here!" he said to himself, and, not knowing where to hide the gold coins, he put them in his mouth, right under his tongue.

And then he tried to run away, but hardly had he taken a step, when he felt himself seized by the arms and he heard these two horrible, cavernous voices which said: "Your money or your life!"

Pinocchio couldn't say a word, since the coins were in his mouth, and so he bowed down low, over and over again, and play-acted a whole pantomime, just to show those two hooded individuals, whose eyes alone were visible through the holes in the sacks, that he was only a poor puppet who didn't have so much as a brass farthing in his pocket.

"Come, come, less nonsense, and out with your money!" shouted the two brigands menacingly.

And once more, the puppet made a gesture with his head and his hands, as if to say, "I haven't got a penny."

"Hand over your money or you're a dead man," said the taller of the two assassins.

"Dead," repeated the other one.

"And after having killed you, we will kill your father too!"

"Your father too!"

"No, no, no, not my poor father!" cried Pinocchio, in despair; but as he cried out, the gold coins jingled in his mouth.

"Ah, you rascal! So you hid them under your tongue? Spit them out at once!"

But Pinocchio stood firm!

"Ah! You're pretending to be deaf, are you? Wait and see, we know ways of making you spit it out!"

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Indeed, one of them grabbed hold of the puppet by the end of his nose and the other held his chin, and they began to tug unmercifully, one this way and the other that way, in order to make him open his mouth. But it was all to no avail. The puppet's mouth might have been nailed and riveted together.

Then the smaller assassin pulled out a wicked knife, which he tried to force like a lever or scalpel between his lips; but Pinocchio, quick as lightning, sank his teeth deep into the assassin's hand, bit it off and spat it out. You can imagine his surprise when, instead of a hand, he realised he had spat out a cat's paw onto the ground.

Encouraged by this first victory, he tore himself loose from the claws of his assassins and, leaping over the roadside hedge, he began to run swiftly across the fields. And the assassins ran after him, just like two dogs chasing a hare; the one who had lost a paw, ran on one leg, though goodness knows how he did it.

After running seven miles, Pinocchio could go on no longer. So, he climbed up the trunk of a very tall pine-tree and sat down on the branches at the top.

The Assassins tried to climb up as well, but half-way they slipped and fell to the ground, grazing their hands and feet.

But, far from giving up, because of that; on the contrary, they gathered a bundle of dry wood, piled it up at the foot of the pine-tree, and set fire to it. In less than no time the tree began to burn and flare up, like a candle blown by the wind. Pinocchio, seeing the flames climbed higher and higher, and not wishing to end his days like a roast pigeon, took a big leap from the tree-top, and away he went running again across the fields and vineyards. The Assassins behind him, always close behind him, never tiring.

Now dawn was breaking and they were still running after him when, suddenly Pinocchio found his path barred by a wide, deep ditch full of dirty, coffee-coloured water. What was there to do?

"One, two, three!" shouted the puppet, and taking a long run, he jumped clear across it. The assassins jumped too, but not having measured their distance well, splash, splash! they fell right into the middle of the ditch.

Hearing the splash and spray of water, Pinocchio laughing, continued to run crying out,

"Have a pleasant bath, Mr. Assassins!"

He was convinced they were well and truly drowned, but then, turning around, he saw they were both running after him, always wrapped up in their sacks, drenched and dripping with water like two broken baskets.

Chapter 15

The Assassins pursue Pinocchio and, having caught him, hang him on a branch of the big oak tree.

When the puppet, losing heart, was on the point of throwing himself on the ground and giving himself up, he turned and saw amid the dark green of the trees, gleaming in the distance, a little cottage white as snow.

"If only I had enough breath left with which to reach that cottage, perhaps I would be safe," he said to himself.

Without wasting a minute, he darted headlong through the woods with the assassins still hard on his heels.

But after a desperate race of almost two hours, tired and completely out of breath, he at last reached the door of the cottage and knocked. No one answered.

He knocked again, harder than before, for behind him he heard the running feet getting closer and the heavy panting of his pursuers; but all was silent.

Seeing that knocking was of no use, in desperation he began to kick and beat his head against the door. A beautiful young girl appeared at the window. Her hair was deep-blue, her face as white as wax. Her eyes were closed, her hands were crossed over her breast and, without moving her lips, she said in a very faint voice that seemed to come from another world:

"There is no one in this house. Everyone is dead."

"Won't you, at least, open the door for me?" cried Pinocchio in a beseeching voice.

"I am dead too."

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"Dead? What are you doing at the window, then?"

"I am waiting for the coffin to come and take me away."

As she said this, the little girl disappeared and the window closed without making a sound.

"Oh, beautiful blue-haired little girl," cried Pinocchio, "open the door, I beg of you. Take pity on a poor boy who is being pursued by two assassins..."

He did not finish the word, because he felt himself seized by the neck, and heard the same two horrible voices growl threateningly:

"You won't get away from us this time!"

The puppet, looking death in the face, began trembling so violently that the joints of his legs rattled and so did the four coins hidden under his tongue.

"Well then?" demanded the assassins, "will you open your mouth, yes or no? Ah! You're not answering? Well, leave it to us. We'll open it for you this time!"

And, drawing two horrible great long, razor-sharp knives, slash, slash they dealt him two heavy blows in the back.

But the puppet, happily for him, was made of very hard wood, which was the reason why the blades shattered into a thousand splinters, leaving the assassins holding the knife handles and staring at each other in dismay.

"I know what we must do," said one of them, "we shall have to hang him!" "Let's hang him!"

"Let's hang him!" repeated the other.

And without further ado, they tied his hands behind his back, and slipped the noose round his neck, letting the rope dangle from a branch of a big tree known as the great oak tree.

Then they sat down on the grass waiting for the puppet to give his last kick. But, after three hours, the puppet's eyes were still open, his mouth shut and his legs were kicking as hard as ever.

Tired of waiting, they looked up at Pinocchio and laughing said. "Good-by till tomorrow. When we return tomorrow, we hope you'll be polite enough to let us find you very dead and with your mouth wide open."

And off they went.

In the meantime, a wild north wind began to blow and, howling and roaring, battered the poor hanging puppet to and fro like the clapper of a bell chiming during a holiday. The swinging caused him severe pain, and the noose, becoming tighter and tighter, choked him.

Little by little his eyes began to grow dim; and even though he felt that death was creeping closer and closer, he kept hoping for some good soul to come to his rescue. But when, after waiting and waiting, he realised that no one, really no one was coming, his thoughts at last turned to his poor old father, and half dead he stammered:

"Oh, father! father! If only you were here!"

He had no breath left to say anything else. He closed his eyes, opened his mouth, stretched out his legs, and giving a great shudder, hung there as if frozen stiff.

Chapter 16

The beautiful blue-haired girl has the puppet taken down, puts him to bed, and calls for three Doctors to find out whether he is dead or alive.

While poor Pinocchio, hanged by the assassins, still dangling from a branch of the Great Oak tree, seemed more dead than alive, the beautiful blue-haired girl once again looked out of her window. Filled with pity at the sight of the poor little fellow hanging by the neck and dancing the Trescone in the gusts of the north wind, she struck her hands together, and gave three little claps.

At this signal, a loud whirr of wings in quick flight was heard and a large Falcon came and settled itself on the window-sill.

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"What is your command, my gracious Fairy?" asked the Falcon, lowering his beak as a gesture of reverence (for you must know that the beautiful little blue-haired girl was none other than a good-hearted Fairy, who had lived, for more than a thousand years, in the vicinity of that wood).

"Can you see that puppet dangling from a branch of the big oak tree?"

"I see him."

"Very well. Fly down there at once and with your strong beak, undo the knot which is holding him in the air and lay him down gently on the grass at the foot of the oak."

The Falcon flew away and in two minutes returned, and said:

"I have done as you commanded."

"And how was he? Alive or dead?"

"He appeared to be dead, but he cannot really be dead, for as soon as I loosened the noose around his neck, he let out a sigh, and murmured faintly, 'Now I feel better!'"

Then the Fairy struck her hands together, gave two little claps, and a magnificent Poodle appeared, walking upright on his hind legs, just like a man.

The Poodle was dressed like a coachman in court livery. He wore a tricorne hat trimmed with gold braid, with a wig of white curls that dropped down over his shoulders, a chocolate-coloured waistcoat with diamonds for buttons, and had two huge pockets to hold the bones, that his mistress gave him for dinner. He was also wearing breeches of crimson velvet, silk stockings, and a pair of low-cut shoes. And behind, a sort of umbrella cover, in blue satin, which served to protect his tail from the rain.

"Come on, good boy Medoro," said the Fairy to the Poodle. "Now hitch up the best carriage in my stables without delay and take it to the woods. Reaching the great oak tree, you'll find a poor, half-dead puppet lying on the grass. Now, lift him up tenderly, place him gently on the cushions of the coach, and bring him here to me."

The Poodle, to show that he had understood, shook the blue satin umbrella he carried behind him three or four times and then set off like a racehorse.

And shortly afterwards a beautiful little sky-blue carriage could be seen pulling out of the stables. It was completely upholstered with canary feathers, and the interiors were lined with whipped cream, custard and wafers. And the carriage was drawn by one hundred pairs of white mice, and the Poodle sitting on the coachman's seat cracked his whip from right to left just like a coachman knowing he was late.

In less than a quarter of an hour the carriage was back again and the Fairy, who was waiting at the cottage door, took the poor puppet in her arms, and carried him to a little room whose walls were mother-of-pearl, and at once sent for the most famous doctors in the district.

The doctors arrived immediately, one after the other, and that's to say: a Crow, an Owl, and a Talking Cricket.

"I should like to know from you gentlemen," said the Fairy, addressing the three doctors gathered around Pinocchio's bed, "I should like to know whether this unfortunate puppet is alive or dead."

At this invitation, the Crow came forward first and felt Pinocchio's nose, his pulse and then his little toe. And when he had felt them thoroughly, he solemnly pronounced the following words:

"It is my opinion that the puppet is quite dead; but if by some mischance he is not yet dead, then that would be a sure sign that he is still alive!"

"I am sorry," said the Owl, "to have to contradict the Crow, my illustrious friend and colleague. But in my opinion, on the contrary, the puppet is still alive; but if, by some mischance he is not alive, then that would be a sure sign that he is really dead!"

"And you, haven't you anything to say?" said the Fairy to the Talking Cricket. "I say that for a wise doctor, when he does not know what he is talking about, the best thing he should do is to keep quiet. Besides, that puppet's face isn't new to me. I've known him for ages!"

Pinocchio, who up to then had seemed as lifeless as a corpse was seized with a sort of convulsive trembling that shook the whole bed.

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"That puppet, over there," went on the Talking Cricket, "is a first-class rascal..."

Pinocchio opened his eyes and closed them again at once.

"He's a ragamuffin, a lazybones, a vagabond."

Pinocchio hid his head beneath the sheets.

"That puppet is a disobedient son, he will make his poor father die of a broken heart!"

At this point the bedroom was filled with sounds of stifled sobbing and weeping. Just imagine how astonished everyone was when, on raising the sheets, they discovered that the sobbing and weeping came from Pinocchio!

"When a dead person weeps, it's a sign he's on the road to recovery," said the Crow solemnly.

"I regret to have to contradict my illustrious friend and colleague," said the Owl, "but as far as I'm concerned, when a dead person weeps, it's a sign he doesn't want to die."

Chapter 17

Pinocchio eats the sugar, but won't take the medicine; however when he sees the grave-diggers coming to carry him away, he takes the medicine. He then tells a lie and, his nose grows longer as punishment.

As soon as the three doctors had left the room, the Fairy went up to Pinocchio and, after touching him on his forehead, she realized that he was suffering from an extremely high fever.

So she dissolved a special white powder into half a glass of water and handing it to him, she said lovingly:

"Drink this, and in a few days you'll be better."

Pinocchio looked at the glass, pulled a face, and asked in a whining voice:

"Is it sweet or bitter?"

"It is bitter, but it will do you good."

"If it is bitter, I won't drink it."

"Do what I say, drink it!"

"I don't like anything bitter."

"Well, drink it and I'll give you a lump of sugar to take the bitter taste from your mouth."

"Where's the sugar-lump then?"

"Here it is," said the Fairy, taking one out of a golden sugar bowl.

"I want the sugar-lump first, and then I'll drink that nasty bitter water."

"Do you promise me?"

"Yes..."

The Fairy gave him the sugar-lump, and after munching and swallowing it in a jiffy, licking his lips he said:

"Wouldn't it be lovely if sugar were a medicine too! I'd purge myself every day."

"Now keep your promise and drink these few drops of water. They'll bring back your health."

Pinocchio unwillingly took the glass and stuck the tip of his nose into it: and then he lifted it to his mouth and once again stuck his nose into it. And finally he said:

"No, it's too bitter, it's much too bitter! I can't drink it."

"How do you know, when you haven't even tasted it?"

"I can tell. I know it from its smell. I want another sugar-lump, and then I'll drink it."

Then the Fairy, with all the patience of a good mother, put some more sugar in his mouth and again handed him the glass.

"I can't drink it like that," said the puppet, pulling a thousand faces.

"Why?"

"Because that pillow on my feet is bothering me."

The Fairy took the pillow away.

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"No, it's no use. I can't drink it like this either."

"What else is bothering you now?"

"I don't like the way that bedroom door looks. It's half open."

The Fairy went and closed the bedroom door.

"No, in short, I won't drink it," shouted Pinocchio, bursting into tears. "I won't drink this awful water. I won't drink it! No, no, no!"

"My boy, you'll be sorry."

"I don't care."

"You are very ill."

"I don't care."

"In a few hours this fever will carry you far away to another world."

"I don't care."

"Aren't you afraid of dying?"

"Not at all. I'd rather die than drink that nasty medicine."

At that moment, the bedroom door flew open and in came four Rabbits, as black as ink, carrying a small coffin on their shoulders.

"What do you want of me?" shouted Pinocchio, sitting up in his bed with terror.

"We've come for you," said the biggest Rabbit.

"To take me away? But I'm not dead yet!"

"No, not dead yet; but you've only got another few minutes left to live, because you refused to take the medicine which would have cured you of the fever."

"Oh, my Fairy, my Fairy," the puppet began to scream, "quick give me that glass! Quick, please! Because I don't want to die! No, no, I don't want to die!"

And holding the glass with both his hands, he emptied it in one gulp.

"Never mind," said the Rabbits, "this time we've made the trip for nothing."

And once again, hoisting the little coffin onto their shoulders, they marched solemnly out of the room, muttering and grumbling under their breath.

At all events, only a few minutes later, Pinocchio leapt out of bed quite well again; because one has to remember that puppets have the privilege of rarely getting ill and so they get well very quickly.

And the Fairy, seeing him running and romping around the room, as sprightly and chirpy as a spring chicken, said to him:

"Well, my medicine was really good for you, wasn't it?"

"Good indeed! It has restored me to life again."

"Why, then, did I have to beg you so hard to make you drink it?"

"I think, we boys are all the same. We're more afraid of medicine than of sickness."

"Well, shame on you! Children ought to know, that good medicine, taken in good time, can save them from serious illness, perhaps even from death..."

"Well, I won't need persuading! I'll remember those black Rabbits with the coffin on their shoulders and then I'll quickly take the glass and empty it!"

"Now, come over to me and tell me how it came about that you found yourself in the hands of the Assassins."

"It happened that Fire-Eater gave me a few gold coins, and he said: "There you are, give them to your father," but on the way, I met a Fox and a Cat, two very respectable people, who said to me, "Would you like these coins to turn into a thousand or two thousand? Come with us and we'll take you to the Field of Miracles." So I said, "Let's go." And they said, "Let's stop at the Red Shrimp Inn, and after midnight we'll set out again. And then when I awoke they'd already left. So then I started out at night, I can't tell you how dark it was. And on the road I met two Assassins dressed in black coal sacks, who

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said to me, "Out with your money!" And I said, "I haven't any money"; for, you see, I had put the four gold coins in my mouth. One of them tried to put his hand in my mouth, and I bit it off and spat it out; but it wasn't a hand, it was a cat's paw. And the Assassins ran after me and I ran and ran, until at last they caught up with me, and tied a noose around my neck and hanged me to a tree in the wood, saying, "Tomorrow we'll come back for you and you'll be dead and your mouth will be open, and then we'll get hold of the gold coins that you have hidden under your tongue."

"Where have you put the four gold coins now?" the Fairy asked.

"I lost them," answered Pinocchio; but he was telling a lie, for he had them in his pocket.

No sooner had he told the lie, than his nose, which was already long, grew two inches longer.

"Where did you lose them?"

"In the wood nearby."

At this second lie, his nose continued to grow.

"If you lost them in the wood nearby," said the Fairy, "we'll look for them and find them, for everything that is lost in the wood nearby is always found."

"Oh, now I remember very well," answered the puppet, getting quite confused. "I didn't lose the four gold coins, but, without realising it, I swallowed them while drinking your medicine."

At this third lie, his nose grew in such an extraordinary way, that poor Pinocchio could no longer turn round. If he turned one way, his nose knocked against the bed or into the window-panes; if he turned the other way, it struck against the walls or the door; if he raised his head a bit, he risked poking his nose into the Fairy's eye.

The Fairy sat watching him, laughing.

"Why are you laughing?" asked the puppet, very confused and anxious at the sight of his nose growing out of control.

"I am laughing at the lies you've told."

"How do you know I told a lie?"

"Lies, my boy, can be quickly recognized, because there are two kinds: there are lies with short legs, and lies with long noses. Yours, as it happens, is the long nosed kind."

Pinocchio, not knowing where to hide himself for shame, tried to run out of the room, but he couldn't. His nose had grown so long that he couldn't get it through the door.

Chapter 18

Pinocchio meets the Fox and the Cat again, and goes with them to sow the gold coins in the Field of Miracles.

As you can imagine, the Fairy let the puppet cry and scream a good half-hour because his long nose could no longer pass through the bedroom door, and she did this to teach him a good lesson, and to correct him of his bad habit of telling lies, that's the worst habit a child can have. But when she saw his face transformed, his eyes popping out of his head from desperation, she then began to feel sorry for him, and she clapped her hands together and at that signal a thousand big birds called Woodpeckers flew in through the window and they all settled themselves on Pinocchio's nose. They began to peck at it a lot and a lot, so that his enormous nose, in only a few minutes, was reduced to its normal size.

"Oh, how good you are, my Fairy," said the puppet, drying his eyes, "how much I love you!"

"I love you, too," answered the Fairy, "and if you wish to stay with me, you shall be my little brother and I shall be your good little sister."

"I'd willingly like to stay... but what about my poor father?"

"I've thought of everything. Your father has been notified, and before nightfall he will be here."

"Oh, really?" shouted Pinocchio, jumping with joy. "Then, my good Fairy, if you're willing, I'd like to go and meet him. I just can't wait to kiss that dear old man, who suffered so much on my account!"

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"Go, by all means, but be careful not to lose your way. Take the road through the wood and you'll surely meet him."

Pinocchio set out, and as soon as he found himself in the wood, he began to run like a deer. But when he reached a certain place, almost opposite the giant oak tree, he stopped, he thought he heard people among the trees. Indeed, there appeared along the road, guess who? The Fox and the Cat, none other than his two travelling companions, with whom he dined at the Red Shrimp Inn.

"Why here's our dear Pinocchio!" cried the Fox, hugging and kissing him.

"How do you come to be here?"

"How do you come to be here?" repeated the Cat.

"It is a long story," said the puppet. "I'll tell you about it some other time. But you ought to know that the other night, when you left me alone at the Inn, I met the Assassins on the road."

"The Assassins? Oh, my poor friend! And what did they want?"

"Well, they wanted to steal my gold coins."

"Infamous villains!" said the Fox.

"Infamous villains!" repeated the Cat.

"But, I began to run away, and with them always at my heels, until they caught up with me and they hanged me from a branch of that oak tree."

Pinocchio pointed to the giant oak that was two steps away from them.

"Could anything be worse?" said the Fox.

"What a world we are condemned to live in! Where can respectable people like us find safe refuge?"

While they were talking like this, Pinocchio noticed the Cat was lame in the right-hand fore paw, because his whole paw with its claws was missing, so he asked:

"What happened to your paw?"

The Cat wanted to say something but became confused. So the Fox quickly said:

"My friend's too modest to answer. That's the reason why he isn't answering.

Now, I'll answer in his place. It's like this, about an hour ago, we met an old wolf along the road and he was almost fainting from hunger, and he asked us for a little charity. Not having even a fish bone to give him, what do you think my friend, who really has the heart of a Caesar, did? With his own teeth, he bit off one of his fore paws and threw it at that poor beast, so that he might appease his hunger."

And so saying, the Fox dried a tear.

Pinocchio was also touched, and approaching the Cat, he whispered in his ear:

"If all cats were like you, how lucky mice would be!"

"And now, what are you doing here?" the Fox asked the puppet.

"I am waiting for my father, who will be arriving here at any moment now."

"And your gold coins?"

"I still have them in my pocket, except for the one which I spent at the Red Shrimp Inn."

"To think that those four gold coins might become a thousand or two thousand tomorrow. Why don't you take my advise?

Why don't you go now and sow them in the Field of Miracles?"

"No, it's impossible today. I'll go with you some other day."

"Another day will be too late," said the Fox.

"Why?"

"Because that field has been bought by a very rich man, and from tomorrow nobody will be allowed to sow money in there."

"How far away is the Field of Miracles from here?"

THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO

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"Oh, barely two miles away. Will you come with us? You'll be there in half an hour. You can sow the four coins straight away, and, after a few minutes, you will be gathering your two thousand gold coins and this evening you'll be back here with your pockets full. Are you coming with us?"

Pinocchio hesitated a moment before answering, he remembered the good Fairy, and old Geppetto, and the advice of the Talking Cricket; but then he ended by doing what all children do, when they've not a scrap of good feelings and are heartless. That's to say, he ended up by shrugging his shoulders and he said to the Fox and the Cat:

"Let's go then! I'm coming with you."

And off they went.

After walking for half a day they came to the town called Catchafool. As soon as they entered the town, Pinocchio noticed that all the streets were filled with hairless dogs, yawning from hunger; with fleeced sheep, trembling with cold; roosters without combs and wattles, begging for a grain of wheat; with large butterflies, unable fly because they had sold their beautiful coloured wings; peacocks, without tails, ashamed to be seen like that; and with pacing pheasants, pacing about in a subdued way, grieving the loss of their brilliant gold and silver feathers, lost forever.

Amidst this crowd of beggars and shameful paupers, a few beautiful carriages went by, from time to time, with either some Fox, or a thieving Magpie or some ravenous bird of prey inside.

"Where's the Field of Miracles?" asked Pinocchio.

"It's only a few steps away."

They crossed the city and, just outside the walls, they stopped at a lonely field, which looked more or less like any other field.

"Here we are," said the Fox to the puppet. "Now you kneel down, dig a hole in the earth with your hands and put the gold coins into it."

Pinocchio obeyed. He dug the hole, he put the four gold coins that remained into it, covered up the hole with a little earth.

"Now then," said the Fox, "go to that near-by brook, bring back a pail of water, and sprinkle it over the earth where you sowed the coins."

Pinocchio went to the ditch but, as he had no pail, he pulled off his shoe, filled it with water, and sprinkled the earth which covered the hole. And then he asked:

"Is there anything else to do?"

"No, nothing else," answered the Fox. "Now we can go away and you can come back in twenty minutes and you'll find the little tree already pushing through the earth and with all its branches filled with gold coins."

Pinocchio, beside himself with joy, thanked the Fox and the Cat a thousand times and promised each of them a beautiful gift.

"We don't want any gifts," answered the rogues. "It's enough for us that we have taught you how to become rich without any hard work. For this we are pleased as Punch."

So saying, they said goodbye to Pinocchio and, wishing him a bumper harvest, they went on their way.

Chapter 19

Pinocchio is robbed of his gold coins and, in punishment, is sentenced to four months in gaol.

Back in town, the puppet began to count the minutes one by one, and when he thought the time was right, he immediately took the road back to the Field of Miracles.

As he walked with hurried steps, his heart beat fast... tic, toc, tic, toc, just like a drawing-room clock. And all the time he was thinking to himself:

"What if, instead of a thousand coins, I'd find two thousand on the branches of the tree? And what if instead of two thousand, I'd find five thousand? And say instead of five thousand I'd find one hundred thousand? Oh, what a fine gentleman I'd be! I'd have a beautiful house, a palace, a thousand little wooden horses and a thousand stables, just for me

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to play with, a cellar full of liqueurs and lovely drinks, and a larder packed full of candied fruit, tarts, sweet bread loaves, nougats, cream filled wafers."

While dreaming like this, he drew near to the field, and then he stopped to see whether by any chance he might catch a glimpse of a tree with branches laden with money; but he saw nothing! He took another hundred steps forward, and still nothing! He entered the field and went right up to the little hole where he had buried his gold coins and still nothing! And then he became thoughtful and, forgetting his good manners and good breeding, he pulled his hand out of his pocket and gave his head a lengthy scratching.

And as he did so, he heard hearty laughter ringing in his ears: and looking up he saw a big parrot in a tree, preening the few feathers he still had on.

"What are you laughing for?" Pinocchio asked.

"I'm laughing because, while preening my feathers, I, I tickled myself under my wings."

The puppet said nothing. He walked to the pond, filled his same shoe with water, and once again sprinkled the ground which covered the gold coins.

And then suddenly another laugh, even more impertinent than the first, rang out in the solitary silence of the field.

"Ah, look here," shouted Pinocchio, getting angry, "may I know, rude parrot, what you're laughing at?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I'm laughing at those simpletons who believe in all the foolish things they are told and allow themselves to be caught so easily in traps set by those who are more cunning than themselves."

"Are you, perhaps, referring to me?"

"Yes, I do mean you, poor Pinocchio, I mean you, who are so empty-headed as to believe that money can be sown and reaped in the fields, ha, ha, ha, just like beans or pumpkins. Yeah, I, too, believed that once, and now I'm paying the price. Now, and it's too late, I've reached the conclusion that, in order to earn a little money honestly, you must know how to earn it either with one's hands or the cleverness of one's own brain."

"I don't understand you," said the puppet, who was beginning to tremble with fear.

"Too bad! I'll explain myself better," added the Parrot. "You see, while you were away in town the Fox and the Cat returned to this field; they dug up the gold coins, and fled as fast as the wind. And now anyone who catches up with them will be lucky!"

Pinocchio was dumbfounded, and not wanting to believe the Parrot's words, he began to dig up with his hands and fingernails the soil he had watered. And he dug, and he dug, and he dug, and he made such a deep hole that a haystack might have stood upright in it. But the coins were no longer there.

Then in a state of desperation, he raced back to town and went straight to the courthouse to denounce the two scoundrels who had robbed him to the judge. The Judge was a huge ape of the Gorilla species; an old ape who was respected for his venerable age, for his white beard and especially for his gold-rimmed spectacles, without lenses, which he was obliged to wear permanently, as a result of fluxion of the eyes, which had been troubling him for many years.

Pinocchio, standing before the judge, told the tale in every little detail, of the unjust fraud of which he had been the victim. He gave the names and surnames and the descriptions of the rascals, and ended by demanding justice.

Well, the Judge listened to him with great patience. And a kindly look shone in his eyes. He became very much interested in the story; he felt moved; he almost wept. And when the Marionette had no more to say, the Judge put out his hand and rang a bell.

At the sound of the ring, two Mastiffs, dressed as police constables immediately appeared.

The judge, pointing to Pinocchio, said to them:

"That poor devil has been robbed of four gold coins. Take him away, and throw him into gaol at once!" The puppet, on hearing this unexpected sentence passed upon him, was completely astounded and tried to protest; but the constables, wasting no time, silenced him and carried him away to the dungeons.

And there he had to remain for four months; four very long months. And he would have remained longer, if it hadn't been for a stroke of good luck. Because you must know that the young emperor who ruled over the town of Catchafool, having won a great victory over his enemies, gave orders for great public rejoicing; he ordered illuminations, fireworks, horse races and bicycle races, and as a sign of good will, he ordered that all the gaol doors be flung open and that all the rascals should be released.

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"If the others leave gaol, I want to leave too," said Pinocchio to the gaoler.

"Oh, not you," answered the gaoler, "Because you are not among those selected."

"I beg your pardon," retorted Pinocchio, "I, too, am a rascal."

"Well, in that case you have every reason," said the gaoler, removing his cap in respect, and wishing him farewell he opened his cell door, and let him out.

Chapter 20

Freed from prison, Pinocchio sets off for the Fairy's house; but on his way he meets a horrible Serpent, and later is caught in an animal trap.

Imagine Pinocchio's happiness when he found himself free! Without dithering a moment he fled from the town and once again he set out on the road that was to take him back to the Fairy's cottage.

On account of the rainy weather, the road had turned into a quagmire into which he sank knee-deep.

But the puppet wasn't discouraged.

Tormented by the desire to see his father and his little sister with the blue hair, he raced along in leaps and bounds like a greyhound, and he splashed with mud right up to his cap.

As he ran, he said to himself, "I've been plagued by misfortunes... I deserve it! I'm stubborn and a bad-tempered puppet... always bent on having my own way, without listening to those who love me and who are a thousand times wiser than I am. But from now on, I'll make a resolution to change my ways and become a well-behaved and obedient boy. At last I've seen disobedient children come to no good, always lose out. And I wonder if my Father is waiting for me. Will I find him at the Fairy's house? Poor man, it's such a long time since I last saw him, and I'm dying to caress him a thousand times and smother him with kisses. Will that Fairy ever forgive me for all my wrongdoings? And when I think of all the good and loving attention she lavished upon me... if I'm still alive, I owe my life to her! Could there ever be a more ungrateful or heartless boy than I am?"

While he was saying this, he stopped suddenly, startled, and took four steps backwards.

What had he seen?

He had seen an enormous Serpent lying stretched across the road, with green skin, fiery eyes and a pointed tail that smoked like a chimney.

You can't imagine how frightened the poor puppet was! He ran back for more than half a mile and sat down on a heap of stones waiting for the Serpent to go on his way, minding his own business, leaving the road clear again.

He waited an hour; he waited two hours; three hours; but the Serpent was always there, and even from afar one could see the glow from his bloodshot, fiery eyes and the column of smoke which rose from his long, pointed tail.

At last Pinocchio, plucking up courage, approached to within a few steps from him and said in a very sweet, ingratiating, soft voice,

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Serpent, would you be so kind as to step aside a little, just enough to let me pass?"

He might as well have spoken to a brick wall. Nothing moved.

So he began once again, in the same little voice:

"You see, Mr. Serpent, I'm going home where my father is waiting for me and it's been such a long time since I last saw him! Would you allow me to continue on my way?"

He waited for a sign in answer to his request, but the answer didn't come. Only the Serpent, who had been until then full of life, became motionless, almost rigid, his eyes closed and his tail stopped smoking.

"Can he really be dead?" said Pinocchio, rubbing his hands together joyfully; and without a moment's hesitation, he made to jump over him, in an effort to get further along the road. But he had hardly lifted his foot, when the Serpent shot up

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suddenly, just like a released spring, and drawing back, the frightened puppet tripped and fell onto the ground. In fact, he fell so badly that he landed with his head stuck in the mud on the road, and his legs right up in the air.

Well, at the sight of that puppet standing on his head and kicking his legs about at an incredible speed, the Serpent was seized with a fit of laughter, that made him laugh, and laugh and laugh until after laughing so much, he burst a blood-vessel in his chest and this time he really did die.

And then Pinocchio began to run again in order to be able to reach the Fairy's house before dark. But along the road, unable to endure the terrible pangs of hunger, he jumped into a field, intending to pick a few bunches of Muscatel grapes. Oh, if only he hadn't done it!

No sooner had he reached the grapevine when... snap... he felt his legs gripped between two cutting iron bars, which made him see all the stars in the heavens.

The poor puppet had been caught in a gin-trap put there by a farmer to capture some plump beech martens, which were the scourge of all the poultry-yards in the neighbourhood.

Chapter 21

Pinocchio is caught by a Farmer, who forces him act as a watchdog at his poultry-house.

Pinocchio, as you may well imagine, began to cry and howl and plead; but his cries and screams were all in vain, since in that area no houses were to be seen and not a living soul passed by down the road.

And meanwhile night descended.

Partly because of the pain caused by the trap which cut into his shins, partly because he was afraid of being left alone in the dark, in the middle of those fields, the puppet was on the point of fainting.

When, out of the blue, he saw a glow-worm above his head, and he called out:

"Oh, little glow-worm, please take pity on me and set me free from this torture?"

"Poor little boy!" answered the glow-worm, stopping and staring down at him with pity.

"However did you come to be caught with your legs clamped between those irons?"

"I came into the field to pick two bunches of these muscatel grapes and..."

"But were the grapes yours?"

"No."

"So who taught you to take things that don't belong to you?"

"Well, I was hungry..."

"Hunger, my boy, is no reason for taking something which doesn't belong to us."

"It's true, it's true!" cried Pinocchio in tears. "I'll never do it again."

Just then, the conversation was interrupted by the faint sound of stealthy footsteps. It was the owner of the field, coming on tiptoe to check whether one of those beech martens, which had been eating his chickens during the night, had been snared in the trap.

Great was his surprise when he pulled out his lantern from beneath his greatcoat and discovered that, instead of a beech marten, he had caught a boy in the trap!

"Ah, you little thief!" said the farmer angrily, "So you are the one who has been carrying off my chickens!"

"No, It wasn't me, it wasn't me!" cried Pinocchio, sobbing. "I only came into the field to pick two bunches of grapes!"

"He who steals grapes may very likely steal chickens too. Now, you leave it to me! I'll teach you a lesson you'll remember for a long while."

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Opening the trap, he grabbed the puppet by the collar, and carried him off to his house as if he were a new-born lamb. And when he reached the yard in front of the house, he flung him on the ground, putting a foot on his neck, he said:

"It's late now and I want to go to bed. We'll settle matters tomorrow. In the meantime, since my watchdog died today, you shall take his place at once. You shall be my watchdog!"

Well, no sooner said than done. He slipped an enormous collar, covered in brass spikes, around his neck and fastened it so tightly that Pinocchio couldn't slip his head out of it. A long iron chain was tied to the collar: and the chain was fixed to the wall.

"If tonight," said the farmer "it should happen to rain, you can go and lie down in that little wooden kennel, where there's still the straw that served as a bed for the last four years for my poor dog. And if, by accident, thieves should come, you be sure to prick up your ears and bark!"

After this last warning, the farmer went into his house, securing the door with a great big chain: and poor Pinocchio lay huddled in the farmyard, more dead than alive from cold, hunger, and fear. Every now and again he angrily put his hands to the collar, that was choking him, and said, crying:

"It serves me right! It really serves me right! I wanted to be a lazybones and a vagabond... I listened to rascals, and that's why I've been hounded by misfortune all this time.

If only I had been a good boy, like so many others; if only I had wanted to study and work, if I had stayed at home with my poor father, I wouldn't be here now, in the middle of the fields, acting as a guard-dog at a farmer's house. Oh, if only I could be born again... But it's too late now. Ah, let it be!"

Relieved by this little outburst, which came right from his heart, he went into the kennel and fell asleep.

Chapter 22

Pinocchio discovers who the thieves are and, as a reward for his trustworthiness, he regains his freedom.

He had already been sleeping soundly for more than two hours, when, at around midnight, he was awoken by whisperings and strange mutterings which seemed to be coming from the farmyard.

Sticking the tip of his nose out of the entrance of the kennel, he saw, gathered together in consultation, four little creatures with dark fur, that looked like cats. But they weren't cats: they were beech martens, little meat-eating creatures, particularly fond of eggs and young chickens. One of these martens, leaving his companions, went to the entrance of the kennel, and said in a whisper:

"Good evening, Melampo."

"My name is not Melampo," answered the puppet.

"Oh! Who are you, then?"

"I'm Pinocchio."

"What are you doing here?"

"I'm acting as a watchdog."

"But where is Melampo? Where is the old dog who used to live in this kennel?"

"He died this morning."

"Died? Oh, poor beast! He was such a good dog! Still, judging by your looks, you seem to be a good-natured dog too."

"I beg your pardon, I am not a dog!"

"What are you, then?"

"I'm a puppet."

"And you're acting as a watchdog?"

"Alas, it's my punishment."

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"Well, then, I propose the same terms and conditions with you that I had with the late Melampo. I am sure you'll be satisfied with them."

"And what might the terms be?"

"Well, we shall come here once a week, as in the past, to pay a night visit to this poultry yard, and we'll carry off eight chickens. Of these seven chickens will be eaten by ourselves, and one we'll give to you, provided, of course, that you pretend to be asleep and never ever let it enter your head to bark and wake up the farmer."

"Did Melampo really do that?" said Pinocchio.

"Most certainly he did, we always got along splendidly well together."

"Now, you sleep quietly, and be assured that before we go, we shall leave, on top of your kennel, a chicken all plucked and ready for your breakfast in the morning. Is that understood?"

"All too well," replied Pinocchio; shaking his head in a threatening manner, he seemed to say, "We'll soon see about that!"

When the four martens thought they were safe, they went straight to the poultry yard which stood very close to the kennel; and having opened the little wooden gate with their teeth and their claws, they slipped through one after another. But they were hardly in before they heard the gate slamming shut with a sharp bang.

The one who had shut it was Pinocchio, who, not satisfied with having shut it, for greater security propped a huge stone in front of it.

And then he started to bark. And he barked just as if he were a real watchdog: "Bow-wow, bow-wow! Bow, wow, wow!"

On hearing the barking, the farmer jumped out of bed, and grabbed his gun and leaning out of the window he called:

"What's going on?"

"The thieves are here," answered Pinocchio.

"Where are they?"

"In the poultry yard."

"I'm coming down right away!"

And, in fact, he was down in less time than it takes to say 'Amen' and he charged into the poultry yard, and grabbed the four martens and after tying them up in a sack, said to them in a happy voice:

"Ah, you have fallen into my hands at last! I could punish you, but I'm not so cruel! Tomorrow, I'll take you to the Innkeeper in the nearby town, who will skin and cook you in the manner of jugged hare.

It is an honour that you don't deserve, but generous people like me are not given to pettiness!"

Then he went up to Pinocchio and began to pat and caress him a lot and, among other questions, he asked him:

"However did you manage to discover these four little robbers' plot? And to think that Melampo, my faithful Melampo, never noticed anything!"

At that, the puppet could have told all what he knew: that is, he could have told the farmer about the shameful contract between the dog and the martens, but remembering the dog was dead, he said to himself: "What good will it do if I accuse the dead? The dead are dead, and the best thing one can do is to leave them in peace!"

"Were you awake or asleep when the martens came into the poultry yard?" the farmer continued to ask.

"I was asleep," answered Pinocchio, "but the martens awakened me with their chattering, and one of them came right up to my kennel and said to me, 'If you promise not to bark, or wake up the farmer, we'll give you a ready plucked chicken.' You understand? They even had the nerve to make me such an offer! You must know that, I am a puppet, I might have all the faults in the world, but I will never become an accomplice and lend dishonest people a hand."

"Good boy!" cried the farmer, slapping him on the shoulder.

"Such sentiments do you honour; to show you how grateful I am, I'm letting you go right now, so that you may go back home at once!"

And he took the dog collar off.

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Chapter 23

Pinocchio mourns the death of the beautiful child with blue hair. He then meets a Dove, who carries him to the seashore where he throws himself into the sea to go to the aid of his father, Geppetto.

No sooner Pinocchio was freed from the very heavy, humiliating weight of that collar around his neck, than he started running across the fields, never stopping for a second, until he reached the main road which would lead him back to the Fairy's little cottage.

Upon reaching the main road, he turned to look down at the valley below, he could plainly see, with the naked eye, the wood where he had unluckily met with the Fox and the Cat. Among the trees he could see the top of the oak tree, where he had been strung up to dangle by the neck; but although he looked everywhere, he couldn't see the cottage where the Fairy with the blue hair had lived.

Then he had a kind of grim presentiment, and, he began to run with all the strength left in his legs, and finally he came to the spot where the white cottage had once stood. But the little white cottage was no longer there. There instead, was a little marble tablet, on which one could read in capital letters this sad inscription:

HERE LIES
THE LOVELY FAIRY WITH BLUE HAIR
WHO DIED OF GRIEF
WHEN ABANDONED BY
HER LITTLE BROTHER PINOCCHIO

How the puppet felt on deciphering those words as best he could I shall leave to your imagination. He fell on the ground, flat on his face, kissing the gravestone with a thousand kisses, he burst into tears. He cried all night, and the next morning he was still crying, although his eyes had no tears left, and his cries and lamentations were so loud and penetrating they echoed in all the surrounding hills.

And, sobbing, he said:

"Oh, my Fairy, why are you dead? Why didn't I die, I who am so wicked, instead of you, who are so good? And my father, where can he be? Oh, dear Fairy, tell me where I can find him, and I shall never, never leave him again! Oh, dear Fairy tell me it's not true you're dead. If you really love me, if you love your little brother, come to life, come back to life as you were before. Don't you feel sorry for me here alone, abandoned by everybody? If the two Assassins come back, they'll hang me again from the giant oak tree and I will really die, this time. What shall I do alone in the world? Now I've lost you, and my father, who will give me something to eat? Where shall I go and sleep at night? Who will make me new little jacket? Oh, it would be better, a hundred times better, if I were to die too! Boo-hoo-hoo!"

While he was despairing like this, he even tried to tear his hair out, but as his hair was made of wood, he didn't even have the pleasure of running his fingers through it.

And meanwhile a very large Dove flew by, pausing with wings outstretched, he called down to him from high above:

"Tell me, little boy, what are you doing way down there?"

"Well, can't you see? I'm crying," said Pinocchio, lifting his head towards the voice and rubbing his eyes with the sleeve of his jacket.

"Tell me," continued the Dove, "do you by any chance know of a puppet, among your friends, called Pinocchio?"

"Pinocchio! Did you say Pinocchio?" repeated the puppet, quickly jumping to his feet. "I'm Pinocchio!"

At this answer, the Dove plummeted down to rest on the ground. He was much larger than a turkey.

"Then you must know Geppetto too?"

"Do I know him? He's my poor father! Perhaps he's talked to you about me? Will you take me to him? Is he still alive? I beg you, please answer me! Is he still alive?"

"I left him three days ago on the seashore."

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"What was he doing?"

"He was building a little boat for himself, with which to cross the ocean. For the last four months, that poor man has been wandering around the world, looking for you. Not having found you yet, he has made up his mind to look for you in the New World, far across the oceans."

"How far is it from here to the seaside?" asked Pinocchio anxiously.

"More than a thousand miles."

"One thousand miles? Oh, dear Pigeon, how I wish I had your wings!"

"Well, if you want to come, I'll take you with me."

"How?"

"Astride my back. Are you very heavy?"

"Heavy? Not at all. Light as a feather."

So, without any further ado, Pinocchio leapt onto the Dove's back and sitting with one leg on this side and one on the other, just like a jockey does, he cried out gaily:

"Gallop, gallop, little horse, for I'm in a great hurry to get there!"

The Dove took to the air, and in only a few minutes he had soared so high that he almost touched the clouds. The puppet, out of curiosity, looked down to see what was below: but he got so frightened, the sight made him so dizzy, so not to run the risk of falling off, he clutched wildly around the neck of his feathery mount.

They flew all day. Toward evening the Dove said:

"I'm very thirsty!"

"And I'm very hungry!" added Pinocchio.

"Let us stop for a few minutes at this dovecote; and then we can go on, and be at the seashore at dawn tomorrow."

They went into the empty dovecote, and there was nothing except a bowl of water and a small basket full of weeds.

The puppet, hated the thought of weeds. According to him, they made him feel sick; it turned his stomach. But that evening he ate them to repletion. And when he had almost finished them, he turned to the Dove and said:

"I could never have believed that weeds could be so good!"

"You must realize, my boy," answered the Dove, "that when hunger is really in command and there is nothing else to eat, even weeds become delicious!" Hunger is the best sauce!

After having a hasty snack they continued their journey and off they flew again!

And the next morning they arrived at the seashore.

The Dove deposited Pinocchio on the ground, and wishing to be spared the embarrassment of being thanked for having done a good deed, he immediately took flight again and disappeared from sight.

The shore was full of people, shrieking and gesticulating as they looked toward the sea.

"What has happened?" Pinocchio asked a little old woman.

"What's happened is that a poor father, having lost his son, has gone away in a little boat in order to search for him across the ocean; and the sea is very rough today and the little boat is going to sink."

"Where is the little boat?"

"There it is, over there, where my finger's pointing," answered the little old woman, pointing to a tiny boat that, seen from that distance, looked no bigger than a nutshell, with a little, little man in it.

Pinocchio fixed his gaze in that direction, and after looking carefully he uttered a piercing cry:

"It's my father! It's my father!"

Meanwhile, the little boat, tossed about by the angry waves, kept disappearing under the great breakers, and then reappearing to float on the surface again. And Pinocchio, standing on the tip of a high rock, never stopped calling his father by name, signalling with his hands, and his handkerchief and even with his cap that he wore on his head.

It looked as if Geppetto, though very far away from the shore, recognized his son, for he took off his cap too and waved and also made signs as if he would return to land. He seemed to be trying to make everyone understand that he would willingly

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have returned, but the sea was so rough he was hindered from using his oars. And then suddenly there came a terrible huge wave and the boat disappeared.

And they waited again for the boat to rise to the surface, but the boat was never seen again.

"Poor man!" said the fishermen who were gathered together on the beach, and murmuring a prayer they turned to go back home.

But just then, a desperate cry was heard and looking back, they saw a little boy, who was on top of a cliff, throwing himself into the sea, and crying out,

"I'll save him! I'll save my father!"

The puppet, being made of wood, floated easily along and swam like a fish. Now and again he disappeared under water, driven by the power of the billows then an arm or a leg would reappear above the water once more, far out to sea. In the end they lost sight of him altogether.

"Poor boy!" said the fishermen who were gathered together on the beach, and mumbling a prayer, under their breath, they returned home.

CHAPTER 24

Pinocchio reaches the "Island of the Busy Bees" and finds the Fairy once again.

Pinocchio, inspired by the hope of arriving in time to save his poor father, swam all night long.

And what a horrible night it was! It poured with rain, it hailed, it thundered terrifyingly, while flashes of lightning made it as light as day.

As dawn broke, he managed to see, not far away, a long strip of land. It was an island in the midst of the sea.

So he tried his utmost to reach that shore, but it was in vain. The waves, falling back and breaking over each other, knocked him about as if he were a twig or a wisp of straw. But, at last, and luckily for him, a tremendous, wild wave broke and flung him onto the sands. The blow was so strong that, on hitting the ground, all his ribs and all his joints rattled. But, he comforted himself by saying:

"Once again I've come out alive!!"

Meanwhile, little by little the sky cleared. The sun came out in full splendour and the sea became calm and smooth as oil. And then the puppet spread out his clothes to dry in the sun and he began looking in every direction to see whether, over that immense expanse of water, he might catch sight of a boat with a little man in it. But after searching all around the horizon he saw nothing in front of him except sky, sea and a few sails; but they were so very far away that they looked no bigger than flies.

"If only I knew what this island was called!" he said to himself. "If only I knew whether this island is inhabited by civilized people, I mean people who are not in the habit of stringing children up on tree branches! But whom am I to ask? There is no one here."

The thought of finding himself alone, really all alone in the midst of a great uninhabited country, made him so sad he was he was on the point of crying, but all of a sudden he saw a big Fish swimming by, at a little distance from the shore, minding his own business, with his whole head out of the water.

Not knowing what to call him, the puppet shouted at the top of his voice:

"Hey there, Mr. Fish, may I have a word with you?"

"Even two, if you want," answered the fish, who happened to be a very polite Dolphin, the kind you wouldn't find often in all the seas of all the world.

"Would you be so kind as to tell me if, on this island, there are places where one may eat without running the danger of being eaten?"

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"I'm sure there are," answered the Dolphin. "In fact you'll find one not far from here."

"How do I get there?"

"You have to take that little path to your left and walk straight on following your nose. You can't go wrong."

"Can you tell me another thing. You who swim all day and all night throughout the seas, you didn't happen, by chance, to meet a little boat with my father in it?"

"Who is your father?"

"He's the best father in the world, just as I am the worst son you could ever have."

"With that dreadful storm last night," answered the Dolphin, "the little boat must have gone to the bottom of the sea."

"And my father?"

"Well, by this time, he must have been swallowed by that Terrible Shark, which, over the last few days, has been spreading death and misery to these waters."

"Is this Shark very big?" said Pinocchio, who was already beginning to tremble with fear.

"Is he big?" replied the Dolphin. "Just to give you an idea of his size, let me tell you that he is bigger than a five-storey building, and he has such a terribly wide and deep mouth, that it could easily hold a whole railway train, with its furnace lit."

"Goodness me!" cried the terrified puppet; and getting dressed as fast as he could, he turned to the Dolphin and said:

"Good-bye, Mr. Fish; please excuse any trouble I have caused you and many thanks for your kindness."

And this said, he immediately set off along the little path and he began to walk quickly, so quickly that he was almost running, and at the slightest sound he would turn around to see whether he was being followed by that Terrible Shark, who was as big as a five storey-building and with a railway train in his mouth.

After walking for a half hour, he came to a small village called the 'Village of the Busy Bees'. The streets were swarming with people running to and fro, going about their business. Everybody worked, everyone had something to do. You couldn't have found an idler or a tramp, not even if you searched for one with a lamp.

"I know, this is a village that will never do for me! The lazy Pinocchio said at once. "I wasn't born for work."

"But in the meantime, he began to feel terribly hungry, for it was twenty-four hours since he had last eaten anything. Not even a dish of weeds.

So what was to be done?

There were only two ways left for him to break his fast. He could either ask for a little work or beg for a penny or a crust of bread.

He was ashamed to beg, because his father had always preached him that begging should be done only by the aged and the sick.

The real poor of this world, deserving assistance and compassion, are those who, by reason of age or sickness, find themselves condemned to be unable to earn their bread by the labour of their own hands. It is the duty of everyone else to work; and should they not work, and suffer from hunger, so much the worse for them.

Just at that moment a man passed along the street who was sweating and breathless, because he was pulling all by himself, and with great difficulty, two carts laden with coal.

Now, Pinocchio, judging him by his looks, thought he must be a kind man and approached him. And lowering his eyes in shame, he said to him in a voice that could hardly be heard:

"Would you be so kind as to give me a penny, I am dying of hunger?"

"Well, not just one penny," replied the Coal Man. "I'll give you four as long as you help me pull these two coal carts home."

"Oh, I'm surprised at you!" answered the puppet, rather offended. "I wish you to know that I've never been a donkey, nor have I ever pulled a wagon."

"Well, so much the better for you!" answered the Coal Man. "Well, my boy, if you're really dying of hunger, then eat two slices of your pride; and be careful you don't get indigestion."

And a few minutes later, a Bricklayer, carrying a basket of lime on his shoulders passed by.

"Good man, would you be kind enough to give a penny to a poor boy who is famished?"

"Oh, gladly, you come with me and carry some lime, replied the Bricklayer and instead of one coin, I'll give you five."

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"But lime is heavy," objected Pinocchio, "I don't want to work so hard."

"If you don't want to work so hard, my boy, enjoy being hungry and much good may it do you!"

In less than a half hour, at least another twenty people passed by, and Pinocchio begged of each one, and they all answered:

"Aren't you ashamed? Instead of begging in the streets, why don't you look for work and learn to earn your own bread!"

Finally, a good little woman went by carrying two pails of water.

"Good woman, will you allow me to have a sip of water from your pail?" asked Pinocchio, who was burning with thirst.

"Go ahead, have a drink, my boy!" said the little woman, setting the two pails on the ground.

And when Pinocchio had drunk his fill, like a sponge, he muttered under his breath as he wiped his mouth:

"I'm no longer thirsty. But, if only I could get rid of my hunger!"

On hearing these words, the good little woman immediately said:

"If you help me to carry one of these pails home, I'll give you a nice piece of bread."

Pinocchio looked at the pail and said neither yes nor no.

"And with the bread, I'll give you a lovely dish of cauliflower seasoned with oil and vinegar added the good woman."

Pinocchio gave the pail another look and said neither yes nor no.

"And after the cauliflower, I'll give you a delicious liqueur-filled sweet."

At this last temptation Pinocchio could no longer resist and he said resolutely:

"All right then! I'll carry the pail home for you."

The pail was very heavy, and the puppet, not being strong enough to carry it with his hands, had to put it on his head.

When they arrived home, the good woman made Pinocchio sit down at a small table which was already laid and placed before him the bread, the cauliflower, and the sweet. Pinocchio didn't eat like a human being; he gobbled everything up. His stomach felt like an empty house that had been uninhabited for five months.

Little by little his ravenous hunger was somewhat appeased, and so he raised his head to thank his kind benefactress; but he hardly looked at her when he let out a long cry of surprise *ohhhh!* and sat there transfixed, his eyes wide open, his fork in the air, and his mouth full of bread and cauliflower.

"Why all this surprise?" asked the good woman, laughing.

"Because..." replied Pinocchio, stammering, "because...you look like...you remind me of...yes, yes, the same voice, the same eyes, the same hair... yes, yes, yes, you also have the same blue hair she had. Oh, my little Fairy, my little Fairy! Tell me it's you! Don't make me cry any longer! If you only knew! I wept so much, I suffered so much!"

So saying, Pinocchio wept a flood of tears, and throwing himself onto his knees on the floor, he hugged the knees of that mysterious little woman.

Chapter 25

Pinocchio promises the Fairy to be good and to study, as he's fed up with being a puppet and wants to become a good boy.

At first the good woman began to say that she was not the Fairy with blue hair: but then, seeing that she had been found out, and not wanting to pretend any longer, she finally admitted who she was, and said to Pinocchio:

"You rascal of a puppet! How did you know it was I?"

"It was my great love for you told me who you were."

"Do you remember? You left me when I was a little girl and now you find me again, a woman, so much so that I could almost be your mother!"

"It seems ages that I've been longing for a mother, just like all the other boys! But how did you manage grow so quickly?"

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"Oh, it's a secret!"

"Well, teach me that secret; I'd like to grow a little too. Can't you see? I have always stayed knee-high to a grasshopper."

"But you can't grow," replied the Fairy.

"Why not?"

"Because puppets never grow. They're born puppets, live as puppets, and they die puppets."

"I'm sick and tired of always being a puppet!" cried Pinocchio, slapping his wooden head. "It's about time I too became a man."

"And you will, if you learn to deserve it..."

"Really? What can I do to deserve it?"

"Well, it's a very simple matter. Try to act like a well-behaved child."

"But I am, aren't I?"

"Ha, ha, quite the opposite! Good boys are obedient, whereas..."

"Whereas I never do what I'm told."

"Good boys love to study and work, whereas you—"

"Whereas I, on the contrary, am a dawdler and a loafer all year round."

"Good boys always tell the truth."

"Whereas I always tell lies."

"Good boys willingly go to school."

"Whereas school makes my body ache all over. From now on I want to change my ways."

"Do you promise me?"

"I promise. I want to become a good boy and be my father's pride and joy. Oh, where can my poor father be now?"

"I don't know."

"Will I ever be lucky enough to see him and hug him once more?"

"I hope so. Indeed, I am sure of it."

On hearing this, Pinocchio's happiness was so great he took hold of the Fairy's hands and began to kiss them with such fervour that he seemed almost beside himself with joy. And then lifting his face and looking at her lovingly, he asked:

"Oh, tell me, dear little mother, it isn't true that you're dead then?"

"It doesn't seem so," replied the Fairy, smiling.

"If only you knew the sorrow I felt and the tightening of my throat when I read 'Here lies—'"

"I know, and that's the reason why I've forgiven you. The sincerity of your sorrow made me see that you have a good heart; when good-hearted children, even if they're rascals and full of bad habits, well, there's always hope for them; that's to say one can hope they'll mend their ways. That's the reason why I have come all this way to look for you. I shall be your mother."

"Oh, how lovely!" cried Pinocchio, jumping for joy.

"You will obey me and will always do what I tell you to do."

"Oh, willingly, willingly, willingly!"

"From tomorrow," said the Fairy, "you'll start by going to school."

Pinocchio became at once a little less cheerful.

"And then you will choose a skill or a profession you like best."

Pinocchio turned serious.

"What are you muttering?" asked the Fairy.

"Well, I was just saying...", mumbled the puppet in a faint voice, "it seems to me, a bit late for me to go to school."

"Oh, no, indeed. Remember it's never too late to learn or to be educated."

"But I don't want either a skill or a profession."

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"Why not?"

"Because work bores me!"

"My boy," said the Fairy, "people who say that usually end up in a prison or in a hospital. Man, as a rule, whether he's born rich or poor, must do something in this world, to be kept busy, to work... No one can find happiness without work. Woe betide idleness! Laziness is a serious illness and one must cure it immediately; yes, even from early childhood. If not, when we become adults it can't be cured at all!"

These words touched Pinocchio's soul, and lifting his head quickly he said to the Fairy: "I'll study; I'll work; I'll do all you tell me. After all, the life of a puppet has become very boring, and I want to become a boy, no matter what it takes. You promised me, didn't you?"

"Yes, I promise you, and now it's up to you."

Chapter 26

Pinocchio goes to the seashore with his friends to see the terrible Shark.

The following day Pinocchio went to the state school.

Just imagine the surprise of the rascally schoolboys when they saw a puppet entering their school! Their laughter seemed endless. They took turns in playing tricks on him. One snatched his cap right out of his hand; one pulled his hat off, another tugged at his jacket from behind; and one tried to draw big moustaches under his nose with ink, and one even tried to tie strings to his feet and hands, to make him dance.

Well, for a while Pinocchio was patient and calm and put up with it all; but in the end, his patience ran out, and turning on those who were goading him and poking fun at him the most, he said to them in a firm manner:

"Careful, boys, I haven't come here to be your clown. I respect others and I want to be respected."

"Ha, ha, ha! Well said, little devil! You talk just like a book!" yelled the rascals, laughing their heads off! One of them, more impudent than the others, stretched out his hand intending to pull the puppet by the tip of his nose.

But he was not quick enough, for Pinocchio stretched out a leg from under the table and kicked him hard on the shins.

"Ouch! Ugh, what hard feet!" yelled the boy, rubbing the bruise that the puppet had given him.

"Ah, ugh, what elbows! They're even harder than his feet!" said another boy who had received a blow in his stomach because of his coarse tricks.

The fact is that after that kick and that elbowing Pinocchio was at once rewarded with the admiration and the affection of all the children in the school; they all lavished favours on him and thought the world of him.

Even the teacher praised him, because he saw he was attentive, and studious, and intelligent, always the first to come into school, always the last to stand up, when school was over.

His only fault was that he hung around with too many friends; and amongst these were many well-known rascals, who were famous for their unwillingness to study or to succeed.

The teacher warned him every day, and even the good Fairy never failed to tell him and to repeat many times over:

"Be careful, Pinocchio! Those bad school companions of yours will sooner or later make you lose your love of learning and perhaps one day they will lead you astray."

"No, there's no such danger!" answered the puppet, shrugging his shoulders and touching his forehead with his finger as if to say, "There's a lot of common sense in here."

And so it happened that one day, while he was walking to school, he met a pack of his usual companions who, going up to him, said,

"Hey, have you heard the great news?"

"No!"

"In the sea, near by, a shark as big as a mountain has turned up."

"Really? I wonder if it could be the same shark that was there when my poor father drowned?"

"We are going to the beach to see it. You coming too?"

"No, I'm not. I want to go to school."

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"What do you care about school? We'll go to school tomorrow. With one lesson more or less, we'll still be the same dunces."

"And what will the teacher say?"

"Oh, let him talk. He's paid to grumble all day long."

"And my mother?"

"Mothers never find out anything," answered those rascals.

"Do you know what I'll do?" said Pinocchio. "I want to see that shark for certain reasons of my own, but I'll go after school."

"Oh, you silly fool!" retorted one of the gang. "Do you think that a fish of that size will hang around waiting for you? Ugh, as soon as he gets bored, he'll take off for somewhere else. He'll turn and off he'll go, and then that'll be that!"

"Well, how long does it take to get to the beach from here?" asked the puppet.

"Ah, we can get there and back in an hour."

"Then let's go! Whoever runs fastest, is the best!" shouted Pinocchio.

Having given the signal to start, the gang of urchins, with their books and their exercise books under their arms, dashed across the fields, and Pinocchio was always ahead of everyone; he appeared to have wings on his feet.

And every so often, turning back to look, he'd poke fun at his friends who were a long way behind him, seeing them panting, out of breath, covered in dust, their tongues hanging out, he laughed heartily. Little did the unfortunate boy know what terrors and dreadful things were going to happen to him!

Chapter 27

The big fight between Pinocchio and his schoolmates, during which one of them is injured and Pinocchio gets arrested by the Carabinieri.

On reaching the beach, Pinocchio immediately looked out to sea; but there was no sign of a shark. The sea was as flat as a plate-glass window.

"So where's that shark?" he asked, turning to his friends.

"He may have gone to have breakfast," replied one of them, laughing.

"Or, perhaps, he threw himself down onto his bed for a little nap," answered another, laughing even louder.

From those silly answers and those stupid chuckles, Pinocchio realized that his friends had played a nasty trick on him, wanting him to believe something that wasn't true. And taking it badly, he said to them angrily:

"Now, may I ask, what's the fun of making me believe that story about the shark?"

"It was great fun, to be sure!" answered the little rascals in chorus.

"In what way?"

"In making you skip school and making you come with us. Aren't you ashamed of being so punctual and so diligent in class every day? Aren't you ashamed of studying so hard?"

"Why should you care how hard I study?"

"It matters a lot to us, because you make us look silly with the teacher."

"Why?"

"Because schoolboys who study always make those like us, who don't want to study, small by comparison. And that's a little too much! We've got our pride, too!"

"Then what must I do to please you?"

"Well, you, too, must begin to dislike going to school, and the lessons and the teacher; those are our three worst enemies."

"And if I were to go on studying?"

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"Well, we'll have nothing more to do with you, the first opportunity we'll make you pay for it!"

"To tell you the truth you almost make me laugh, said the puppet.

"Hey, Pinocchio," shouted the biggest of the boys, confronting him. "Don't come here behaving like a braggart; don't come here to be so cocky! Because you if you're not afraid of us, we're not afraid of you either! And remember, you are on your own and there are seven of us."

"Like the seven deadly sins," said Pinocchio with a loud laugh.

"Did you hear that? He insulted us all. He has called us the seven deadly sins."

"Yeah, Pinocchio, apologize for that insult, or else, the worse for you!"

"Cuckoo!" said the puppet, tapping his forefinger on the tip of his nose, as a teasing gesture.

"Pinocchio! You're going to be sorry!"

"Cuckoo!"

"You'll get it, just like a mule!"

"Cuckoo!"

"You'll go home with a broken nose!"

"Cuckoo!"

"Very well, then, I'll give you cuckoo!" shouted the boldest of those ragamuffins.

"Take this for a start, and keep it for supper this evening."

And with these words, he gave Pinocchio a terrible blow on the head.

But it was, as the saying goes, give and take; because the puppet, as was to be expected, promptly retaliated with another blow: and right there and then the fight raged on, becoming general and furious.

Pinocchio, although alone, defended himself like a hero. With those two hard wooden feet of his which worked so well, he kept his opponents at a respectful distance. Wherever his feet could reach out and kick, they always left a bruise as a souvenir.

Therefore the boys, vexed at not being able to fight the puppet at close quarters, decided that it would be better to throw things at him, and untying their bundles of schoolbooks, they began hurling their spelling-books, grammars, dictionaries, storybooks, geography books, the *Fairy Tales of Count Thourar*, *Baccini's Chick*, as well as other schoolbooks. But the puppet, who had a sharp eye and was no fool, always ducked in time, so that the books flew over his head, ending up in the sea.

Imagine the surprise of the fish! Believing that those books were something to eat, they came in shoals to the surface of the water; but having nibbled a page or two, and the odd title-page, they spat them out at once, making a sort of grimace with their mouths, as if to say:

"It isn't stuff for us! We are used to much better food than this!"

Meanwhile, the battle raged on, growing fiercer and fiercer, and then suddenly a huge crab, that had come out of the water, crawled ever so slowly up onto the beach, calling out loudly, in a gruff voice that sounded like a trombone with a cold:

"Stop it, you're nothing but rascals! These fisticuff fights, boys versus boys, rarely end well. Something bad always happens!"

Poor Crab! He might as well have preached to the wind. Indeed that rascal Pinocchio, turning round and scowling at him, said:

"Shut up, boring Crab! You'd do better to suck a couple of lichen lozenges to cure that sore throat of yours. Or else go to bed and try and sweat it out!"

And in the meantime, the boys, who by now had thrown all their own books, caught sight of the puppet's bundle of books lying near-by, and in less than no time they got hold of it.

Amongst these books, there was a very large volume bound in thick cardboard, its spine and corner tips made of parchment. It was a Treatise on Arithmetic. Well, you can just imagine how heavy that must have been.

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One of the rascals grabbed the volume and, aiming it at Pinocchio's head threw it at him with all the strength we could muster. But instead of hitting the puppet, it struck one of the other boys on the head. He turned as white as a sheet, and all he could say was "Agh!"

"Agh, goodness me, help me! I'll die!" And then he collapsed flat down on the sandy beach.

At the sight of that pale little corpse, the frightened boys took to their heels, and in only a few moments they were nowhere to be seen.

But Pinocchio stayed there, even though overcome by grief and fright, he too was more dead than alive, and nevertheless, he ran to the sea and soaked his handkerchief in seawater and with it bathed the head of his poor little schoolmate. All the while he sobbed profusely, despairingly calling the boy by his name, and saying:

"Eugenio, my poor Eugenio! Open your eyes and look at me! Why don't you answer? I was not the one who hit you, you know. Believe me, I didn't do it. Open your eyes, Eugenio ... If you keep them shut, you'll make me die too. Oh, good God, how can I ever go home now? How can I ever have the courage to go back to my good mother again? What will become of me? Where shall I go? Where shall I hide? Oh, how much better it would have been, a thousand times better, if only I had gone to school! Why did I listen to those boys, who will be the death of me? My teacher told me so! ... and my mother told me over and over again! "Beware of bad company!" But I'm stubborn and obstinate. I let everyone have their say, and then I always do as I please. And then I have to pay for it... It's always been like this ever since I came into this world I've never had a moment's peace! Goodness me! What will become of me? What will become of me?" What will become of me?"

Pinocchio went on crying and screeching and beating his head with his fists and calling poor Eugenio by name, when suddenly he heard heavy steps approaching.

He turned around and saw two tall Carabinieri near him.

"What are you doing there, lying on the ground?" they asked Pinocchio.

"I'm taking care of this schoolfellow of mine."

"Is he ill?"

"I think so."

"Mmm, hurt indeed!" said one of the Carabinieri, bending over to examine Eugenio closely. "This boy has been injured on the temple. Who was it that injured him?"

"Not me," stammered the puppet, gasping for breath.

"If it wasn't you, who was it injured him then?"

"Not me," repeated Pinocchio.

"And what was he injured with?"

"With this book," said the puppet and picked up the *Treatise on Arithmetic*, bound in cardboard and parchment, and showed it to the Carabinieri.

"And whose book is this?"

"It's mine."

"Right, that's enough; no need for more. Get up at once, and come along with us."

"But I..."

"Come along!"

"But I'm innocent."

"Come along with us!"

Before leaving, the Carabinieri called out to some fishermen who just happened to be sailing by in their boat near the shore, and told them:

"We're leaving this little boy with a head injury in your care. You take him home and look after him. Tomorrow we'll come to see him."

They then turned to Pinocchio and, after putting him between the two of them, they ordered him in military tones: "Forward and quick march! or else so much the worse for you!"

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Without waiting for them to repeat it the puppet began to walk down the lane that led to the village. But the poor fellow hardly knew where he was. He thought he was dreaming and what an awful dream it was! He was beside himself. His eyes saw everything double, his legs trembled, his tongue was stuck to the roof of his mouth, and he could hardly utter a single word. Yet, in spite of this sort of awe and bewilderment, a very sharp thorn pierced his heart; the thought, that is, of passing under the windows of his good little Fairy's house, walking between the two Carabinieri. He would rather have died!

They were about to enter the village, when a sudden gust of wind blew off Pinocchio's cap carrying it ten paces away.

"Would you mind," the puppet asked the Carabinieri, "if I go and fetch my cap?"

"Go ahead, make it quick!"

The puppet went, picked up his cap—but instead of putting it on his head, he stuck it in his mouth between his teeth and off he raced as hard as he could go towards the seashore. He went like a bullet out of a gun.

Ahh, the Carabinieri, judging it would be very difficult to catch him, sent a big Mastiff after him, an animal that had won first prize in all the dog races. Pinocchio ran, the dog ran faster than him. So all the people looked out of their windows, crowded the streets, anxious to see the end of this fierce contest. But they were disappointed, for the dog and Pinocchio raised so much dust on the road that, after only a few moments, it was impossible to see anything at all.

Chapter 28

Pinocchio runs the risk of being fried in a pan, like a fish.

During that wild flight, there was one terrible moment, a moment when Pinocchio thought himself lost. You see, Alidoro (that was the mastiff's name), after running and running, had almost caught up with him.

Well, let's just say that the puppet could hear, a hand's breadth away, the laboured panting of that beast, he could even feel the scorching heat of his breath.

But, fortunately, the beach was close now, and there was the sea only a few strides away.

And as soon as he reached the beach, the puppet made a magnificent leap, just like a frog would have done, and fell right into the water. Alidoro, however, intended to stop, but, carried away by the impetus of the race he, too, landed in the water. And that poor wretch didn't know how to swim, so he thrashed about with his paws to keep afloat; but the more he floundered, the further his head went under.

And when his head resurfaced, the poor dog's eyes were terrified and bewildered and barking, he howled, "Woof, I'm drowning! Woof, drowning!"

"Fiddlesticks!" answered Pinocchio from a safe distance.

"Help me, dear Pinocchio! Woof, save me from death! Wooo!"

At those pitiful cries, the puppet, who after all had a very kind heart, was moved to compassion and turning to the dog said:

"But if I save your life, will you promise not to bother me again and not run after me?"

"Woof, I promise! I promise! Only hurry up, for pity's sake; woof, for if you wait another half minute, I'm as good as dead, wooo!"

Pinocchio hesitated a bit longer; but then remembering that his father had told him many times, that by doing a good deed one never loses out, he swam towards Alidoro and, holding him by his tail, with both his hands, he dragged him safe and sound to the dry sandy beach.

The poor Dog could hardly stand up. He had swallowed, without meaning to, so much salt water he was swollen up like a balloon. However, Pinocchio, not trusting him too much, considered it prudent to throw himself back into the sea once more; and as he swam away from the beach, he called out:

"Goodbye, Alidoro, have a good journey, give my best wishes to all at home!"

"Woof, goodbye Pinocchio," answered the dog. "A thousand thanks for saving me from death. Woof, you've done me a great service, and, in this world, one good turn deserves another. Woof, if the occasion arises, woof, we'll talk it over."

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Pinocchio went on swimming, always keeping close to shore. At last he thought he had reached a safe place; and glancing at the beach, he saw among the rocks a kind of cave, out of which rose a very long plume of smoke.

"Oh, in that cave," he said to himself, "there must be a fire. So much the better. I'll go and dry and warm myself, and then?... well, then we'll see what happens"

Having made up his mind, he approached the rocks, but as he started to climb, he felt something beneath him in the water, that was rising, rising, rising, rising so high he was lifted right up into the air. At once he tried to escape, but it was too late, because, to his great surprise, he found himself caught in a huge fishing net, amidst a swarm of fish of every shape and size, wagging their tails and struggling like so many lost souls.

At the same time, he saw a fisherman coming out of the cave, a fisherman who was so ugly, so very ugly he looked like a sea monster. Instead of hair, a thick bush of green grass grew on top of his head. Green was the skin of his body, green were his eyes, green was the long, long beard that reached down to the ground. He looked like a giant lizard standing on his hind legs.

When the Fisherman had pulled his fishing net out of the sea, he shouted happily:

"Ah, thank Heaven! Once again I shall have a bellyful of fish!"

"What a good thing that I'm not a fish!" said Pinocchio to himself, plucking up a little courage.

The netful of fish was carried inside the cave, a dark, smoky place, in the middle of which a large frying-pan of oil was sizzling and there was a whiff of candle snuff that took one's breath away.

"Now, let's see what kind of fish we've caught today," said the Green Fisherman and, into the net he thrust his hand, a huge hand, so out of proportion it looked like a baker's shovel and he pulled out a handful of red mullets.

"Ah, these mullets, are good!" he said, after looking and sniffing at them. And then he flung them into a bucket without water.

And then he repeated the same process several times and, little by little, as he plucked out the other fish, his mouth began to water and overjoyed, he said:

"Hum, fine fish, these hake!"

"Oh, delectable, these sole!"

"Ah, exquisite, these spiderfish!"

"Hee-hee, cute, these anchovies with their heads still on!"

As you can well imagine, the hake, the soles, the spiderfish, and the anchovies all went together into the bucket to keep the red mullet company.

The last thing remaining in the fishing-net was Pinocchio.

As soon as the fisherman had plucked him out, his large green eyes opened wide with surprise, and he cried out, as though frightened:

"What kind of fish is this? I don't remember ever eating fish of this shape and kind."

He went on looking at the puppet closely, and after scrutinizing him from every angle, he said at last:

"Now I know, he must be a crab!"

Well, Pinocchio, who was mortified at being taken for a crab, said resentfully:

"Crab indeed! You had better be careful how you treat me! I am a puppet, I want you to know."

"A puppet?" replied the fisherman. "Mmm, to tell you the truth, puppetfish are new to me! Well, so much the better. I'll enjoy eating you all the more."

"Eat me? But can't you understand, I'm not a fish? Can't you hear that I speak and think as you do?"

"That's absolutely true," the fisherman commented; "but since I see you are a fish, who is lucky enough to speak and reason like me, I will treat you with all due respect."

"Which means what exactly?"

"As a sign of friendship and particular esteem, I'll leave to you to choose the manner in which you are to be cooked. Do you wish to be fried in a frying-pan, or would you rather prefer to be stewed in a pot with tomato sauce?"

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"To tell you the truth," answered Pinocchio, "if I must choose, I'd much rather go free so I may return home!"

"Are you joking? Do you think I want to miss the opportunity of tasting such a rare fish? A puppetfish doesn't come very often to these seas. You leave it to me. I'll, I'll fry you in a pan with the other fish. I know you'll like it. It's always a comfort to find oneself fried in good company."

The unhappy Pinocchio, on hearing this, began to cry and wail and beg, and with tears streaming down his cheeks, he said: "How much better it would have been if I had gone to school! I did listen to my school friends and now I am paying for it! Boo-hoo-hoo!"

And as he wriggled like an eel and made indescribable efforts to slip out of the Green Fisherman's clutches, the fisherman took a nice length of reed, and after tying him up hand and foot like a sausage, threw him into the bottom of the bucket with the other fish.

Then he pulled out a battered wooden tray full of flour and started to flour all those fish; and as he floured them, he threw them into the frying pan. The first to dance around in the boiling oil were the poor hake, and then the spiderfish, then the mullet, then the sole and the anchovies, and then came Pinocchio's turn. Seeing himself so near to death (and what a horrible death!) he began trembling so violently from fear that he had neither voice nor breath left with which to plead for his life.

The poor boy pleaded with his eyes. But the Green Fisherman, without taking a blind bit of notice, turned him over five or six times in the flour, covering him so thoroughly from head to toe that he looked like a puppet made of plaster.

Then he took him by the head and . . .

Chapter 29

Pinocchio returns to the Fairy's house and she promises him that, on the following day, he will cease to be a puppet and will become a boy. A splendid breakfast of coffee-and-milk to celebrate the grand event.

Just as the fisherman was on the point of tossing Pinocchio into the frying-pan, a huge dog entered the cave, drawn by the powerful and delicious smell of fried fish.

"Get out!" shouted the fisherman threateningly, while still hanging on to the flour-coated puppet.

But the poor dog was as hungry as four dogs put together, and whining and wagging his tail, he seemed to be saying:

"Give me a bite of fried fish and I'll leave you alone."

"Go away, I tell you!" repeated the fisherman.

And he stretched out his leg to give him a kick.

Then the Dog, who was really famished and couldn't stand being trifled with, turned on the Fisherman, snarling and baring his terrible fangs.

And at that moment, a very feeble little voice was heard saying:

"Save me, Alidoro! If you don't, I've had it now"

The dog immediately recognized Pinocchio's voice, and to his great astonishment he realized that the little voice came from the flour-covered bundle that the Fisherman was holding in his hand.

So what did he do? He took one great leap, seized the flour-coated bundle in his mouth and, holding it gently between his teeth, ran out of the cave and disappeared like a flash of lightning!

The Fisherman, furious at seeing a fish, that he would so happily have eaten, snatched from right under his nose, tried to run after the dog, but after taking only a few steps a fit of coughing made him stop and he turned back.

Meanwhile, Alidoro, having found the lane which led to the village, stopped and set Pinocchio gently down on the ground.

"How can I thank you!" said the puppet.

"Baw, not necessary," answered the dog. "Baw, you saved me, and one good deed deserves another, baw!"

It's well known that in this world we all have to help one another, woof."

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"But what on earth were you doing in that cave?"

"I was still lying on the beach more dead than alive, woof, when the wind brought me from afar a lovely smell of fried fish. Augh, the smell whetted my appetite and I set off to follow it. Augh, and if I had arrived a minute later, woof!"

"Oh, don't speak about it!" yelled Pinocchio, who was still trembling with fear. "Don't speak about it! If you had come a minute later, by this time I would have been as good as fried, eaten, and digested. Augh! I get the shivers at the mere thought of it."

Laughing, Alidoro held out his right paw to the puppet, who shook it heartily, as a sign of great friendship and then they parted from each other.

The dog took the path leading back home, and Pinocchio, left alone, walked towards a hut nearby and asked a little old man who was warming himself at the door:

"Tell me, good man, have you heard anything about a poor boy with a head injury, whose name was Eugenio?"

"The boy was carried to this hut by some fishermen, and now..."

"Now he must be dead?" interrupted Pinocchio, with great sorrow.

"No, now he's alive and he has already returned home."

"Really? Oh, really?" cried the puppet, jumping for joy. "So the wound wasn't serious?"

"But it might have been, and even fatal," answered the old man, "because it was a big book bound in cardboard that they threw at his head."

"Who threw it at him?"

"One of his schoolmates, a certain Pinocchio."

"And who is this Pinocchio?" asked the puppet, pretending he didn't know.

"Ah, they say he is a bad boy, a vagabond, a real madcap..."

"Lies! It's all lies!"

"Do you know this Pinocchio?"

"By sight!" answered the puppet.

"And what do you think of him then?" asked the old man.

"I think he's a very good boy, really fond of studying, obedient and doting on his father, and family..."

While the puppet was pouring out all these bare-faced lies, he touched his nose and found that it had grown longer by a hand's breadth. Scared out of his wits, he cried out:

"Don't take any notice, good man, of all the wonderful things I have said about him; because I know Pinocchio very well and I too can assure you he really is a very bad boy, disobedient, lazy-bones who, instead of going to school, runs away with his schoolmates to behave like a clever clogs."

As soon as he had uttered these words, his nose grew shorter, returned to its normal size, just as it was before.

"Why are you so white?" the old man asked suddenly.

"Let me tell you. Without realising, I rubbed myself against a freshly whitewashed wall," replied the puppet, ashamed of admitting that he had been covered with flour just like a fish that was about to go into the frying pan.

"What have you done with your jacket and trousers, and your cap?"

"I met up with thieves and they robbed me of my clothes. Tell me, kind old man, have you not, by any chance, some clothes you could give me, so that I could go home?"

"My boy, as for clothes, I only have a little sack where I keep lupin seeds. If you want it, take it. There it is."

Pinocchio didn't wait to be told twice. He promptly took the lupin sack, which was empty, and used a pair of scissors to cut a little hole in the bottom and two on either side of it, and then he slipped

it on as if it were a shirt. Lightly clad as he was, he headed off towards the village.

Along the way he felt very uneasy. In fact he went along sometimes taking one step forward and one step backwards, and he kept saying to himself:

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"How shall I ever face my good little Fairy? What will she say when she sees me? Will she forgive me for this second escapade? I bet she won't forgive me! Oh, she certainly won't forgive me... And it serves me right! I'm a rascal, always promising to change my ways, and never keeping my word!"

He reached the village by nightfall and, because the weather was so bad and because it was pouring with rain, he went straight to the Fairy's house, firmly resolved to knock at the door and be let in.

When he arrived there, he lost courage and instead of knocking, ran some twenty paces away. Then he went back to the door a second time and still he did nothing; he approached a third time, and still nothing; and then the fourth time, trembling, he grasped the iron knocker in his hand and gave the door a tiny tap.

He waited and waited, and finally, after half an hour, the top-floor window (the house had four storeys) opened and Pinocchio saw a large snail with a tiny light on top of her head, peering out.

"Who's there at this hour?" she called.

"Is the Fairy at home?" asked the puppet.

"The Fairy is asleep and does not wish to be awakened; but who are you?"

"It's me."

"Who is me?"

"Pinocchio."

"Who's Pinocchio?"

"The puppet, the one who lives in the Fairy's house."

"Oh, I understand," said the Snail. "Wait there for me. I'll come down and let you in right away."

"Oh, be quick, I beg of you, I'm dying of cold."

"My boy, I am a snail and snails are never in a hurry."

An hour went by, and then two; and the door did not open. So Pinocchio, who was shivering from cold, trembling with fear and soaked to the skin, plucked up courage and knocked a second time, this time more loudly.

At that second knock, a window opened on the floor below and the same snail looked out.

"Beautiful little Snail," cried Pinocchio from the street. "I have been waiting for two hours! And two hours on a dreadful night like this seems longer than two years. For heaven's sake, please be quick!"

"My lad," that completely sluggish, phlegmatic creature answered from the window, "my dear lad, I am a snail and snails are never in a hurry." And the window closed once more.

A little later the clock struck midnight; and then one o'clock, and then two o'clock, and the door still remained closed!

Well then Pinocchio, losing his patience, grabbed the door knocker angrily, intending to give it a blow that would resound throughout the building. But the knocker, which was made of iron, turned suddenly into a live eel and, slipping out of his hands, disappeared into a rivulet of rainwater that ran down the middle of the road.

"So, that's the way it is!" shouted Pinocchio, more and more blinded with rage. "Since the knocker has vanished, I will go on knocking by means of kicking the door."

And stepping back a little, he let fly with a furious kick against the outside door of the house. His blow was so hard that his foot sank halfway through the wood, and when the puppet tried to pull it out again, it was wasted energy; his foot remained stuck inside, just like a hammered down nail.

Well, you can just imagine poor Pinocchio! He had to spend the rest of the night with one foot on the ground and the other one up in the air.

In the morning, as dawn was breaking, the door finally opened. That good creature the snail, had only taken nine hours to go down from the fourth floor to the outside street-door. It's really true that she'd worked up a sweat!

"What are you doing with your foot stuck in the door?" she asked the puppet.

"It was an accident. Now, let's see, pretty little snail, if you can set me free from this torture?"

"My lad, we need a carpenter here and I've never been one."

"Well, please ask the Fairy to help me!"

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"The Fairy is asleep and doesn't want to be awakened."

"But what do you want me to do, nailed all day to this door?"

"Enjoy yourself counting the ants which are passing by on the street."

"At least bring me something to eat, I'm famished!"

"Right away!" said the snail.

And in fact, after three and a half hours, Pinocchio saw her return with a silver tray on her head. On the tray there was a loaf of bread, a roast chicken, four ripe apricots.

"Here's the breakfast the Fairy sends to you," said the snail.

At the sight of all these heavenly things, the puppet felt much relieved.

But, how great was his disappointment, when he began to eat and he found the bread to be made of plaster, the chicken of cardboard, and the four apricots of alabaster, all painted to look real!

He wanted to cry, he was just driven to despair, he wanted to throw away the tray and all that was on it. Instead, either as a result of his great sorrow or his great hunger, the fact is he fell down and fainted.

When he regained consciousness, he found himself stretched out on a sofa and the Fairy was next to him.

"I have forgiven you this time as well," said the Fairy. "But woe to you if you get into mischief again."

Pinocchio promised, swore that he would study and always behave himself. And he kept his word for all the rest of the year. Indeed, at the holiday examinations, he had the distinction of being the best pupil in the school, and his behaviour, in general, was judged so praiseworthy and satisfactory that the delighted Fairy said to him:

"Tomorrow your wish shall be granted at last."

"What do you mean?"

"Tomorrow you will cease to be a wooden puppet and shall become a good, respectable boy."

Anyone who hadn't witnessed Pinocchio's joy, of this long-awaited news, could never have quite imagined it. All his friends and schoolmates had to be invited the next day to a grand meal at the Fairy's house, to celebrate the great event, and the Fairy prepared two hundred cups of coffee-and-milk and four hundred rolls, buttered on both sides.

The day promised to be very beautiful and very merry, BUT...

But, unfortunately, in a puppet's life there is always a BUT, which spoils everything.

Chapter 30

Instead of becoming a boy, Pinocchio secretly leaves for the Land of Toys with his friend, Candlewick.

Naturally, Pinocchio immediately asked the Fairy for permission to go around the village to give out the invitations. And the Fairy said:

"By all means go and invite your friends to tomorrow's party, but remember to be back home before dark. Is that clear?"

"I'll definitely be back within an hour," answered the puppet.

"Be careful, Pinocchio! Children make promises but, more often than not, they're slow at keeping them."

"But I am not like the others. When I give my word, I keep it."

"We'll see. If you were to disobey, it'll be much the worse for you."

"Why?"

"Because children who don't listen to the advice of those who know more than they do, always come to grief."

"Ha! And I know from experience!" said Pinocchio, "but from now on, I'm not going to fall into that trap again."

"Well. We'll see if you can avoid it."

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Saying no more, the puppet bade farewell to the good Fairy, who was a sort of mother to him, and singing and dancing, he left the house.

In little more than an hour, all his friends had been invited. And some accepted quickly and gladly. Others, at first, played hard to get, but when they heard that the rolls for dunking in the coffee-and-milk would be buttered even on the outside, they all ended by saying, "We'll come along too, just to please you."

Now you have to know that, among his friends and schoolmates, Pinocchio had a favourite, a very dear friend whom he loved most of all. The boy's real name was Romeo, but oh, everybody called him by his nickname, Candlewick, on account of his dry, lanky figure which was just like a candlewick.

Candlewick was the laziest and the most mischievous boy in the whole school, but Pinocchio loved him dearly.

In fact he went straight to his house to look for him, to invite him to the party, but he was not at home; he went back a second time, and Candlewick wasn't there; and he went back a third time, but made that trip in vain.

How could he hunt him down? He searched here, he searched there and everywhere, but finally he discovered him hiding under the porch of a peasant's house.

"Whatever are you doing there?" asked Pinocchio, going up to him.

"I'm waiting for midnight, so I can leave."

"Where are you going?"

"Far, very far away!"

"And I went to your house three times to look for you!"

"What did you want of me?"

"Haven't you heard about the great event? Have you not heard about the good fortune bestowed upon me?"

"Tell me?"

"Tomorrow I end my days as a puppet and become a boy, like you and all the others."

"Much good it will do you!"

"So, I'll be expecting you over at my house for the party tomorrow."

"But what if I say I'm leaving tonight."

"When?"

"Shortly."

"Where are you going?"

"I'm going to live in a country which is the most beautiful country on earth; a real paradise!"

"What's it called?"

"It's called the Land of Toys. Why don't you come, too?"

"Me? Oh, no!"

"You are making a mistake, Pinocchio. Believe me, you'll be sorry if you don't come. Where would you find a healthier place for us children to live? There are no schools there, there are no teachers there, there are no books there! In that blessed place no one ever studies. There's no school on Thursdays; and every week is made up six Thursdays and one Sunday. Just think, the autumn holidays begin in January and end on the last day of December. Now, that's really a country to my liking! That's how all civilized countries ought to be!"

"But how does one spend one's days in the Land of Toys?"

"Well they're spent playing games, having fun, from morning till night. Then, at night one goes to bed, and the next morning, you start all over again. Now, what do you think of that?"

"Hmm!" said Pinocchio, nodding his head slightly, as if to say, "It's the kind of life I'd enjoy."

"Well then, do you want to come away with me? Yes or no? You gotta make up your mind."

"No, no, no, no, no and again no! I've promised my good Fairy to become a respectable boy, and I want to keep my word. In fact, as I see the sun setting, I must leave you at once, be on my way. Well, goodbye then, have a good journey."

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"Where are you going in such a hurry?"

"Home. My good Fairy wants me to return home before nightfall."

"Oh, wait another couple of minutes."

"I'll be too late!"

"Only two minutes."

"What if the Fairy tells me off?"

"Well, let her tell you off. After she's scolded you good and proper, she'll stop," said the rascal Candlewick.

"You going alone or are there others?"

"Alone? There'll be more than a hundred of us!"

"You travelling on foot?"

"No! In a little while, a coach will pass by to pick me up and take me over the border to that marvellous land."

"Gosh, I'd give anything to see that coach go by now!"

"Why?"

"To see you all set out together."

"Well, stay a little longer and you will see us!"

"No, no, no, no! I want to return home."

"Wait another two minutes."

"No, I've waited too long as it is. The Fairy will be worried about me."

"Oh, poor Fairy! Is she perhaps afraid the bats will eat you up?"

"So then," Pinocchio went on, "you're really sure there are no schools in that country?" "Not even the shadow of one."

"Not even teachers?"

"Not a single one."

"And one never has to study?"

"Never, never, never!"

"What a splendid country!" said Pinocchio, his mouth beginning to water. "What a splendid land! I've never seen anywhere like it, but I can well imagine it."

"Well, why don't you come, too?"

"It's no use trying to tempt me! I've already promised my good Fairy that I'd become a sensible boy, and I don't want to break my promise."

"Well, goodbye, then, give my best wishes to the middle School, and also to those High Schools, should you ever meet them on your way."

"Goodbye, Candlewick. Have a pleasant journey, enjoy yourself, and think of your friends, once in a while."

Having said that, the puppet took a few steps with the intention of leaving; but stopping and turning around towards his friend, he asked him:

"But are you really sure that, in that country, every week's made up of six Thursdays and one Sunday?"

"Very certain!"

"You're sure the holidays begin on the first of January and end the thirty-first of December?"

"Very, very certain!"

"Oh, what a great country!" repeated Pinocchio, his mouth watering so much from pleasure he had to spit.

And then, with great determination, he added hurriedly:

"Well, it's really goodbye, and have a good journey."

"Goodbye."

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"When are you leaving?"

"Very soon."

"A pity! If it were only for one hour, I might be tempted to wait for you."

"What about the Fairy?"

"Well, I'm late already, returning home one hour early or one hour late, makes very little difference."

"Poor Pinocchio! And if the Fairy scolds you?"

"Well, it's too bad, I'll let her tell me off. And when she's told me off good and proper, she'll calm down."

In the meantime, the night grew darker and darker; and then, suddenly in the distance they saw a small light flickering... they heard the sound of harness bells, and the faint, muffled blast of a trumpet, which sounded like the buzz of a mosquito.

"There it is!" cried Candlewick, jumping to his feet.

"What is it?" asked Pinocchio under his breath.

"It's the coach, it's coming to collect me. So you're coming or not?"

"But is it really true," asked the puppet, "that in that country children never have to study?"

"Never, never, never!"

"What a marvellous country! What a marvellous country! What a marvellous country!"

Chapter 31

After five months of idling around, Pinocchio to his great surprise, feels a fine pair of donkey's ears sprouting, and he turns into a little donkey, tail and all.

Finally the coach arrived; and it arrived without making the slightest noise because its wheels were wrapped in tow and rags.

It was drawn by twelve pairs of little donkeys, all the same size, but with coats of different colours.

Some were grey, some white, others speckled salt and pepper and others were covered with large yellow-and blue stripes .

But the strangest thing was that those twelve pairs of asses, well, that's the twenty-four donkeys, instead of being iron-shod like any other beast of burden, were wearing men's boots made of white leather.

And the driver of the coach?

Well, picture to yourselves a little man, much wider than he was tall, as soft and greasy as a pat of butter, with a little face like a rosy apple, a tiny mouth that was always laughing, and a soft, caressing voice, like that of a cat appealing to the tender-hearted mistress of the house.

The moment the boys saw him they fell in love with him, and they competed with each other to get onto his coach and be driven away to the land of real pleasure that goes by the name of the Land of Toys on the maps.

In fact the coach was already packed with boys between the ages of eight and twelve, piled on top of each other like pickled sardines. They were uncomfortable, they were crowded together, they could hardly breathe; but not a single one said *ouch!*

The comfort of knowing that in a few hours they would arrive in a country where there were no books, no schools, no teachers, made them so happy and uncomplaining that they felt neither the strain of the journey, nor hunger, nor thirst, and nor need of sleep.

No sooner had the coach stopped than the little man turned to Candlewick and, with a thousand smirks and a thousand mincing ways, he asked in a wheedling tone:

"Tell me, my handsome lad, do you also want to come to that wonderful country?"

"Yes, of course I want to come."

THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO

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"But I must warn you, my dear boy, there's no more room in the coach. As you can see, it's completely full."

"Never mind," answered Candlewick, "if there's no room inside, I shall manage to sit on the coach shafts."

And with a leap, he mounted astride the shaft.

"And what about you, my love?" said the little man in a flattering manner, towards Pinocchio, "What are you going to do? Are you coming with us, or are you going to stay?"

"I'm staying," replied Pinocchio. "I want to go back home; I want to study and I want to do well at school, like all good children do."

"And a lot of good it'll do you!"

"Pinocchio!" Candlewick called out. "Listen to me; come with us and we'll have lots of fun."

"No, no, no!"

"Come away with us and we'll have lots of fun together," cried out four other voices from within the coach.

"Come with us and we'll have lots of fun," a hundred voices shouted, all together, from within the coach.

"And if I come with you, what will my good Fairy say?" said the puppet, who was beginning to weaken and waver.

"Don't worry your head off with melancholy thoughts. Just think we're going to a land where we'll be our own masters, free to make all the racket we like from morning till night."

Pinocchio didn't answer, but sighed deeply; and then he sighed again, and then a third time. And finally, he said:

"Make a little room for me. I want to come along, too!"

"All the seats are full," answered the little man, "but to show you how welcome you are, I shall give up my driver's seat for you."

"And where will you sit?"

"I'll make the journey on foot."

"No, indeed, I won't allow that. I much prefer riding on the back of one of these donkeys," cried Pinocchio.

No sooner said than done. He went up to the first donkey harnessed to the right-hand side of the shaft and tried to mount. But the little animal turned suddenly and gave him such a terrible butt that it knocked him head over heels.

You can imagine the rude and wild laughter of all those children watching.

But, the fat man didn't laugh. Full of tenderness, he went up to the rebellious donkey and, pretending to give it a kiss, bit clean off half of his right ear.

In the meantime, Pinocchio having angrily picked himself up from the ground, leapt onto the poor donkey's back. It was such a splendid leap that all the boys stopped laughing and began to shout: "Hooray for Pinocchio!" and gave him a round of applause that seemed endless.

And then lo and behold! The donkey reared up on its hind legs and bucked violently, and threw the poor puppet into the middle of the road, onto a mound of gravel.

Again the boys shouted with laughter. But the little man, instead of laughing, was overcome with so much love towards the little restless donkey that, with a kiss, he bit half of his other left ear clean off.

"You can mount now, my boy," he said then to Pinocchio. "Have no fear, that donkey must have had a bee in his bonnet, but I whispered two little words in his ear, and I hope I've managed to tame him and make him see reason."

Pinocchio mounted and the coach began to move; but while the donkeys were galloping, with the coach clattering along the cobblestone road, the puppet thought he heard a very quiet voice that was hardy intelligible saying to him:

"Poor simpleton! You wanted to have it your way, but you'll be sorry."

Pinocchio, feeling rather frightened, looked all round to see where the voice had come from, but, he saw no one. The donkeys were galloping along, the wagon was rolling on, the children inside were fast asleep. Candlewick snored like a dormouse and the little man sitting on the driver's seat, was singing under his breath.

Everybody sleeps at night...

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And I don't sleep at all...

After they had gone another mile, Pinocchio again heard the same feeble little voice which said to him:

"Remember this, you little nitwit! Boys who give up studying and turn their back on books and schools and teachers in order to devote themselves entirely to fun and games... hee-haw... will sooner or later come to grief... hee-haw... I, I know from experience, I can tell you, oh...!"

A day will come when you will weep too... hee-haw... as I do today... but then it will be too late, oh...!"

At these softly whispered words, the puppet, more frightened than ever, jumped off the donkey's back, and took him by the muzzle.

Just imagine his surprise when he realised that his donkey was weeping... and he was weeping just like a boy!

"Hey, Mister Little Man!" said Pinocchio to the owner of the coach. "Do you know what's going on here?! This little donkey is weeping."

"Let him weep. He'll laugh when he gets a bride."

"Did you by chance also teach him to speak?"

"No, he learnt to mumble a few words on his own, after spending three years in a company of trained dogs."

"Poor beast!"

"Come, now," said the Little Man, "don't let us waste time watching a donkey weeping. Mount him again and let's go; the night is cold and the road is long."

Pinocchio obeyed without another word. The coach set off again, and in the morning, towards dawn, they happily reached the Land of Toys.

This country was entirely different from any other country in the world. Its population was entirely made up of children. The oldest were fourteen years of age, the youngest were barely eight. And in the streets there was such merriment, such a din, such screeching as to stun the brain! Hordes of urchins were gathered together everywhere. Some were playing at throwing walnuts, some were playing hopscotch, some playing ball, some were riding bicycles, some were riding hobbyhorses: these children were playing blindman's buff, and those at tag; others, dressed like clowns were fire-eating, and others were reciting and singing. A few did somersaults, some were amusing themselves by walking on their hands with their feet in the air; some rolled hoops, some strolled about dressed like generals with paper helmets and papier-mâché sabres; and some of them were laughing, some shrieking, some calling out, some clapping their hands, some whistling, some were clucking like a hens laying eggs: in short, there was such a pandemonium, such chattering, such a devilish racket that it would have been necessary to stuff your ears with cotton-wool.

In all the town squares one could see canvas theatres, that were packed with children from morning till night, and on all the walls of the houses, one could read inscriptions written with charcoal, about splendid things such as these:

Long live soys (instead of toys): We don't want anymore skools (spelt s k o o l s). Down with Arit Mettick and other such gems.

As soon as they had set foot in that country, Pinocchio and Candlewick and all the other children who had travelled together with the Little Man, plunged right into the thick of the hubbub, and in a matter of only a few minutes, as you might well guess, they had made friends with everybody. Who could have been happier, or more contented than they?

In the midst of continual games and every variety of amusement, the hours, the days, and the weeks went by like a flash of lightning.

"Oh, what a wonderful life!" said Pinocchio each time that, by chance, he bumped into Candlewick.

"So you see I was right?" the later would reply. "And to think you didn't want to come! To think you had got it into your head to return home to your Fairy's house, and waste your time studying; now if you are free today of the boredom of books and schools, you owe it to me, to my advice, to my kindness, don't you agree? Only true friends can do such great favours."

"It's true, Candlewick. If today I'm a really happy boy, it is all because of you. And the teacher, on the other hand... you know what he used to tell me, when speaking about you? He always used to say, 'Don't spend time with that rascal Candlewick, because Candlewick is a bad influence and will only lead you astray!'"

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"Ha, ha! Poor teacher!" replied the other, shaking his head. "I'm only too well aware that he disliked me and how he enjoyed speaking badly about me; but I'm generous, and I forgive him."

"Noble soul!" said Pinocchio, hugging his friend affectionately, giving him a kiss on the forehead.

Well, by now five months had gone by on living this carefree life of fun and games all day long, without ever seeing a book, or a school. And then one day when Pinocchio awoke, he had, as they say, a rather nasty surprise, which left him in a very bad mood.

Chapter 32

Pinocchio develops donkey's ears, and then turns into a real donkey and begins to bray.

And what was this surprise?

Well, I shall tell you, my dear little readers: the surprise was that Pinocchio, when he awoke, felt an urge to scratch his head, and in scratching his head he noticed...

Well, can you just guess what he noticed?

He realised, to his great surprise, that his ears had grown several inches!

I must tell you that puppets, are born with very small ears, so small indeed they're hardly visible. Well, fancy how he felt when he noticed that overnight his ears had become so long that they resembled two shoe brushes!

He hurried about searching for a mirror, to see what he looked like, but not finding one, he filled the washbasin with water and looking down at his reflection he saw something he would rather never have seen; he saw his own image adorned with a magnificent pair of donkey's ears.

I leave you to imagine the sorrow, the shame, the despair of poor Pinocchio.

He began to cry, to shriek, to bang his head against the wall; but the more he despaired, the more his ears grew longer, and longer, and longer, becoming furry towards the top.

At the sound of those piercing cries, a pretty little Marmot who lived on the floor upstairs, came in. And, seeing Pinocchio so grief-stricken, she asked him:

"What's the matter, my dear neighbour?"

"I'm ill, my dear little Marmot, very ill... from an illness that frightens me! Do you know how to take one's pulse?"

"Well, a little."

"Well, feel mine then and see if by chance I've got a fever."

The Marmot raised her right forepaw, and after having taken Pinocchio's pulse, sighed and said: "My friend, I'm sorry to have to give you some very bad news."

"Which is?"

"You have a very nasty fever."

"But what sort of fever would that be?"

"It's donkey fever."

"I don't know what kind of fever that is," answered the puppet, who had regrettably understood only too well what she meant.

"Well then, I'll explain," said the little Marmot.

"I have to tell you that within two or three hours, you will no longer be a puppet, or a boy."

"What will I be?"

"Within two or three hours, you will turn into a real little donkey, just like the ones that pull carts that take cabbages and lettuce to market."

"Oh, poor me! Oh, poor me!" cried Pinocchio, taking both his ears in his hands, and pulling and tugging at them angrily, just as if they were somebody else's ears.

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"My dear boy," replied the little Marmot trying to comfort him, "what can you do about it now? It's your destiny. For it's written in the decrees of wisdom, that all these lazy children who take a dislike to books, schools and teachers, and spend their days with toys, and games and having fun, must sooner or later turn into lots of little donkeys."

"But is it really so?" asked the puppet, sobbing.

"Unfortunately it is. And it's no use crying now. You should have thought about it... before."

"But it's not my fault. Believe me, dear little Marmot, the fault is all Candlewick's."

"Who is this Candlewick?"

"A school-friend of mine. I wanted to go home. I wanted to be obedient. I wanted to keep on studying and to do well, but Candlewick said to me, 'Why bother wasting your time studying? Why do you want to go to school? Come with me to the Land of Toys instead and we'll never have to study again. There we can have fun from morning to night, and we'll always be happy.'"

"And why did you take the advice of that false friend, of that bad companion?"

"Why? Because, my dear little Marmot, I'm a puppet with no judgment... and heartless. Oh! If only I'd been good-hearted, I'd never have abandoned that good Fairy, who loved me like a mother and had done so much for me! And by now, I'd no longer be a puppet... but instead I'd be a respectable boy, like so many others! Woe betide Candlewick, if I ever bump into him I'm going to give him a piece of my mind... and much more, too!"

And he turned as if to go out. But when reaching the door, he remembered that he had donkey's ears, and feeling ashamed to show them in public, what do you think he did? He took a large cotton nightcap and shoving it over his head, he pulled it right down over the tip of his nose.

He then went out, and set about looking for Candlewick everywhere. He looked for him in the streets, in the squares, inside the theatres, everywhere; but he was not to be found. He asked everyone he met along the way, but no one had seen him.

So he went to look for him at his house and on reaching the door, he knocked.

"Who is it?" asked Candlewick from within.

"It's me!" answered the puppet.

"Wait a minute and I'll open the door."

After half an hour the door opened. Imagine Pinocchio's surprise, when entering the room, he saw his friend Candlewick, with a large cotton nightcap over his head, which came down right under his nose.

At the sight of that nightcap, Pinocchio felt slightly consoled and suddenly wondered to himself:

"Might my friend be suffering from the same illness that I have? I wonder if he, too, has donkey fever?"

But pretending not to have noticed anything, he asked him, smiling:

"How are you, my dear Candlewick?"

"Oh, very well. Like a mouse in a full round of Parmesan cheese."

"Do you really mean that?"

"Why should I lie to you?"

"Well, excuse me, my friend, but then why are you wearing that cotton nightcap that covers up both your ears?"

"The doctor ordered it, because I injured my knee. And you, dear puppet, why are you wearing that cotton nightcap which has been tugged down right under your nose?"

"Doctor's orders, because I grazed my foot."

"Oh, poor Pinocchio!"

"Oh, poor Candlewick!"

Then after these words there followed a long silence, during which the two friends did nothing but look mockingly at each other.

And finally the puppet, in a mellifluous, fluty little voice, said to his companion:

"Oh, just to satisfy my curiosity, my dear Candlewick, have you ever suffered from ear disease?"

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"Never! And you?"

"Never! Only since this morning, and my ear has been torturing me."

"Oh, so has mine."

"You too? Which ear aches?"

"Both of them. What about you?"

"Both of them. Yes, I wonder if it could be the same disease."

"I'm afraid it is."

"Would you do me a favour, Candlewick?"

"Oh, gladly! With all my heart."

"Will you let me see your ears?"

"Yeah, why not? But first, I want to see yours, dear Pinocchio."

"Oh, no. You must show yours first."

"No, my dear! Yours first, then mine."

"Well, then," said the puppet, "let's make a deal, like good friends."

"Oh, well let's hear about the deal then!"

"Let's both take off our nightcaps at the same time. Do you agree?"

"Yeah, I agree."

"Get ready then!"

And Pinocchio began to count out aloud,

"One! Two! Three!"

At the word "Three!" the two boys pulled off their nightcaps and threw them up into the air.

And then a scene unfolded which might have seemed hard to believe, but was all too true. The puppet and his friend, Candlewick, when they saw that they both had been stricken by the same misfortune, instead of feeling mortified and sorry, they began to poke fun at each other's overgrown ears, and, after a thousand gibes, they burst into hearty laughter.

And they laughed and laughed, and laughed until they had to hold themselves together; until, at the height of their laughter, Candlewick suddenly fell silent and staggering turning pale, said to his friend:

"Help, help, help Pinocchio!"

"What's the matter?"

"Oh, help me! I can't... I can't stand upright anymore."

"Neither, neither can I," cried Pinocchio; weeping and swaying.

And as they spoke, they both doubled up and began to run about the room on their hands and legs. And as they ran, their hands became hoofs, their faces lengthened into muzzles, and their backs became covered with a light greyish coat of fur, speckled with black.

But you know what was the most dreadful moment for those two wretches? It was when each felt a tail growing behind. Overcome with shame and pain, they began to weep and lament their fate.

And if only they'd not tried, because instead of moans and laments, they brayed like donkeys. Braying loudly, they formed a chorus together: "*Hee-haw, hee-haw, hee-haw,*"

And then there was a knock at the door, and a voice outside said:

"Open! I'm the Little Man, I'm the driver of the coach which brought you to this country. Open up immediately, or you'll regret it!"

Chapter 33

THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO

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Having turned into a real donkey, Pinocchio is taken away to be sold, and he is bought by the manager of a company of clowns who will teach him to dance and jump through hoops: but one evening he becomes lame, so then he is bought by a man who wants to use his hide to make a drum.

Seeing that the door didn't open, the Little Man flung it wide with a violent kick and coming into the room, with his usual little laugh, said to Pinocchio and Candlewick:

"Ha, ha! Good boys! You brayed so well, I recognized your voices immediately, and now, here I am! Ha, ha, ha!"

At these words, the two Donkeys were crestfallen, with their heads hanging down, their ears drooping, their tails between their legs.

At first, the Little Man stroked and caressed them and felt how plump they were. And then he took out a currycomb and began grooming them thoroughly. And after much grooming, he'd made them shine like two mirrors, only then did he bridle them and take them to the market square, in the hope of selling them and making a good profit.

In fact, buyers weren't very long in coming forward. Candlewick was bought by a farmer whose donkey had died the day before. And Pinocchio was sold to the Manager of a company of clowns and tight-rope performers, who bought him in order to train him to jump and dance together with the other beasts in his Circus.

Now, my little readers, do you understand the real nature of the Little Man's fine profession? This wicked little monster, who appeared all milk and honey, went around the world, from time to time, in his coach, promising and coaxing, and gathering up all the lazy children who disliked books and school: and after loading them into his coach he carted them off to the Land of Toys so they could spend all their time playing, making a racket and having fun. And when all those poor deluded children, as a consequence of always playing and never studying, turned into little donkeys, then, tremendously cheerful and contented, he would take them all up to fairs and markets to be sold.

And so, in a matter of only a few years, he had made a fortune and had become a millionaire.

What happened to Candlewick, I don't know: But I do know, however, that Pinocchio, right from the very first day had to endure a very tough and overtiring life.

When he was led into the stable, his new master filled his manger with straw, but Pinocchio, after having tasted a mouthful, spat it out.

And then his master, grumbling, filled the manger with hay. But he didn't like hay either.

"Ah! You don't even like hay?" shouted his master angrily. "Leave it to me then, my fine donkey, if you've got any silly whims in your head, I'll soon get rid of them!"

And by way of punishment, he promptly lashed out with a whip against his legs.

Pinocchio, in great pain, began to cry a bray and braying he said:

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw! I can't digest straw!"

"Then eat hay!" replied his master, who understood donkey dialect perfectly.

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw! Hay gives me stomach ache!"

"Do you believe, by any chance, that I should feed a donkey like you on chicken breasts and capon in aspic?" his master went on getting angrier and angrier, and lashing out with his whip a second time.

And after the second whipping, Pinocchio thought it would be wiser to remain silent.

After that, the stable door was shut and Pinocchio was left alone, and because he had not eaten for many hours he began to yawn from hunger. And in yawning he opened a mouth that seemed as large as an oven.

And finally, because he couldn't find anything else in the manger, he resigned himself to chewing a little hay, and after chewing it very, very thoroughly, he shut his eyes, and... he gulped it down.

"This hay isn't too bad," he said to himself. "But how much better it would have been if only I had gone on studying! By now, instead of hay, I might be eating a crust of fresh bread and a nice slice of salami! But never mind!"

When he woke the next morning, he immediately searched for more hay in the manger, but he found none, because he had eaten it all the night before.

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So, he had a mouthful of chopped straw, but, as he was chewing, he had to admit that chopped straw tasted nothing like either *Risotto alla Milanese* or *Maccheroni alla Napoletana*.

"Oh, never mind!" he said again, as he went on chewing. "If only my misfortune might serve as a lesson to disobedient children who refuse to study! Never mind! Never mind!"

"Never mind, my foot!" shouted his master, who was coming into the stable. "Do you believe, perhaps, my fine little donkey, that I bought you just to feed and water you? I bought you so that you could work and earn a lot of money for me!

Now, come along, be a good boy. Come into the circus with me and there I'll teach you how to jump through hoops, how to break through paper-covered barrels head first, how to dance the waltz and the polka standing upright on your hind legs."

Well, poor Pinocchio, whether he liked it or not, had to learn all these wonderful things; but it took him three months of lessons to learn them and many lashings that made his hide very sore.

The day came at last when Pinocchio's master could announce a truly extraordinary show. The colourful posters, put up at street corners, read like this:

GRAND GALA PERFORMANCE

This evening

THE CUSTOMARY ACROBATIC JUMPS

AND AMAZING ACROBATIC EXERCISES

PERFORMED BY ALL THE ARTISTS

and all the horses of the Company, mares and stallions alike,

PLUS

appearing for the first time

the famous

DONKEY PINOCCHIO

known as

THE STAR OF THE DANCE

The Theatre will be brilliantly illuminated.

That evening, as you might well imagine, an hour before the show began, the theatre was packed full.

Not a single seat could be found, neither in the front stalls or the back stalls or in the circle, not even if you could afford to pay its weight in gold.

The seats of the Circus swarmed with children, boys and girls of all ages, who were terribly excited as they were longing to see the famous donkey Pinocchio dance.

When the first part of the performance was over, the Ringmaster, dressed in a black coat, white breeches, and big leather boots which reached above his knees, presented himself to the crowded audience and making a sweeping bow, he solemnly uttered the following garbled speech:

"Most honoured public, ladies and gentlemen! Your humble servant, whilst only passing through your illustrious city, wishes to have the honour and the pleasure of presenting to this intelligent and distinguished audience the famous little donkey that has already had the honour of performing before His Majesty the Emperor in all the major Courts of Europe.

"And thanking you, I beg of you to help us with your stimulating presence and may you sympathize with us!"

This speech was greeted by much laughter and applause; but

the applause redoubled, became a sort of hurricane, when the little donkey Pinocchio, appeared in the centre of the circus ring. He was all spruced up for the occasion. He had a new bridle of shining leather with brass buckles and studs; two white camellias behind his ears; his mane was divided into lots of small curls, tied together with little red bows; and a broad sash of gold and silver girded his waist and his tail was completely plaited with reddish-purple and blue ribbons. In short, he was an adorable donkey indeed!

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The Ringmaster, when introducing him to the public, added these few words:

"Most honoured audience! I am not here to lie to you about the great difficulties I encountered while trying to comprehend and subjugate this mammal, whilst he was grazing freely from mountain to mountain in the plains of the torrid zone. Observe, I beg of you, the savage look in his eyes, notwithstanding all the efforts proved to be in vain at subjugating him into living like civilized quadrupeds do and I had to resort, more than once, to the gentle language of the whip. Yet, all my kindness, which should have increased his love for me, made him dislike me all the more. I, however, by following the Welsh system, discovered a little bony cartilage, which the same Medicean Faculty of Paris recognized as being the bulb that regenerates hair and the Pyrrhic dance. That is the reason why I wanted to school him in dancing, as well as in skills relating to jumping through hoops and through paper-topped barrels. Marvel at his beauty! And then judge for yourselves!

Before, however, taking my leave of you, allow me, ladies and gentlemen, to invite you to the matinee show tomorrow evening. In the event that rainy weather might threaten a downpour, then the show, instead of tomorrow evening, will be postponed till tomorrow morning, at eleven a.m. in the afternoon."

And here the Ringmaster made another very deep bow and turning to Pinocchio he said: "Buck up, Pinocchio! Before commencing with your exercises, greet this respectable public: knights, madams, and children!"

Pinocchio obediently knelt down and remained kneeling until the Ringmaster, cracking his whip, shouted: "Walk!"

And then the little donkey got up on four legs and began to walk round the ring at a walking pace. After a short while the Ringmaster shouted:

"Trot!" and Pinocchio, obeying the command, changed his step to a trot.

"Gallop!" and Pinocchio broke into a gallop.

"Full speed!" and Pinocchio galloped as fast as he could. But while he was galloping like a Barbary steed, the Ringmaster raised his arm into the air and let off a pistol shot. Bang!

At the shot the little donkey, pretending to be wounded, fell down to the ground as if he were really dying.

A roar of applause greeted the donkey as he got up from the ground. Shouts and handclappings that seemed to rise up to the heavens, made it natural for him to lift his head and look up.... And as he looked, he saw a beautiful lady in one of the boxes, wearing a heavy gold chain around her neck, from which hung a medallion. And on the medallion was painted the portrait of a puppet.

"That's a portrait of me! That lady is the Fairy!" said Pinocchio to himself, recognizing her immediately, and overcome with joy he tried his best to cry out:

"Oh, my little Fairy! My own little Fairy!"

But instead of these words, there emerged from his throat such a sonorous and prolonged braying that it made all the spectators, and especially all the children who were in the audience, burst out laughing.

Then, in order to teach the donkey a lesson that it wasn't good manners to bray like that before the public, the Ringmaster gave him a blow on the nose with the handle of his whip.

The poor little Donkey stuck out his long tongue and licked his nose for a good five minutes, hoping that perhaps that would ease the pain.

But imagine how great his desperation was when, looking upwards a second time, he saw that the box was empty and the Fairy had vanished!

Well, he thought he was going to die; his eyes filled with tears, he began to weep bitterly. Well, no one noticed though, least of all the Ringmaster, who, cracking his whip, cried out:

"Good boy, Pinocchio! Now show these ladies and gentlemen how gracefully you can jump through the hoops."

Pinocchio tried two or three times, but each time he stopped at the hoop, and instead of going through it, he passed more comfortably under it. But finally, he leaped through, but by ill-fortune his hind legs got caught by the hoop, making him fall onto the ground, on the other side, in one big heap.

When he got up, he found he was lame and could only return to the stable with great difficulty.

"Bring on Pinocchio! We want the little donkey! Bring on the little donkey!" shouted the children in the stalls, saddened and upset by the unfortunate accident.

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But the little donkey didn't appear again that evening.

The next morning, after the veterinarian, that is, the animal doctor, had examined the donkey, he declared he would be lame for the rest of his life.

Now, the Ringmaster then turned to his stable-boy and said:

"Ha, ha! What am I expected to do with a lame donkey?" He'd just be a scrounger of free meals. "Take him to the market, sell him!"

When they reached the square, a buyer was soon found and he asked the stable-boy,

"How much do you want for that little lame donkey?"

"Twenty pounds."

"I'll give you twenty shillings. Don't think I'm buying him to make him work for me; I buying him exclusively for his hide. It looks like his hide is very tough, and with this hide I can make a drumhead for the musical band in my village."

Now, dear children, I leave it to you to guess what Pinocchio must have felt when he heard that he was going to become a drum!

At all events, no sooner had the buyer paid the twenty shillings than the new owner led the little donkey to the seashore. Having put a stone around his neck, and tying a rope around it, and attaching it to one of his hind legs, he suddenly gave him a shove which pushed him right into the water.

With that stone round his neck Pinocchio sank immediately. And the buyer sat down on a rock to allow the little donkey all the time he needed to drown, so as to be able to skin him and make off with the hide.

Chapter 34

Pinocchio, thrown into the sea and eaten by fish, becomes a puppet once more; but while swimming to safety, he is swallowed up by a terrible Shark.

After the little donkey had been under water for fifty minutes, the buyer said to himself:

"By this time my poor little lame Donkey must be well and truly drowned. Let's pull him up again, and we'll make a fine drum out of his hide."

And he began to pull up the rope which he'd tied round the donkey's leg. He pulled and pulled and pulled and finally he saw appearing on the surface of the water... can you guess what? Instead of a dead donkey, he saw a puppet, very much alive, breaking the surface of the water, wriggling and squirming just like an eel.

Seeing that wooden puppet, the poor man thought he was dreaming and stood there with his mouth wide open and his eyes starting out of his head.

Recovering a little from his initial shock. He wept and stammering he said:

"Where's the little donkey I threw into the sea?"

"I am that donkey," answered the puppet laughing.

"You?"

"Yes, me."

"Ah, you little scamp! So you think you can play tricks on me?"

"Playing tricks on you? Not at all, dear master. I'm talking very seriously."

"But, then, how is it that you, who only a few minutes ago were a donkey, have now, after being in the water, turned into a wooden puppet?"

"It must be the effect of the sea-water. The sea is fond of playing these tricks."

"Oh, be careful, puppet, be careful! Don't think you can laugh behind my back! Woe betide you if I lose my patience!"

"Well, then, master, do you want to know the real story? Well, untie my leg and I'll tell you."

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Curious to know the real story of the puppet's life, the bungling buyer promptly undid the knot in the rope which the puppet was attached to; and Pinocchio, feeling free as a bird in the air, began his tale:

"So you see, I used to be a wooden puppet, just as I am today. And then it was touch and go whether I would become a real boy, like so many others in this world, but instead, because of my unwillingness to study and because of listening to the advice of bad company, I ran away from home. Then one fine day, I awoke to find myself turned into a donkey with great long ears... and even a long tail! Oh, what a humiliation that was for me, dear master. I pray blessed Saint Anthony won't make, even you, suffer like this!

I was taken to the donkey market to be sold, and I was bought by the Ringmaster of an equestrian company, who took it into his head to make a great dancer and hoop-jumper out of me. But one night, during a performance, I had a bad fall and became lame. So then, not knowing what to do with a lame donkey, the Ringmaster sent me to the market to be sold again, and you bought me."

"Yeah, my bad luck! I paid twenty shillings for you. Now who is going to give back my wretched twenty shillings?"

"But why did you buy me? You bought me to make a drum out of my hide! A drum! ..."

"I'm afraid so! And now where will I find another hide?"

"Oh, don't despair, master. There are so many asses in this world."

"Tell me, impudent little urchin, does your story end there?"

"No," replied the puppet, "only a few more words and then I'm through. After buying me, you brought me to this place to kill me, but then, giving in to a humane feeling of pity, you preferred to tie a rock round my neck and to throw me to the bottom of the sea. This delicate sentiment of yours does you honour and I shall be forever grateful to you. Besides, dear master, that time you didn't count on the Fairy."

"Who's this Fairy?"

"She is my mother, and, she's like all other good mothers who love their children very much, and never lose sight of them, and who lovingly help them in all their misfortunes, even when these children, because of their carelessness or bad behaviour, deserve to be abandoned and left to fend for themselves. As I was saying, the good Fairy, when she saw I was in danger of drowning, immediately sent a huge shoal of fish all around me and believing I was a dead donkey they began eating me! And what great bites they took! I never would have thought that fish were greedier than children!

Some of them ate my ears, some ate my muzzle, some my neck and some my mane, some took the skin off my legs and some ate the fur off my back and there was one very polite little fish that deigned even to eat my tail."

"Oh, from now on," said the horrified buyer, "I swear I'll never again eat a bite of fish. I really couldn't bear to cut open a red mullet or a fried hake just to find a donkey's tail inside!"

"I feel the way you do," answered the puppet, laughing. "I'll tell you, when the fish finished eating my donkey's hide, which covered me from head to toe, they naturally came to the bones—or rather, to the wood, because you see, I'm made of very hard wood. And after the first few nibbles, those greedy fish soon realised that wood wasn't really their cup of tea, and, nauseated by such indigestible food, they all turned and swam off some this way, some that way, without even glancing back to thank me. So there you have the story of why, on pulling up the rope, you found a live puppet and not a dead donkey."

"I think your story is ridiculous!" shouted the enraged buyer. "All I know is I spent twenty shillings to get you and I want my money back. Do you know what I'm going to do? I am going to take you straight back to the market once more and I'm going to sell you by weight as seasoned wood for starting fires."

"Go ahead, sell me. I don't mind," said Pinocchio. But, so saying, he gave a big leap and plunged into the sea. Swimming cheerfully, further and further away from the beach, he cried out to the poor buyer:

"Good-by, master. If you ever need a hide for your drum, do remember me."

And he began to laugh as he went on swimming. And after a while, he turned around again and called louder than before:

"Goodbye, master. If you ever need a piece of dry firewood to light a fire with, ha, ha! Do remember me."

In fact, in a twinkling of an eye he'd gone so far out, he could scarcely be seen. Or rather, all that could be seen of him was a little black speck on the surface of the water, a speck which every now and then lifted a leg out of the water and turned somersaults and leapt up just like a good natured, playful dolphin.

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While Pinocchio was swimming about aimlessly, he saw a rock in the middle of the sea, that looked like white marble; and high up on the rock there was a beautiful little kid that bleated tenderly, beckoning him to come closer to her.

The strangest thing was that, the kid's fleece, instead of being white or black or spotted with several colours, like the fleece of other kids, her fleece was a deep brilliant blue that reminded him strongly of the hair of the beautiful Little Girl.

Well, I'll leave you to imagine whether Pinocchio's heart began beat harder! He redoubled his efforts and began swimming towards the white rock. He was almost halfway there, when suddenly a horrible head of a sea monster came out of the water, its mouth gaping like a huge chasm, with three rows of fangs, which would have filled you with fear even if it had been only a picture.

Do you know who that sea-monster was?

That sea monster was none other than that gigantic shark, which has often been mentioned in this story and which, on account of its massacres and insatiable voraciousness, had been nicknamed "Attila of the Fish and Fishermen".

Just think of poor Pinocchio's terror at the sight of that monster! He tried to avoid him, to change his direction; he tried to escape, but that immense gaping mouth kept coming nearer and nearer to him with the speed of an arrow.

"Hurry up, Pinocchio, for heaven's sake!" bleated the beautiful little kid.

And Pinocchio swam desperately, using his arms, his chest, his legs, and his feet.

"Quick, Pinocchio, the monster is getting nearer!"

And Pinocchio, gathering all his strength, swam faster and faster.

"Watch out, Pinocchio! The monster catching up with you!"

There he is! There he is! Swim fast, for pity's sake, or you're lost!"

And Pinocchio swam faster than ever, on and on and on he went, just like a bullet shot right out of a gun. He was already close to the rock, and the little kid was already leaning over the sea, stretching out her little hooves forward to help him up out of the water.

But, alas! It was too late. The monster had caught up with him. And the monster, drawing in his breath, swallowed the poor puppet just the way he would have sucked up a raw egg; and he swallowed him with such violence and greed, that Pinocchio, fell right down deep into the shark's belly, bumping his head so badly he lay stunned for a quarter of an hour.

When he recovered his senses, he was so bewildered that he didn't have the faintest idea where he was. All around him was total darkness, a darkness so dense and so black and so deep, it seemed he had fallen head first into an inkwell. He sat there listening, heard not a sound. Every now and then he felt strong gusts of wind beating against his face. At first he couldn't understand where that wind was coming from, but after a while he realised it was coming from the monster's lungs. Because you have to understand that the shark suffered badly from asthma, and when he breathed it felt like the north wind was blowing.

At first Pinocchio tried to be brave, but when he had proof, became convinced that he was really and truly trapped in the Shark's belly, he began to cry and shriek; and weeping he said. "Help! Help! Oh, poor me! Isn't there anyone out there who can come and save me?"

"Who do you think will want to save a wretch like you?" a harsh cracked voice, just like an out-of-tune guitar, reverberated in the darkness.

"Who said that?" asked Pinocchio, frozen with fear.

"It's me! I'm a poor Tunny-fish, swallowed by the shark along with you. What kind of a fish are you?"

"I don't have anything to do with fish. I'm a puppet."

"Well, if you are not a fish, why did you let the monster swallow you?"

"I didn't let myself be swallowed: he just swallowed me! And now what are we going to do here in the dark?"

"Accept our fate and just wait until the shark has digested us both."

"But I don't want to be digested," howled Pinocchio, starting to sob again.

"Well, neither do I wish to be digested," added the Tunny-fish, "but I am rather philosophical and it consoles me to think that, if one is born a Tunny-fish, it is more dignified to die under water than in a frying pan."

"What nonsense!" cried Pinocchio.

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"Well, mine is an opinion," replied the Tunny-fish, "and opinions deserve to be respected, as Tunny-fish politicians would say."

"Well, I want to get out of here. I want to escape."

"Escape then, if you can!"

"Is this Shark that has swallowed us very big?" asked the puppet.

"His body, not counting his tail, is certainly longer than a mile."

While they were talking in the darkness, Pinocchio thought he saw a faint light in the distance.

"Whatever can that faint light, way off in the distance be?" said Pinocchio.

"Oh, it's probably some other companion of misfortune, who like us is waiting to be digested."

"Well, I want to go and find him. You never know, he might be an old fish who may be able to show me the way to escape."

"You have my heartfelt wishes, dear puppet."

"Goodbye, Tunny."

"Goodbye, puppet, and good luck."

"Where shall we meet again?"

"Who knows? It's better not even to think about it."

Chapter 35

Pinocchio finds in the belly of the shark... whom does he find? Read this chapter, and you will know

As soon as Pinocchio had said goodbye to his good friend Tunny, he moved away, fumbling in the darkness, and began groping his way through the body of the shark, he went forward one step at a time towards the faint light which was flickering far, far away.

As he walked he could feel his feet squelching in puddles of greasy, slippery water, and that water had such an acrid smell of fried fish he thought he was in the middle Lent.

The further he went forward, the brighter and clearer the tiny light became. Until, after walking and walking at last he arrived; and when he arrived... what did he find? Ha! I'll give you a thousand guesses: he found a little table all set for dinner, with a lighted candle stuck in a green glass bottle; and sitting at the table was a little old man, as white as the snow, just as if he were made of the snow of whipped cream, and there he was munching on some little, live fish, but so alive, that sometimes while he was eating them, they managed to pop out of his mouth.

Well, at the sight of the old man, poor Pinocchio was filled with such great and sudden joy that he almost fell into a delirium. He wanted to laugh, he wanted to cry, he wanted to say a thousand and one things, but instead he mumbled confusingly and stammered incoherent, broken words. But, finally, he managed to let out a cry of joy and, flinging his arms out wide he threw them around the old man's neck and began to shout.

"Oh, my little daddy! Have I found you at last? Oh, now I shall never, ever leave you again!"

"Are my eyes really telling me the truth?" answered the old man, rubbing his eyes. "Oh, you really are my own dear Pinocchio?"

"Yes, yes it's me, it's really me! And you've already forgiven me, haven't you? Oh, my dear daddy, how good you are! While I, instead... Oh, if you only knew how many misfortunes have rained down on my head and how many things went wrong for me! And to think that I, on the day you, my dear daddy, sold your old coat to buy me my alphabet book so that I could go to school, I ran away to see the puppets, and the puppeteer wanted to throw me into the fire to burn, so as to help cook his roast mutton! He was the one who gave me five gold pieces that I was to take to you, but I met up with the Fox and the

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Cat, who took me to the Red Shrimp Inn, where they ate like wolves and then I left the Inn alone and I met the murders who started to run after me, and I ran off, and they were always after me, after me, and off I went until they, they hanged me from the branch of a great oak tree, where the beautiful little girl with blue hair sent a carriage to fetch me, and the doctors, after examining me, said straight away, 'If he's not dead, then it's a sign that he's alive,' and then, by accident, I told a lie, and my nose began to grow and I couldn't get it through the bedroom door. And then I went with the Fox and the Cat to bury the four gold coins, for one I had spent at the Inn and the parrot began to laugh, and, instead of two thousand gold coins, I found none. When the Judge heard I had been robbed, he immediately had me put away in jail, so as to satisfy the thieves. Coming away from there, I saw a lovely bunch of grapes in a field, and I was caught in a gin-trap; and the peasant, who was perfectly right, put a dog collar on me so that I could guard his poultry yard and then he acknowledged my innocence and let me go, and the Serpent with the smoking tail started to laugh and burst a blood vessel in his chest, so I went back to the beautiful Little Girl's house, but she was dead, and the Pigeon, seeing me crying, said, 'I saw your father building a little boat to go out and look for you,' and I said to him, 'Oh, if only I had your wings too!' and he said to me, 'Do you want to go to your father?' and I answered, 'I wish I could, but who's going to take me' and he said, 'I'll take you.' And I said 'How?' And he said, 'Climb onto my back' and we flew like that all night long, and the next morning all the fishermen were looking out to sea, and they said, 'There's a poor man in a little boat who is about to drown,' and even though I was a long way off I immediately knew it was you, because my heart told me so and I signalled to you to come back to the shore..."

"Yes, I recognized you too," said Geppetto, "and I would have gladly returned to the shore; but how could I? The sea was rough and a breaker capsized my boat. Then a terrible shark, who was nearby, came after me as soon as he saw me in the water, and, sticking out his tongue, he swallowed me whole, just as easily as if I had been a Bolognese tortellino."

"How long have you been shut away in here?" asked Pinocchio.

"Ever since that day, it must be two years by now, two years, my dear Pinocchio, that have seemed like two centuries!"

"And how have you managed to stay alive? Where did you find the candle? And the matches to light it, whoever gave them to you?"

"Now, I'll tell you the whole story. You see, in that same storm which capsized my boat, a merchant ship also sank. Yes, the sailors were all saved, but the ship went right down to the bottom of the sea, and that same terrible shark, who had an enormous appetite on that day, after having swallowed me, swallowed the ship as well."

"What! It swallowed it all in one gulp?" asked Pinocchio in amazement.

"All in one mouthful, and it only spat out the mainmast, because it had got stuck between its teeth like a fishbone. But, to my very good luck, that ship was laden with cans of preserved meat, with biscuits, otherwise known as rusks, bottles of wine, raisins, cheese, coffee, sugar, candles, and boxes of wax matches. And with all these blessings, I have been able to stay alive for two whole years, but today I am down to my last rations. Today there's nothing left in the pantry, and this candle you see burning, is the last one I have left..."

"And then?"

"And then, my dear, we'll find ourselves in darkness."

"Then, my dear Father," said Pinocchio, "there's no time to lose. We must try to escape at once."

"Escape! ... but how?"

"We can escape through the shark's mouth and dive into the sea, and swim away."

"Ha! That's easy for you to say, dear Pinocchio, I don't know how to swim."

"That doesn't matter. You can climb onto my shoulders and ride on my back, I'm a strong swimmer. I'll carry you safely to shore."

"Wishful thinking, my dear boy!" answered Geppetto, shaking his head and smiling sadly. "Do you really think it's possible for a puppet, who is barely three feet tall, to have enough strength to swim with me on his back?"

"Try and you'll see! And in any case, if it is written in Heaven that we must die, at least we shall have the consolation of dying in each other's arms."

And without another word, Pinocchio took the candle and going ahead to light the way, he said to his father:

"Follow me and don't be afraid."

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And so they walked a long way, they crossed the whole body and belly of the shark. But when they reached the point where the monster's immense throat began, they decided it would be better to stop and take a look round, so as to seize the right moment in which to make their escape.

Now, I want you to know that the shark, being very old and suffering from asthma and palpitations of the heart, was obliged to sleep with his mouth open. So, Pinocchio, gazing out from the opening of his enormous wide-open mouth and looking upwards, was able to catch a glimpse of a lovely expanse the sky filled with stars, and beautiful moonlight.

"This is the right time to escape," he whispered, turning towards his father. "The Shark's sleeping like a dormouse, and the sea is calm and it's as bright as day. So come on, dear Father, follow me closely, we shall soon be free."

No sooner said than done. They climbed up the throat of the sea monster and, arriving in his immense mouth they had to walk on tiptoe, along his tongue, a tongue so broad and long it seemed like a garden footpath. And they were just preparing to make the great leap into the sea, when, at that self-same moment, the shark sneezed... and in sneezing, he drew such a deep breath and gave such a tremendous shudder Pinocchio and Geppetto found themselves thrown backwards and hurled down again into the depths of the monster's stomach.

In that great shock of the fall the candle went out, and father and son were left in pitch darkness.

"And now what?" asked Pinocchio becoming serious.

"Now, my boy, we're really done for!"

"Why should we be done for? Give me your hand, dear Father, be careful not to slip!"

"Where are you taking me?"

"We must try to escape again. Now come with me and don't be afraid."

Having said that, Pinocchio took his father by the hand and, always walking on tiptoe, they climbed back together up the monster's throat. Then crossed the whole of his tongue and clambered over three rows of teeth. But, just before they took the last great leap, the puppet said to his father:

"Climb onto my shoulders piggyback, hold your arms very, very tightly around my neck. I'll do the rest."

As soon as Geppetto was comfortably astride his son's back, Pinocchio, very sure of what he was doing, dived into the water and began to swim. The sea was as smooth as oil, the moon shone brightly, and the shark continued to sleep so soundly that not even a cannon-shot would have awakened him.

Chapter 36

Pinocchio finally stops being a puppet, and becomes a real boy.

While Pinocchio was swimming quickly towards the shore, he noticed that his father, who was riding piggy-back with his legs half in the water, was trembling violently, as if the poor man were suffering from a bout of malarial fever.

Was he shivering because of the cold, or of fright? Who knows? Perhaps a little of both. But Pinocchio, thinking his father was shivering from fear, tried to comfort him by saying:

"Take heart, Father! In a few moments we'll be safe on dry land."

"But where is this blessed shore?" asked the old man, becoming even more anxious, squinting just like a tailor threading a needle. "Here I am looking everywhere, I can't see anything but sea and sky."

"But I can also see the shore," said the puppet. "You must know, I see better at night than in the daytime. I'm like a cat."

Poor Pinocchio pretended to be cheerful, but in fact he was beginning to feel discouraged, he was running out of strength, he was becoming breathless, exhausted... in fact he could hardly go on much longer, and the shore was still far away.

He swam until he no longer had any breath left, and then he turned his head towards Geppetto and said in broken words:

"Dear Father, help me, I'm dying!"

Both father and son were by now both on the verge of drowning, when they heard a voice like an out-of-tune guitar, which said:

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"Who's dying?"

"It's me and my poor father."

"I recognize that voice. You're Pinocchio..."

"That's right! And you?"

"I'm the Tunny fish, your cell-mate in the shark's belly."

"How did you manage to escape?"

"I followed your example. It was you who showed me the way and after you had gone, I escaped as well."

"Oh, Tunny, you arrived just in the nick of time! I implore you, by the love you bear your little tunny children; help us, or we are lost!"

"Of course! With all my heart. Hang onto my tail, both of you, and let me tow you. I will get you to shore in four minutes."

Geppetto and Pinocchio, as you might well imagine, accepted the invitation right away; but, instead of holding onto his tail, they thought it better to ride astride the Tunny's back.

"Are we too heavy?" asked Pinocchio.

"Heavy? Not in the least; it feels like having two sea-shells on my back," answered the Tunny, who was of such a large and robust build, that he might have been a two-year-old calf.

Once they had reached the shore, Pinocchio jumped off first to help his father do the same; and said:

"Ah, my friend, you saved my father! Well, I have not enough words with which to thank you! Allow me at least to give you a kiss as a sign of my eternal gratitude."

The Tunny stuck his snout out of the water and Pinocchio knelt down on the sand and kissed him most affectionately on his mouth.

At this display of spontaneous heartfelt tenderness, the poor Tunny, who was unaccustomed to such gestures, was so moved and embarrassed at being seen crying like a baby that he plunged his head into the sea, and disappeared.

In the meantime, day had dawned.

Then Pinocchio offered his arm to Geppetto, who barely had enough strength to stand, and said to him:

"Lean on my arm, dear Father, let's be on our way. We can walk very, very slowly, just like ants, and if we feel tired we can rest by the wayside."

"And where are we going?" asked Geppetto.

"In search of a house or a hut, where they will be kind enough to give us a crust of bread and some straw to sleep on."

They hadn't taken a hundred paces when they saw two rough-looking characters sitting by the roadside begging for alms.

They were the Cat and the Fox, but they were unrecognizable as the same ones as before. But, just imagine the Cat, who, after pretending to be blind for so many years, in the end had really ended up blind. And the Fox was old, mangy, completely paralysed down one side, and had even lost his tail.

So that's the way it was. That sly thief had fallen into the most abject poverty, and one day had been forced to sell that beautiful tail to a travelling pedlar who bought it to use as a fly-swat.

"Oh, Pinocchio," called out the Fox in a whining voice, "Oh, give a little charity to these two poor invalids!"

"Invalids!" repeated the Cat.

"Farewell, charlatans!" replied the puppet. "You've cheated me before, but you're not going to fool me again."

"But it's true, Pinocchio, today we are poor and unfortunate, truly!"

"Truly!" repeated the Cat.

"If you are poor; you deserve it! Remember the old proverb which says: 'Stolen money never bears fruit.' Farewell, charlatans."

"Have mercy on us!"

"On us."

"Goodbye charlatans! Remember the old proverb which says: 'The devil's flour turns out to be chaff!'"

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"Don't abandon us!"

"Abandon us," repeated The Fox.

"Farewell, charlatans. Remember the old proverb: 'He who steals his neighbour's cloak, usually dies without a shirt'"

So saying, Pinocchio and Geppetto calmly went on their way until, after another hundred paces, at the end of a long road, in the middle of the fields, they caught sight of a quaint hut made of straw, with a roof over it in terracotta tiles.

"Someone must live in that hut," said Pinocchio. "Let's go and knock at the door."

"Who is it?" said a little voice from within.

"It's a poor father and a poor son, without food and no roof over their heads," answered the puppet.

"Turn the key and the door will open," said the same little voice.

Pinocchio turned the key and the door opened. As soon as they went in, they looked here and there but they couldn't see anybody.

"Hey, where's the owner of the hut?" cried Pinocchio, in amazement.

"Here I am, up here!"

Father and son immediately looked up at the ceiling, and there on a beam they saw the Talking Cricket.

"Oh, my dear little Cricket," said Pinocchio, greeting him courteously.

"Ha, ha! Now you call me 'Your dear little Cricket', but do you remember when you threw your hammer handle at me...?"

"Yes, you're quite right, dear little Cricket. Throw me out... even throw a hammer handle at me! But take pity on my poor father."

"I'm going to take pity on both father and son, but I wanted to remind you of the bad treatment I received and to show you that in this world of ours, whenever possible, it's necessary to be kind and courteous to others, if we want to be paid back in kindness in our own times of need."

"Yes, you're right, little Cricket, you are more than right, I shall remember the lesson you have taught me. But, will you tell how you managed to buy this pretty little cottage?"

"This cottage was given to me yesterday by a charming little goat whose fleece was the most beautiful blue colour."

"And where did the goat go?" asked Pinocchio, extremely curious.

"I don't know."

"And when will she come back?"

"She will never come back. Yesterday she went away dejected and bleating, and it seemed to me she said: 'Poor Pinocchio, I shall never see him again. . . the Shark must have well and truly devoured him...'"

"Were those her exact words? Oh, so it was her! ...it was her! It was my dear little Fairy," cried out Pinocchio, sobbing, weeping profusely.

Well, after he had a good cry, he dried his eyes and prepared a nice bed of straw, where he made old Geppetto lie down. And then he asked the Talking Cricket:

"Tell me, little Cricket, where can I find a glass of milk for my poor Father?"

"Three fields away from here lives Farmer Giangio, who has some cows. You go and visit him and he'll find the milk you want."

Pinocchio ran all the way to Farmer Giangio's house: but the farmer said to him:

"How much milk do you want?"

"Well, I want a full glass."

"A glass of milk costs a penny. First give me the penny."

"I haven't even got a farthing," replied Pinocchio, thoroughly mortified and grieved.

"Very bad, my puppet," answered the farmer, "If you haven't even got a farthing, I haven't even got a drop of milk."

"Too bad," said Pinocchio and made as if to leave.

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"Hey, wait a moment," said Giangio. "Perhaps we can come to some arrangement, you and I. Are you willing to turn the donkey wheel?"

"What's a donkey wheel."

"It's a contraption made of wood that brings water up from the cistern to water the vegetables."

"I'll give it a try..."

"Then draw up one hundred buckets of water, and, in payment, I'll give you a glass of milk."

"Very well."

Giangio took the puppet into the vegetable garden and taught him how to turn the donkey wheel. Pinocchio set about working at once, but before he had finished drawing up a hundred buckets of water, he was soaked in sweat from head to toe. He had never worked so hard in his life.

"Up till now," said the vegetable farmer, "I had my donkey do this work of turning the wheel, but now the poor animal's dying."

"Will you take me to see him?" said Pinocchio.

"Gladly."

As soon as Pinocchio entered the stable, he saw a handsome little Donkey lying on a bed of straw in the corner of the stable, completely worn out by hunger and too much work. After staring at that donkey, Pinocchio said to himself, feeling troubled: "But I know this donkey! He looks familiar to me."

Bending down over him, he said in donkey dialect: "Who are you?"

At this question, the Donkey opened his dying eyes and stammered in the same dialect: "I am Can... dle... wick..."

Then he closed his eyes again and passed away.

"Oh! Poor Candlewick!... said Pinocchio in a whisper, and picking up a handful of straw, he dried a tear that was running down his cheek.

"Why are you so upset about a donkey that's cost you nothing?" said the vegetable farmer. "I, who have paid my good money for him, what should I be doing?"

"But, you see, he was my friend."

"Your friend?"

"A school-friend of mine."

"What," yelled Giangio, laughing loudly. "What! You had asses as school-friends? I can just imagine what a fine education you had!"

The puppet, feeling mortified by those words, didn't answer, but he took his glass of lukewarm milk and returned to the hut. And from that day on, for more than five months, he continued to get up every morning before dawn, in order to go and turn the donkey pump and earn the glass of milk, which was so good for his father's poor health. But he was still not completely satisfied with all this, he learned to weave baskets and panniers of rushes, and with the money he earned he provided, with much good sense, for all their everyday expenses.

Amongst other things he built, all by himself, a smart little cart with which to take his father out on nice days, so as to let him get a good breath of fresh air.

During the long evening hours, he practised reading and writing. In the neighbouring town, he had bought, for only a few pennies, a big book that had lost its table of contents and that's how he practiced his reading. As far as writing was concerned, he used a sharpened straw as a pen; and since he had neither an inkwell nor ink, he dipped it into a little bottle full of blackberry and cherry juice.

In fact, it was through his goodwill to do his best by working hard to get ahead, that he not only managed to keep his old father in reasonable comfort but he also was able to put forty shilling aside to buy himself some new suit.

And one morning he said to his father:

"I'm going to the neighbouring market place, to buy myself a little coat and cap, and a pair of shoes. When I come back home," he added laughing, "I'll be so well-dressed you'll mistake me for a gentleman."

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Once outside his house, he began running happily. But suddenly, he heard his name called out, and looking round he saw a pretty snail crawling out of a hedge.

"Don't you recognize me?" said the Snail.

"Well, yes I do and no I don't!"

"Don't you remember the Snail who was the Blue Fairy's maid? Don't you remember the time I came downstairs to light the way for you and you got your foot stuck in the front door?"

"Yes, I remember everything," cried Pinocchio. "Answer me quickly, pretty Snail, where have you left my good Fairy? What's she doing? Has she forgiven me? Does she still remember me? Does she still love me? Is she very far away from here? May I go and see her?"

At all these questions, tumbling out one after the other, the Snail answered, in her usual measured way:

"My dear Pinocchio, the Fairy is bedridden in a hospital for the poor."

"Hospital for the poor?"

"Unfortunately, yes. She has been beset by so many misfortunes and she fell seriously ill. She no longer has a penny left with which to buy herself a crust of bread."

"Oh, really? What terrible grief you've brought me! Oh, my poor, dear little Fairy! If I had a million pounds I would run to take it to her! But I've only these forty shillings. Here they are. I was just going to buy myself a new suit. Take them at once, little Snail, give them to my good Fairy."

"What about your new suit?"

"What do I care about a new suit? I'd even sell these rags I'm wearing to help her. Oh, go, Snail and hurry up! Come back here within a couple of days, I hope I'll give you a little more money then! Up to now I've worked to provide for my father. But, from now on, I'll work five hours longer each day in order to provide for my dear Godmother too. Goodbye, Snail, I'll be waiting for you in two days' time."

The Snail, much against her usual habit, rushed off like a lizard in the blazing August sun.

When Pinocchio got back home, his father asked him:

"Where's your new suit?"

"I couldn't find one to fit me. Never mind!... I'll buy one another time."

And that evening, Pinocchio, instead of going to bed at ten o'clock waited till midnight, and instead of making eight baskets, he made sixteen.

After that he went to bed and he fell asleep. But, as he slept, he thought he saw the Fairy in a dream. She was beautiful and she was smiling, and after kissing him she said: "Well done Pinocchio! As a reward for your kind heart, I forgive you all your past pranks. Children who love and take loving care of their parents when they're old and sick, always deserve great praise and affection, even though they may not be cited as models of obedience and good behaviour. Behave properly in the future and you'll be happy."

At that very moment the dream ended, and Pinocchio awoke wide-eyed with amazement.

Ah! Just imagine how surprised he was when he realised he was no longer a wooden puppet, but that instead he'd become a real live boy like all the others! When he looked all around instead of the hut's old straw walls, he saw a beautifully furnished little room, decorated with elegant simplicity. Jumping out of bed, he discovered a fine collection of new clothes; a new cap, a pair of leather boots, which fitted him just beautifully.

As soon as he had got dressed, he quite naturally put his hands in his pockets and pulled out a little ivory purse, on which were written the following words:

*The Fairy with Blue Hair returns
forty shillings to her dear Pinocchio
and thanks him so much for his good heart.*

On opening the purse, instead of forty brass coins, there were forty shiny brand-new pure gold coins!

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Afterwards he went to look at himself in the mirror, he thought he looked like someone else. He no longer saw the wooden puppet reflected in the mirror but a lively, intelligent boy with chestnut hair, and blue eyes, who looked as happy as if it were the Easter holidays.

Amidst all these marvels which followed one after the other, Pinocchio hardly knew whether he was awake or just day-dreaming.

"Where's my Father?" he cried out all of a sudden; and entering the room next door, he found old Geppetto in good health, sprightly and good-humoured, as in times gone by and, having immediately resumed his wood-carving profession, he was now designing a beautiful ornamental picture frame, embellished with foliage and flowers and heads of various animals.

"Ah, dear Father, will you satisfy my curiosity; what is the explanation of all these sudden changes," cried Pinocchio, throwing his arms around his father's neck and covering him with kisses.

"These sudden changes in our house are all of your doing," answered Geppetto.

"Why so?"

"Because when naughty children become good, they have the power of bringing about a happy change for the whole family at home."

"I wonder where old wooden Pinocchio has hidden himself?"

"There he is," answered Geppetto. And he pointed to a big puppet leaning against a chair, head turned to one side, arms dangling limply, with his legs crossed and bent in the middle, so that it seemed a miracle that he was still standing.

Pinocchio turned to look at him and after a while. He said to himself, greatly pleased;

"How funny I was when I was a puppet! And how happy I am now to have become a real live boy!"