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Dramatic Publishing

PINOCCHIO

by

WILLIAM GLENNON



Dramatic Publishing

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(PINOCCHIO)

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PINOCCHIO

A Play in Two Acts

For 6 Men, 1 Woman and 6-7 Men or Women, 2 Boys

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

FIRE EATER the puppetmaster, a large, loud, florid man
with a red beard down to his knees

THE BLUE FAIRY

POLICEMAN (a silent movie type)

ANTONIO the woodcutter

CANDLEWICK his son

THREE PUPPETEERS (male or female)

FOX

CAT

GEPPETTO the wood carver

PINOCCHIO

HARLEQUIN

MISS ROSE

PUNCHINELLO

CLOWN*

} puppets (male or female)

*Doubling possible

This play moves rapidly from one place to another, requiring a minimum of stylized scenery. An in-one traveller (curtain) would help speed things along. Bold, colorful costumes, imaginative use of sound and music and spirited performances would also be helpful ingredients.

ACT ONE

SCENE: *Carnival-type music is heard as the house lights dim. FIRE-EATER comes through the split in the curtain.*

FIRE-EATER (*bellows*). Welcome to the biggest little town in all of Italy! Home of Fire-Eater's fabulous puppet show! Fire-Eater, that's me! And my puppet shows are guaranteed to make you laugh, or your money will be refunded. But not too cheerfully.

(He hears a peal of laughter from the rear of the auditorium and watches the BLUE FAIRY trip down the aisle. She is humming merrily and carries a large handbag made of flowers. She is as fey as she is pretty. She chatters happily as she reaches the stage.)

BLUE FAIRY. Hello, hello, hello! Obviously I came along just in the nick of time. I usually do, you know. The very nick. I'm sure you all want to know when the story takes place. I certainly do. Well, we'd better call up.

FIRE-EATER. Who?

BLUE FAIRY. Mind holding this? *(She gives him the handbag and begins fishing in it.)* I surely didn't forget it, did I? No! Here we are! *(She takes out a telephone made mostly from a lily and hands him a vine that trails from it.)* Now, then, we have to plug it in.

FIRE-EATER. Plug it in?

BLUE FAIRY. Please. *(He hesitates, then plugs it in his ear.)*

Hello? Hello? Anyone there? The Blue Fairy here.

FIRE-EATER. Hello. Fire-Eater speaking.

BLUE FAIRY. Oh, good! I think I can guess why you called.

FIRE-EATER. Look, my puppets are getting anxious and nervous and hungry and so am I. Let's begin!

BLUE FAIRY. Gracious! I thought you called to ask when the story takes place.

FIRE-EATER. So, go ahead, tell me, when?

BLUE FAIRY. Once upon a time, of course!

FIRE-EATER. Aha! *Now we begin!*

(He signals, the curtain rises and lively music is heard. BLUE FAIRY takes back the handbag and stows the lily phone in it. The activity that follows moves very quickly. POLICEMAN enters and lets out a blast on his whistle which signals the three PUPPETEERS to race down the aisles, calling attention to their signs that advertise the performance. They call out happily.)

PUPPETEERS.

-See the greatest puppet show on earth!

-Fire-Eater's fabulous puppets!

-Guaranteed to make you laugh!

-Or your money refunded!

FIRE-EATER *(calling out from the stage)*. But not too cheerfully. *(He then begins to direct their activities.)*

(In the meantime, ANTONIO and CANDLEWICK enter, carrying a large log and start for the other side. As they are about to exit, CANDLEWICK drops his end of the log and goes to watch PUPPETEERS. ANTONIO staggers under the weight, then screams for CANDLEWICK to help.)

He lets the log down. FOX and CAT, two sly characters, slink around one side of the proscenium and watch the activities with greedy and wary eyes. BLUE FAIRY darts back and forth. POLICEMAN sounds another blast on his whistle, and the characters "freeze.")

FIRE-EATER. And so we begin! The place, a little town in Italy.

BLUE FAIRY. Once upon a time; and the people...

FIRE-EATER (*pointing him out*). He's our Policeman. (*POLICEMAN nods.*) Doesn't say much but he blows his whistle a lot. (*POLICEMAN toots the whistle.*) He also makes sure the law is obeyed, the guilty punished, the innocent rewarded, and the people who are supposed to be in school are in school. (*Big nod and another toot.*)

CANDLEWICK. My name's Candlewick and I'm here to see what fun I can have. And not in school. (*He starts away but is caught by ANTONIO.*)

ANTONIO. Name's Antonio and I'm his father. I'm here to see you do as you're told. Pick up that log. (*Pause.*) Pick it up, I say!

FOX. He's a fool if he does.

CAT. Never do anything I'm told. Unless I want to.

FOX. Fox by name.

CAT. Cat, at your service, if your service means a profit. (*FOX and CAT laugh.*)

ANTONIO. Pick it up this minute! If you don't, you'll be sorry. (*CANDLEWICK smiles, picks up the log and quickly deposits it in ANTONIO's arms. He laughs as the old man staggers about under the weight.*)

CANDLEWICK. I'm not a bit sorry! (*He runs out, laughing. POLICEMAN blows his whistle and follows.*)

FOX. There's a boy after my own heart.

CAT. Mean to his father. Most admirable. (*BLUE FAIRY tries to help ANTONIO with the log, but he finally staggers out carrying it with him.*)

BLUE FAIRY. Bye-bye, dear Mr. Antonio!

FIRE-EATER. Where's he going with the log?

BLUE FAIRY. It's for his good friend, Mr. Geppetto.

FIRE-EATER. Geppetto?

BLUE FAIRY. The old woodcarver. Remember? Mr. Antonio's the woodcutter and Mr. Geppetto's the woodcarver!

FIRE-EATER. I see. Well now, ladies and gentlemen! Introducing my three fabulous, famous puppets! (*As each one is introduced, PUPPETEERS bring PUPPETS around to the stage. PUPPETEERS are on a platform, and we can see them manipulating the strings of the live PUPPETS.*) First, the fascinating, flirtatious and fancy Miss Rose!

(Music for MISS ROSE's entrance.)

FIRE-EATER. And now the fantastic, farcical, frolicking Punchinello!

(Music for PUNCHINELLO's entrance.)

FIRE-EATER. And last, but not least, the favorite, the fabled, funny and fortunate and faithful Harlequin!

(Music at HARLEQUIN's entrance and a brief routing. BLUE FAIRY laughs and applauds.)

FIRE-EATER. That's quite enough for now. Just a sample, my dear friends, but be of stout heart and know that a full-length fabulous performance awaits you at my theatre. Come one, come all. And bring plenty of money!

BLUE FAIRY (*stepping forward*). Well, here we are!

(One by one they call out their names, "Fox," "Cat," "Fire-Eater," etc. POLICEMAN, CANDLEWICK and ANTONIO re-enter for the roll call.)

BLUE FAIRY. There's one more character in our story...and his name is...*(She signals to POLICEMAN who blows his whistle. All scurry about and pick up large, poster-size signs and line up across the stage, backs to the audience. Music goes along with this. PUPPETEERS, ANTONIO, who has put his log down for the moment, FIRE-EATER, CANDLEWICK, FOX, CAT and the BLUE FAIRY. POLICEMAN is at one side. Another signal from the whistle and they turn, one by one, to display the cards, a letter on each one so that they can spell P-I-N-O-C-C-H-I-O. They are, for the moment, all mixed up, and it takes two quick shifts to get the spelling right.)* Yes!

ALL. Pinocchio!

BLUE FAIRY (*sweetly*). Pinocchio.

(She signals POLICEMAN who lets out a blast on his whistle and all go into action, hanging their signs on a framework which then suggests the modest cottage belonging to Geppetto. All this to music. Once finished, FIRE-EATER and his CREW exit, touting the merits of their puppet show. POLICEMAN chases CANDLEWICK off stage R and ANTONIO picks up the log and totters off the other way. BLUE FAIRY then approaches the cottage and calls inside.)

BLUE FAIRY. All right, Mr. Geppetto, now!

(She scurries out of sight. GEPETTO comes out of the cottage. He is a kindly, gray-haired, be-spectacled old man. He looks up and sees a sign missing. From inside the door he takes a sign and hangs it over his doorway. It reads: "Geppetto, The Woodcarver.")

GEPETTO. That's me. A woodcarver who can't afford any wood. That's like a singer with no songs.

(ANTONIO weaves dizzily on stage, still toting the log. He is quite near exhaustion.)

GEPETTO. Antonio! Good friend! What a pleasant surprise!

ANTONIO. Here...help me! Take this...*(But the weight of the log again swings him around and across the stage.)*

GEPETTO. I was just thinking how lonely I am, and lo and behold, here you are!

ANTONIO. Never mind the how-de-do's!

GEPETTO. Indeed, you've lightened my heart.

ANTONIO *(again propelled by the log's weight)*. Lighten my load, brother, lighten my load.

GEPETTO. May I offer you refreshments? *(He picks up one end of the log, upsetting the balance.)*

ANTONIO *(as the log's weight drags him offstage)*. No, offer some help, argh! *(He is gone.)*

GEPETTO. It's always nice to see Antonio. Wish he could have stayed a little longer. *(A crash is heard offstage. GEPETTO winces and goes out.)*

(BLUE FAIRY enters and watches ANTONIO and GEPETTO return carrying the log.)

ANTONIO. Heavy, isn't it?

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GEPETTO. Um. Who's it for?

ANTONIO. It's for you!

GEPETTO. For me?

ANTONIO. Certainly, you're a woodcarver.

GEPETTO. True.

ANTONIO. And I'm your friend.

GEPETTO. How comforting.

ANTONIO. And this log is for you to carve something out of.

Whatever you like. *(They drop the log on a platform and ANTONIO sinks down on a stool, spent.)*

GEPETTO. Whatever I like.

(A whistle is heard offstage and CANDLEWICK runs on from R, followed shortly by POLICEMAN giving chase. CANDLEWICK laughs as he runs, stops, turns, makes a terrible face and is off again, POLICEMAN in hot pursuit. ANTONIO rises, sighs, starts running in place as GEPETTO watches.)

ANTONIO. That terrible boy. Hard to believe he's my son.

He should be in school, you know. But he isn't. I'd better investigate. The log is yours, good Geppetto. Carve something nice. *(Calls.)* Candlewick! You come back here! *(He runs out. GEPETTO watches, then his attention turns to the log. BLUE FAIRY examines it, too.)* What shall I carve? *(She looks surprised, and starts a furtive dance, muttering "A puppet! A puppet!")* I know! A puppet! For my very own! Like a son. Someone to talk to, so I won't be lonesome all the time. Yes! A puppet! I'll need my tools. *(He exits into the cottage.)*

BLUE FAIRY. Well, it's going to be a rather special puppet. Obviously. Now, I've a bit of work to do. *(She glances off.)* I hope no one's peeking. No peeking, hear? Or I'll tell

the goblins! *(She digs in her handbag.)* I knew I'd be needed. Aha, here. A little fairy dust. *(She sprinkles some on the log and tinkly music is heard.)* This is my kiss and my promise. I promise always to arrive in the nick of time. *(She reaches into the bag again.)* The dew from a patch of forget-me-nots. *(More music as she sprinkles it on the log.)* My pledge of friendship forever and two days! *(Again an item from the bag.)* Three tears from a weeping willow tree. *(Three musical notes as they go on the log.)* They're not salty now like human tears, but, who knows, someday they may be. *(She hears GEPETTO.)* I must hurry. *(She hums and sings merrily as she removes masking tape from the log, giving the impression that she's drawing a figure. With the tape now placed in her handbag we see the white outline of PINOCCHIO.)* There! You promise to be a good puppet and I'll promise to be a good fairy godmother.

(GEPETTO returns, carrying his carving tools and examines the log, not seeing the outline.)

GEPETTO. Such a big log. It'll probably take weeks to carve my puppet.

BLUE FAIRY *(getting out her wand and shaking it)*. Nonsense! A couple of seconds should do nicely.

(GEPETTO raises a tool to begin the job and the BLUE FAIRY raises her wand. A flash and a blackout. BLUE FAIRY giggles. When the lights are restored, the log has vanished and in its place we see PINOCCHIO. GEPETTO looks about, stunned for a moment.)

GEPETTO. My word, wasn't that a quick storm. My, my, my. *(He turns back to the "log" and is about to commence*

carving when he spots the change.) My word! (Can't believe his eyes.) What's this? I must be seeing things. (Rubs his eyes.) No. It's really there. Was it lightning, or maybe magic? Incredible?! (He examines PINOCCHIO, gingerly touching him at first. Then he gives him a little poke.)

PINOCCHIO. Ouch! (*GEPPETTO nearly faints and retreats a few steps.*)

GEPPETTO. What...what did you say?

PINOCCHIO (*voice a bit twangy, sharp and mechanical*). I said "Ouch" 'cause you poked me.

GEPPETTO. He can talk! Oh, my word! He can talk!

PINOCCHIO. Certainly I can talk. I've got a mouth. I can stick my tongue out, too. See?

GEPPETTO. A talking puppet!

PINOCCHIO. Who are you?

GEPPETTO. I'm...your father.

PINOCCHIO. Can I bite you?

GEPPETTO. Bite me?

PINOCCHIO. Sure. I've got a mouth. I can talk and stick out my tongue and I'll bet I can bite you.

GEPPETTO. You wouldn't want to bite your father, would you? Old Geppetto?

PINOCCHIO. Gep-pet-to?

GEPPETTO. Yes.

PINOCCHIO. What's *my* name?

GEPPETTO. Your name? Well, let's see. Your name.

BLUE FAIRY (*cups her hand to her ear and looks out at audience*). Pinocchio?

GEPPETTO. Pin-Pinocchio? What a fine name! Your name, dear puppet, is Pinocchio. Isn't that a lovely name?

PINOCCHIO. It'll do. Well?

GEPPETTO. Well what?

PINOCCHIO. Get me up! I can't stay here forever, can I?

GEPPETTO. Oh, forgive me, dear Pinocchio, of course you can't! I'll have to get you up. Now, then...*(He hovers about PINOCCHIO, trying to decide which end to lift and how. Unfortunately, his hand gets a little too close to the mouth and he shrieks as PINOCCHIO bites down on his finger.)* Pinocchio! That's not nice! Let go, son! You mustn't bite your dear father. That's naughty!

PINOCCHIO. What's "naughty"?

GEPPETTO *(nursing his wounded finger)*. "Naughty" is when you do things you shouldn't do. Like biting me.

PINOCCHIO. Naughty.

GEPPETTO. Yes, naughty. Now, then, let's see if we can get you sitting up. *(He tries, but PINOCCHIO keeps slipping back down. Finally the BLUE FAIRY helps hold him up.)* There, that's a good boy!

PINOCCHIO *(looking around, delighted but always with a strong trace of wickedness)*. Good boy!

GEPPETTO. Yes.

PINOCCHIO *(looking at GEPPETTO)*. Pinocchio.

GEPPETTO. No, you're Pinocchio. I'm Geppetto. Your father.

PINOCCHIO. Geppetto. Father. *(He laughs very loudly.)*

GEPPETTO. Well, now you'll have to learn to walk.

PINOCCHIO. Walk. What's "walk"?

GEPPETTO. Well, "walk" is like this. *(Demonstrates.)* First one foot. Then the other. *(BLUE FAIRY illustrates this, too.)*

PINOCCHIO. Foot. What's "foot"?

GEPPETTO. This. This is your foot. *(PINOCCHIO swings his leg, nearly kicking GEPPETTO.)*

PINOCCHIO. Naughty?

GEPPETTO. Yes, naughty.

PINOCCHIO. I like naughty.