



PINOCCHIO

There once was an old woodcarver who made his living by carving wooden toys. His name was Geppetto and he was the most skilled woodcarver for miles and miles around. But he was lonely, because he had no one except his little pet cat called Figaro, who was his best friend, but not a human being, of course. As an old man, Geppetto regretted just one thing: not having a son or a daughter to make him happy.

Once on a stroll through the woods, he came across a beautiful piece of wood and just as he set his eyes on it he knew it was going to make for a marvellous marionette. He cut the wood and got down to work that very day. He was so happy when he finished. The marionette looked so lifelike! It could move its little arms and legs, and was dressed in beautiful clothes. Geppetto was delighted with his work and Figaro, sitting next to him, happily wagged his tail and cheerfully meowed.

“I will call you Pinocchio,” said Geppetto merrily when he placed the wooden boy on a small cabinet next to his bed.

As it was already quite late, Geppetto was getting ready for bed. Everything was dark outside and he looked out the window into the night.

“Look at the beautiful sky, Figaro.” Geppetto said as he picked up his cat, and

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the two of them gazed at the starry night.

“It’s such a shame, really, that I was never blessed with a son. If only Pinocchio was made out of real flesh and bones and not just carved from wood,” he said, praying to the brightest star in the sky, his favourite and lucky star. And indeed, it was.

That night when every living soul had already left for the realm of dreams, the lucky star came down from the night sky and, swimming in the bright moonlight, turned into a fairy. She took a step closer to Pinocchio and said: “To a warm heart I will gladly grant a wish and turn this lifeless log into living flesh.”

Then she waved her magic wand and brought Pinocchio to life.

Pinocchio slowly opened his eyes and carefully stretched out one of his tiny hands.

“I’m alive,” he said surprisedly, “I’m a real boy!” Then he stood up and happily jumped up and down all around the room.

“Be careful, though, Pinocchio!” the fairy warned him. “You can keep your human form, but only as long as you are honest, fair and brave. You have to know right from wrong and help Geppetto whenever he needs.”

“But how am I to know what’s right and what’s not?” said Pinocchio, squinting confusedly.

“You have your own soul now, so decide wisely,” she added and disappeared, leaving just a few sparks behind her.

Pinocchio quietly thanked her and then waited impatiently for the sun to rise and announce the new day.

When Geppetto woke up that morning, Pinocchio greeted him immediately: “Good morning, daddy.”

Confused Geppetto looked around the room but didn’t see anyone to whom the voice could belong.

“Have you heard it too, Figaro?” he asked the cat, who just nodded.

“I am here. It’s me who’s speaking,” continued Pinocchio.

“That’s impossible! I must still be dreaming!” Geppetto couldn’t believe his eyes.

“I am your son, daddy! The son you have always wanted. Your wish has come

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true,” said the boy cheerfully.

Even though Geppetto still couldn't wrap his head around it, he felt great joy engulfing him. At once he picked the boy up and hugged him lovingly, happiness filling the whole house up to the roof.

Just a few days passed until the boy started wishing he could go to school just like every other child.

“Daddy, I want to be an ordinary boy. I want to learn to read and write and count, so that I can help you make money,” said Pinocchio to the old woodcarver.

Geppetto rejoiced at the wisdom and genius of his son, but he didn't have enough money to pay for his schoolbooks. It didn't take him long, though, to come up with a plan. He sold his favourite woollen vest and with that money, he bought his son all the school supplies he needed.

When the woodcarver gave his son his books, Pinocchio asked in surprise: “But where's your vest?”

“I didn't need it anymore,” lied Geppetto and smiled at the boy. “Here you are. I hope they serve you well.”

Pinocchio was very grateful and threw his arms around his father's neck.

He set off to school the very next morning. Walking cheerfully, he suddenly heard loud music coming from behind the shrubs and found himself looking at a giant colourful tent. Naturally, he was very curious, just like every other little boy, and decided to take a closer look. Soon enough he found out that he was looking at a circus.

“Excuse me, how can I get inside?” he asked a tall man in front of the tent.

“Well, you would have to buy a ticket,” answered the man coarsely.

“I don't have any money, just these books,” he said and showed them to the man. With a sly look in his eye, the man took the books and gave Pinocchio a colourful ticket in return.

“Now you can enter,” said the man and let Pinocchio in.

Pinocchio worked his way to the very front, eyeing the scene at the stage, utterly astonished. Two wooden marionettes danced there on strings attached to their hands and feet, and Pinocchio, unable to resist, joined them delightedly, as if he

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had just found his long-lost friends. People started cheering, throwing money on the circus ring. When the owner saw it, he realized right away how much money a wooden puppet dancing on its own could make him, and once the show was over he quickly grabbed Pinocchio and locked him in a cage.

“Please, sir, don’t leave me here! I must go to school,” yelled the boy at the well-dressed man.

“What did you say? Well, why are you in my circus, then, when you’re supposed to be at school?” asked the man, confused.

“I’m actually a real boy, not a wooden puppet. I sold my books to see your show, but now I really, really regret it,” said Pinocchio disappointedly, finally realizing what a mistake he had made.

“Dear boy! Here’s your money. Now go, buy some new books and take good care of yourself. Not everyone is such a goodhearted fellow as I am,” the man warned Pinocchio, and let him out of the cage.

“Thank you, sir, thank you!” said Pinocchio with a smile on his face and hurried off to school.

‘I was lucky this time,’ thought Pinocchio. “Now I will know better what is right” He hurried onward, but it didn’t take long until he met a fox.

“Where are you going?” the fox asked as she wound around his legs.

“To school, of course,” answered Pinocchio with a smile and walked on.

“School is a waste of time. Why go to school when you can have all that you want without having to learn anything...” said the fox, trying to trick him.

“What do you mean?” asked Pinocchio, taken aback.

“Well, come with me and I’ll show you a place you will never ever want to leave.” Then she left the path, heading for a nearby grove. Pinocchio followed her without saying a single word, listening to her stories about this magical place. He couldn’t wait to finally get there, and when he did, he saw that she wasn’t lying at all. There were sweets and lollipops and chocolates and candies and toys everywhere! And also children his own age, so many new friends! Happy and smiling, he immediately ran to the other boys.

Somehow several hours passed. The sun was slowly setting down, but Pinocchio

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was still playing with his new friends, the thought of Geppetto, worried at home, never crossing his mind.

It was almost dark when Pinocchio finally stopped for a moment. He had a strange feeling as if he had something on his head, and as he touched his ears, he felt they were large and hairy. He quickly stood up and ran to the nearest mirror, seeing that all of a sudden, he had grown a tail and donkey ears. Pinocchio had no idea what was happening but knew for sure he had to put an end to it. Where exactly was he? Why was he changing into a donkey? He strayed from the right path yet again, fell prey to deception and didn't know right from wrong. He blamed the cunning fox, of course, but the truth is it was his fault and nobody else's.

Pinocchio instantly took to his heels but the guards, whom he hadn't even noticed up until that moment, started chasing him. He ran and ran as fast as his wooden legs would carry him. When he finally escaped the enchanted forest, both the tail and ears disappeared, but Pinocchio dared not stop. He had never been this scared in his entire life but decided to slow down a bit and turn around to find whether he was still being followed.

That's when he realized that he was standing on a seashore, not far from the port by the town. But then he heard voices and steps right behind him and so he swiftly jumped into the water. He swam for a while, easily floating on the waves since he was made of wood, and then, all of a sudden, a giant whale emerged from the water and he could see the inside of its huge mouth. Gulp! Gulp! It gobbled him up and Pinocchio found himself in its huge belly where he surprisingly bumped into poor old Geppetto.

The old woodcarver got swallowed by the whale while out looking for his only son, who didn't return from school. When he searched every nook and cranny of the land, he decided to start looking at sea where he came upon this monster. "Daddy? Is that you?" Pinocchio flung his arms around Geppetto.

"What are you doing here, my dear boy? Where have you been?" asked Geppetto, hugging the boy tightly.

"When I left for school in the morning, someone grabbed my hand and took me away. I couldn't do anything about it," lied Pinocchio, and before he could

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even finish, his nose started growing. He had no idea what was going on and kept lying and lying. “Later, they found I’m made of wood and threw me into the waves.” By then, his nose was much longer than a minute ago and he grasped it with both hands, terrified.

“Are you sure this is what really happened?” asked Geppetto in disbelief.

“Yes, I am,” lied the boy again and the nose kept on growing until it was so long he couldn’t even see properly.

A voice in his head kept telling him that lying is bad and he finally decided to confess what really happened. Ashamed – and there was a lot to be ashamed of – he told Geppetto everything, realising he must tell the truth. And when he owned up to all his mischief, his nose shrank back to its normal size.

Now they had to figure out how to get out of the whale’s belly. There were shipwrecks all around them as well as many long-lost things the whale had gobbled up. That’s when Pinocchio came up with a brilliant idea.

“Daddy, what if we lit a fire? The smoke would make the whale sneeze and that would be our way out,” suggested the boy cheerfully.

“Well, I hope it works, son. Let’s get down to it,” said Geppetto.

They did as Pinocchio said and everything went as planned. After starting the fire, the whale sneezed and hurled them all the way to the shore. The father and the son hugged and cheered. They were so lucky, getting out of the beast’s belly! In the evening, the fairy appeared again in their house, asking Pinocchio how he fared.

“Not very well. I couldn’t resist temptation, didn’t know right from wrong and also I lied,” he answered truthfully, looking sadly to the ground. He thought the fairy came back to turn him into a voiceless marionette once again.

“Well, Pinocchio, you have done some wrong things but now you’re here, safe and sound. It took you a while to figure out what is right. You were brave and honest. You have learnt that lying is not the path you want to follow, am I right?” the fairy asked.

“No, it’s not. Please, don’t turn me back into a wooden puppet,” begged the miserable boy.

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“Don’t worry. We spend our whole lives learning to tell right from wrong. You have discovered today that the world is not perfect and with that knowledge you have become a real human being,” said the fairy and pointed her magical wand towards Pinocchio, who suddenly turned into a real boy, flesh and bones.

Pinocchio had learnt from his mistakes, discovering that you can’t trust just anyone you meet. And Geppetto, well, he was so terribly happy he didn’t even know how to express his thanks properly. His greatest dream had come true – he now had a son, Pinocchio