

AI-Generated Graded Readers

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About This Edition

This book is a simplified English adaptation created for extensive reading practice.

The text was translated from Italian into English and simplified using ChatGPT for intermediate English learners as part of an educational project.

Target reading level: CEFR A2-B1

This edition aims to support fluency development through accessible vocabulary, expanded narration, and improved readability while preserving the original story structure.

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Carlo Collodi, *The Adventures of Pinocchio* [*Le avventure di Pinocchio: Storia di un burattino*] (Simplified Edition, Adapted and Simplified from the Italian by ChatGPT)

Part 1

Once there was...

“A king!” many children may say at once.

“No, children, you are wrong. Once there was a piece of wood.”

It was not a rich or special piece of wood. It was only a simple piece from a pile of firewood. In winter such wood is put in the stove or in the fire so that people can warm their rooms and cook their food. It looked like any other piece of wood that people burn in the fire.

No one knows how it happened, but one day this piece of wood arrived in the shop of an old wood worker. The old man’s name was Antonio, but everyone called him Master Cherry. People called him that because the end of his nose was always bright red, just like a ripe cherry.

The moment Master Cherry saw that piece of wood, he felt very happy. He rubbed his hands together and spoke softly to himself.

“This piece of wood came at the right time. I will use it to make a leg for a small table.”

He took his sharp axe so that he could begin to cut the wood and shape it. But when he lifted the axe and was ready to make the first strong cut, he suddenly stopped with his arm in the air. He had heard a very small voice.

The voice said softly, “Please do not hit me so hard!”

You can imagine how surprised Master Cherry was. He opened his eyes wide and quickly looked around the room to see where that voice had come from.

He looked under the work bench. There was no one there.

He opened a cupboard that was always closed. There was no one there.

He looked inside the box that was full of wood dust and little pieces of wood. No one.

He even opened the door of the shop and looked outside into the street. No one was there either.

“What can this mean?” the old man said.

Then he began to laugh and scratched his head under his white hair.

“I understand. That little voice must be something I only imagined. It was only in my head. Let us go back to work.”

He again took the axe in his hands and brought it down strongly on the piece of wood.

“Ow! That hurt me!” cried the same tiny voice.

This time Master Cherry was so afraid that his eyes seemed to jump out of his head. His mouth opened wide and his tongue hung out in surprise.

For a long moment he could not speak. At last he began to talk, but his voice shook with fear.

“Where did that voice come from? It said ‘Ow!’ But there is no one here. Can it be that this piece of wood has learned to cry and complain like a child? I cannot believe that. This is only a piece of firewood. If someone were hiding inside it, that would be bad for him. I will soon find out!”

He took the poor piece of wood with both hands and began to shake it and hit it against the walls of the room.

Then he stopped and listened carefully to see if the voice would cry again.

He waited two minutes.

Nothing.

He waited five minutes.

Nothing.

He waited ten minutes.

Nothing.

“I understand,” he said again, trying to laugh and scratching his head once more. “That voice was only in my head. Let us work again.”

But he was still a little afraid. To give himself courage, he began to sing in a quiet voice.

He put the axe down and picked up another tool that he used to smooth wood.

Then he began to move the tool over the wood, up and down.

But while he was doing this work, he again heard the same little voice. This time the voice laughed and said:

“Stop! That makes my body feel very strange!”

Poor Master Cherry fell to the floor like a man who had lost all his strength.

When he opened his eyes again, he found himself sitting on the ground. His face looked very strange, and even the end of his red nose had turned blue from fear.

Just then someone knocked on the door.

“Come in,” said the wood worker, though he still did not have the strength to stand up.

The door opened, and a lively little old man came into the shop. His name was Geppetto. The boys in the neighborhood often made fun of him and called him Polenta because his yellow wig looked very much like a dish made from yellow corn.

Geppetto had a quick temper. If anyone called him Polenta, he became very angry.

“Good morning, Master Antonio,” said Geppetto. “Why are you sitting on the floor?”

“I am teaching the ants their numbers,” answered Master Cherry.

“I hope it goes well for you,” said Geppetto.

“What brings you here, my friend Geppetto?”

“My feet brought me here. I came to ask you for a favor.”

“I am ready to help you,” said the wood worker, getting up onto his knees.

“This morning I had an idea,” said Geppetto.

“Tell me about it.”

“I thought I would make a wooden puppet. But not just any puppet. It will be a wonderful puppet that can dance, fight with a sword, and jump high in the air. With such a puppet I will travel around the world and earn bread and wine. What do you think?”

“Bravo, Polenta!” suddenly cried the same little voice.

When Geppetto heard the name Polenta, his face became red with anger. He turned toward Master Cherry and shouted:

“Why are you insulting me?”

“I did not insult you.”

“You called me Polenta!”

“I did not.”

“Then I must have called myself?”

“I say it was not me.”

“Yes, it was you!”

“No!”

“Yes!”

Soon their voices became louder. Then they stopped speaking and began to fight. They grabbed each other, pulled hair, scratched, and pushed.

When the fight ended, Master Cherry was holding Geppetto’s yellow wig in his hands. And Geppetto found the wood worker’s gray wig in his mouth.

“Give me back my wig!” cried Master Cherry.

“And you give me back mine,” said Geppetto.

After they each took back their wigs, the two old men shook hands and promised to remain good friends for the rest of their lives.

“Now then, Geppetto,” said Master Cherry, “what did you want from me?”

“I would like a piece of wood to make my puppet. Will you give me one?”

Master Cherry happily went to the bench and picked up the same piece of wood that had frightened him so much.

But when he tried to give it to Geppetto, the piece of wood suddenly jumped from his hands and hit Geppetto hard on the legs.

“Ah! Is this the way you give gifts?” cried Geppetto. “You almost broke my legs!”

“I swear it was not me!”

“Then it must have been me!”

“It was the wood!”

“I know it was the wood. But you threw it at me!”

“I did not!”

“Liar!”

“Geppetto, do not insult me, or I will call you Polenta!”

“Donkey!”

“Polenta!”

“Fool!”

“Polenta!”

At the third time he heard the name Polenta, Geppetto lost all control. He jumped at the wood worker, and the two began another fight.

When it ended, Master Cherry had two more scratches on his nose, and Geppetto had lost two buttons from his coat.

Once again they shook hands and promised to remain good friends forever.

Then Geppetto took the piece of wood, thanked Master Cherry, and slowly walked home.

Part 2

When Geppetto arrived home, he immediately began to work on the puppet. His house was a very small room on the ground floor. The light came from a window that looked out under the stairs of another house.

The furniture in the room was very simple. There was a poor chair, a small bed that was not very good, and an old table that looked worn and broken. On the wall at the back of the room there was a fireplace with a bright fire. But the fire was not real. It was only a picture painted on the wall. Next to the fire there was also a painted pot that seemed to boil happily, sending up smoke that looked almost real.

As soon as he entered the house, Geppetto took his tools and began to cut and shape the piece of wood.

“What name shall I give him?” he said to himself while he worked. “I want to call him Pinocchio. That name will bring him good luck. I once knew a whole family named Pinocchio. There was Pinocchio the father, Pinocchia the mother,

and Pinocchi the children. All of them lived well. The richest one of them even asked people for money in the street.”

When he had decided on the name, he began to work more seriously.

First he made the hair. Then he shaped the forehead. After that he began to make the eyes.

But when the eyes were finished, Geppetto was very surprised. The eyes began to move. They looked around the room, and then they stared straight at him.

Geppetto did not like this very much.

“Wooden eyes,” he said with a serious voice, “why are you looking at me like that?”

No one answered.

After the eyes he made the nose. But the moment the nose was finished, it began to grow. It grew and grew and grew. In only a few minutes it became a very long nose that seemed to have no end.

Poor Geppetto tried to cut it shorter. But every time he cut it, the nose grew even longer.

After the nose he began to make the mouth.

But the mouth had hardly been finished when it began to laugh and make fun of him.

“Stop laughing!” Geppetto said angrily.

But the mouth continued to laugh.

“I said stop laughing!” Geppetto shouted.

Then the mouth stopped laughing, but it stuck out its tongue.

Geppetto pretended not to see this, because he did not want to lose his patience. He continued his work.

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

But the moment the hands were finished, Geppetto felt something strange. His yellow wig was suddenly pulled off his head.

He looked up.

There was the puppet holding the wig in his hand.

“Pinocchio! Give me my wig back at once!”

But instead of giving it back, Pinocchio put the wig on his own head. It was so big that it covered almost his whole face.

Seeing such rude behavior, Geppetto became very sad. He turned to the puppet and spoke with a serious voice.

“You naughty child! You are not even finished yet, and already you show no respect to your father. This is bad, my boy. Very bad.”

Then he wiped a tear from his eye.

There were still the legs and the feet to make.

When Geppetto finished the feet, he suddenly felt a strong kick on the end of his nose.

“I deserve that,” he said quietly to himself. “I should have thought of it earlier. Now it is too late.”

Then he took the puppet under his arms and placed him on the floor so that he could try to walk.

At first Pinocchio’s legs were stiff and could not move well. Geppetto held his hand and helped him take one step after another.

Slowly the legs began to move more easily.

Soon Pinocchio began to walk by himself.

Then he began to run around the room.

Suddenly he ran through the open door of the house and out into the street.

He began to run away as fast as he could.

Poor Geppetto ran after him, but he could not catch him. The naughty puppet ran like a rabbit, and his wooden feet made a loud noise on the stones of the street.

“Catch him! Catch him!” shouted Geppetto.

The people in the street stopped and stared. They saw a wooden puppet running very fast, and they began to laugh. They laughed so much that they could hardly stop.

At last, luckily, a police officer came along. He heard the noise and believed that perhaps a young horse had escaped and was running wild in the street.

He stood in the middle of the road with his legs wide apart, ready to stop it.

Pinocchio saw the officer from far away. He tried to run between the officer's legs and escape.

But he failed.

The officer calmly caught him by the nose. It was such a long nose that it was easy to grab.

Then he gave Pinocchio back to Geppetto.

Geppetto wanted to pull Pinocchio's ears to punish him. But when he tried to find the ears, he discovered something surprising.

Pinocchio had no ears.

In his hurry while making the puppet, Geppetto had forgotten to make them.

So he took Pinocchio by the neck and began to lead him home.

"Let us go home now," he said in a serious voice. "When we arrive, we will settle our account."

When Pinocchio heard these words, he threw himself on the ground and refused to walk.

Soon many people gathered around them. Some said one thing, some said another.

"Poor puppet!" some people said. "He is right not to go home. Who knows how badly that man Geppetto will beat him!"

Others said with mean smiles:

"That Geppetto looks like a good man, but he must be a terrible father. If they leave that poor puppet with him, he will surely break him to pieces."

In the end the officer believed the crowd.

He set Pinocchio free.

Then he took poor Geppetto to prison.

Geppetto had no words ready to defend himself. He cried like a small calf. While he walked toward the prison, he said through his tears:

"Unhappy child! And to think that I worked so hard to make him a good puppet. But it is my own fault. I should have thought of this before."

What happened next is a story so strange that it is almost impossible to believe. And it will be told in the next chapters.

Part 3

While poor Geppetto was taken to prison, though he had done nothing wrong, the naughty Pinocchio ran across the fields as fast as he could. He wanted to return home before anyone could stop him.

In his hurry he jumped over high banks of earth, thorn bushes, and small streams full of water. He moved quickly and lightly, almost like a young goat or a small rabbit that runs away from hunters.

At last he reached his house. The door was slightly open. He pushed it and went inside.

Then he quickly closed the door and put the small wooden bar across it.

After doing this he sat down on the floor and let out a long breath.

“Ah! Now I feel safe,” he said.

But his happiness did not last long.

Suddenly he heard a small sound inside the room.

“Cri-cri-cri!”

Pinocchio jumped up in fear.

“Who is calling me?” he asked.

“It is I,” answered the voice.

Pinocchio looked around and soon saw a large cricket slowly climbing up the wall.

“Tell me, Cricket,” said Pinocchio, “who are you?”

“I am the Talking Cricket,” the insect answered calmly. “I have lived in this room for more than one hundred years.”

“Well,” said Pinocchio, “today this room belongs to me. If you want to please me, go away at once and do not come back.”

“I will not leave,” said the Cricket quietly, “until I have told you an important truth.”

“Say it quickly,” said Pinocchio.

The Cricket spoke slowly and clearly.

“Bad things happen to children who refuse to obey their parents and who leave their homes in anger. Such children will never find happiness in this world. One day they will feel very sorry.”

Pinocchio shook his head.

“You can sing your song as much as you like,” he said. “But I know one thing. Tomorrow morning I will leave this place. If I stay here, the same thing will happen to me that happens to all boys. They will send me to school, and I will have to study whether I want to or not. I tell you the truth: I do not want to study. I prefer to run after butterflies and climb trees to take baby birds from their nests.”

The Cricket sighed.

“Poor foolish puppet,” he said. “Do you not know that if you live like that you will grow up to be a very foolish donkey? Everyone will laugh at you.”

Pinocchio became angry.

“Be quiet, bad Cricket!” he shouted.

But the Cricket was patient and wise. He was not angry. He continued speaking in the same calm voice.

“If you do not want to go to school, why do you not learn a trade? Then you could work and earn your bread honestly.”

Pinocchio crossed his arms.

“Shall I tell you the truth?” he said. “Of all the trades in the world there is only one that I really like.”

“And what trade is that?” asked the Cricket.

“The trade of eating, drinking, sleeping, having fun, and living a free life from morning to night.”

The Cricket shook his head.

“Let me tell you something,” he said. “People who live like that almost always end up in the hospital or in prison.”

Pinocchio stamped his foot.

“Be careful, bad Cricket! If you make me angry, you will be sorry.”

The Cricket looked at him with kind eyes.

“Poor Pinocchio,” he said. “I truly feel sorry for you.”

“Why do you feel sorry for me?” asked Pinocchio.

“Because you are a puppet,” said the Cricket, “and what is worse, you have a wooden head.”

When Pinocchio heard these last words, he became furious.

He jumped up from the bench, grabbed a wooden hammer that lay nearby, and threw it at the Talking Cricket.

Perhaps he did not really mean to hit him.

But sadly the hammer struck the Cricket directly on the head.

The poor Cricket had only enough breath to make a small sound.

“Cri... cri... cri...”

Then he stayed there, stuck against the wall, and did not move again.

After this, night slowly came.

Pinocchio suddenly remembered that he had not eaten anything all day. Soon he began to feel a strange feeling in his stomach.

At first it was only a small feeling.

But the hunger of children grows quickly.

After only a few minutes that small feeling became strong hunger. And soon the hunger became so strong that it felt like sharp pain.

The poor puppet ran to the fireplace where the pot seemed to boil.

He lifted the lid to see what was inside.

But the pot was only painted on the wall.

You can imagine how disappointed he felt.

His nose, which was already long, seemed to grow even longer with sadness.

Pinocchio began to run around the room. He opened every box and every cupboard.

He searched everywhere for something to eat.

A piece of bread.

A hard crust.

A bone left for a dog.

A little old food.

A fish bone.

Even a cherry stone.

Anything at all that he could chew.

But he found nothing.

Absolutely nothing.

The hunger inside him grew stronger and stronger.

The only relief he had was to yawn. And his yawns were so wide that sometimes his mouth stretched almost to his ears.

After yawning he spat and felt his stomach turning inside him.

At last he began to cry.

“The Talking Cricket was right,” he said through his tears. “I did wrong to run away from my father and leave home. If my father were here now, I would not be dying from yawning and hunger. Oh, what a terrible sickness hunger is!”

While he was crying, he suddenly saw something round and white in a pile of dust and small trash.

It looked like an egg.

In one quick jump he grabbed it.

It really was an egg.

The joy of the puppet cannot be described. He turned the egg in his hands again and again. He touched it, kissed it, and spoke to it happily.

“Now how shall I cook it? Shall I make an omelet? No... perhaps it would be better to cook it in a pan. Or maybe I should fry it. Or perhaps I should cook it soft. No, the fastest way is to cook it in a small pan. I want to eat it quickly!”

He placed a small pan over a little fire of hot coals.

Instead of oil or butter he poured a little water into the pan.

When the water began to smoke, he broke the egg shell.

But instead of egg white and yellow, a small chick jumped out.

The chick bowed politely and said in a cheerful voice:

“Thank you very much, Mr. Pinocchio, for saving me the trouble of breaking the shell myself. Goodbye! I wish you good health, and please give my greetings to everyone at home!”

Then the chick spread its wings, flew out of the open window, and disappeared

into the sky.

Pinocchio stood there without moving.

His eyes were wide open.

His mouth hung open.

In his hands he still held the broken egg shell.

After a moment he began to cry loudly. He shouted and stamped his feet on the floor.

“The Talking Cricket was right again! If I had not run away from home and if my father were here now, I would not be dying from hunger. Oh, what a terrible sickness hunger is!”

His stomach still made loud noises.

He did not know what to do.

Finally he decided to leave the house and go to the nearby village.

Perhaps there he would find someone kind who would give him a little bread.

Part 4

That night the weather was terrible. Thunder rolled loudly in the sky. Bright flashes of light filled the dark clouds as if the sky itself were on fire. A strong cold wind blew across the land. The wind whistled loudly and pushed great clouds of dust into the air. Trees bent and creaked in the storm.

Pinocchio was very afraid of thunder and lightning. Each flash of light made him jump, and each loud sound made his wooden body shake.

But his hunger was even stronger than his fear.

For that reason he opened the door of the house and began to run toward the village. In only a few quick jumps he reached the road. His tongue hung out and his breath came fast, just like a hunting dog that has been running for a long time.

When he finally arrived at the village, he stopped and looked around.

Everything was dark.

Everything was quiet.

The shops were closed.

The doors of the houses were closed.

The windows were closed.

There was not even a dog walking in the street.

The village looked like a place where no one lived anymore.

Pinocchio felt very sad and very tired. His stomach hurt from hunger. He walked slowly through the empty street until he came to a house.

He reached up and pulled the bell.

The bell rang loudly.

Inside his head he said to himself, "Someone will come to the window."

And someone did.

After a moment a window opened above him. An old man leaned out. He wore a night cap on his head and looked very annoyed.

"What do you want at this hour?" the old man shouted.

Pinocchio looked up at him with hopeful eyes.

"Please," he said politely, "would you give me a little piece of bread?"

"Wait there," the old man answered. "I will come back at once."

The old man believed that the person ringing the bell was one of those wild boys who liked to wake people at night just to cause trouble.

After half a minute the window opened again.

The old man called down to him.

"Stand closer and hold out your hat."

But Pinocchio did not yet own a hat.

Still he stepped forward.

At that moment the old man threw down a large bucket of water.

The water fell directly on Pinocchio's head and soaked him from top to bottom, just like a plant that someone has watered.

Poor Pinocchio stood there dripping wet.

He slowly walked back home. His wooden body was heavy with water, and his legs were weak from hunger and tiredness.

When he reached the house, he could hardly stand.

He sat down on a small chair and placed his wet feet on a little pan full of hot

coals so that they could dry.

The warmth felt good after the cold rain.

Soon he began to feel sleepy.

His eyes slowly closed.

And in a short time he fell fast asleep.

While he slept, the wooden feet that rested on the hot coals slowly began to burn.

The fire touched them little by little.

The wood became black.

Then it turned to ash.

But Pinocchio continued sleeping and even snored a little, as if the burning feet belonged to someone else.

Finally morning came.

Pinocchio woke up because someone knocked on the door.

Still half asleep, he rubbed his eyes and asked:

“Who is there?”

A familiar voice answered from outside.

“It is I.”

That voice was the voice of Geppetto.

Pinocchio was still sleepy, so he did not yet notice that his feet had been burned away.

When he heard his father’s voice, he quickly jumped down from the chair to open the door.

But after two or three steps he began to fall.

Without feet he could not stand.

He crashed onto the floor with a loud noise, like a bag full of metal spoons falling from a high window.

Outside, Geppetto knocked again.

“Open the door!” he called.

Pinocchio began to cry.

“Father, I cannot!”

“Why can you not?”

“Because my feet have been eaten.”

“And who ate them?”

Pinocchio looked around the room and saw the cat playing with some small pieces of wood.

“The cat ate them,” he said.

“Open the door,” Geppetto repeated. “If I come inside, I will punish the cat myself!”

“I cannot stand up,” Pinocchio cried. “Believe me. Oh, poor me! I will have to walk on my knees all my life!”

Geppetto believed that the puppet was only playing another trick.

So he climbed up the wall and entered the house through the window.

At first he was ready to shout and scold.

But when he saw Pinocchio lying on the floor without feet, his heart softened at once.

He lifted the puppet into his arms, kissed him many times, and spoke with tears running down his face.

“My poor Pinocchio! How did you burn your feet?”

Pinocchio began to explain in a confused and hurried way.

“I do not know, father. But believe me, it was a terrible night. There was thunder and lightning. I was very hungry. Then the Talking Cricket said I deserved it because I was bad. And I said to him, ‘Be careful!’ And he told me I had a wooden head. Then I threw a hammer at him and he died, but it was his fault because I did not want to kill him. Then I put a pan on the fire and broke an egg, but a little chick came out and flew away. And my hunger grew stronger and stronger. Then the old man with the night cap told me to hold out my hat, and he poured water on my head. So I came home, and because I was still hungry I put my feet on the hot coals to dry them. Then you came back, and now my feet are gone! And I am still hungry! Boo-hoo! Boo-hoo!”

Pinocchio cried so loudly that people far away could have heard him.

From that long and confused story Geppetto understood only one thing.

His puppet was starving.

The old man reached into his pocket and took out three pears.

He gave them to Pinocchio.

“These pears were my breakfast,” he said kindly. “But I will give them to you. Eat them and enjoy them.”

Pinocchio looked at the fruit.

“If you want me to eat them,” he said, “please peel them first.”

Geppetto looked surprised.

“Peel them? I did not know that you were so delicate and careful about food. This is not good. In this world we must learn to eat what we have, because we never know what may happen.”

“You may be right,” Pinocchio answered. “But I will never eat fruit with the skin on. I cannot stand the skins.”

Geppetto sighed quietly.

With great patience he took out a small knife and peeled the three pears.

Then he placed the skins in a corner of the table.

Pinocchio ate the first pear quickly in two bites.

When he finished, he threw the core away.

But Geppetto stopped him.

“Do not throw it away. Everything in this world can be useful.”

“But I will never eat the core!” cried Pinocchio angrily.

“Who knows? Anything can happen,” Geppetto said calmly.

In the end the three cores were placed on the table next to the skins.

Pinocchio finished all three pears.

Then he gave a long yawn and said sadly:

“I am still hungry.”

“But I have nothing more to give you,” said Geppetto.

“Nothing at all?”

“Only the skins and the cores.”

Pinocchio thought for a moment.

“Very well,” he said. “If there is nothing else, I will eat a skin.”

He began to chew.

At first he made a face.

But soon he ate all the skins.

Then he ate the cores as well.

When everything was finished, he patted his stomach happily.

“Now I feel much better!”

Geppetto smiled gently.

“You see,” he said, “I was right when I told you not to be too delicate with food. In this world we never know what may happen. Many things can occur.”

Part 5

As soon as the hunger left his stomach, Pinocchio began to complain and cry again. This time he cried because he wanted a new pair of feet.

Geppetto heard him, but he did not hurry to help him.

He decided to punish the puppet a little for his bad behavior. So he allowed Pinocchio to cry and complain for half a day.

Finally the old man spoke.

“Why should I make new feet for you?” he asked. “So that you can run away from home again?”

Pinocchio shook his head and began to cry even harder.

“I promise you,” he said between his sobs, “that from today on I will be good.”

Geppetto sighed.

“All children say that when they want something,” he replied.

“But I really promise,” said Pinocchio. “I will go to school. I will study. I will work hard.”

Geppetto looked at him carefully.

“Every child says the same thing when he wants to get what he wants,” he answered quietly.

Pinocchio raised his hand as if he were making an oath.

“But I am not like the other children,” he said. “I am better than all of them. I

always tell the truth. I promise you, father, that I will learn a trade. I will help you when you are old. I will be your support and your comfort.”

Geppetto tried to keep a serious face.

But the truth was that his eyes were full of tears, and his heart was full of love for the poor puppet lying there without feet.

Without saying another word, the old man picked up his tools and two small pieces of dry wood.

Then he began to work carefully.

His hands moved quickly but gently. He cut the wood, shaped it, and smoothed it.

In less than an hour the feet were finished.

They were small, strong, and well made, almost as if a great artist had created them.

Geppetto looked at Pinocchio and said:

“Close your eyes and sleep.”

Pinocchio closed his eyes.

But he only pretended to sleep.

While the puppet lay still, Geppetto mixed a little glue inside an empty egg shell. With great care he attached the two new feet to Pinocchio’s legs.

He worked so carefully that it was impossible to see where the new feet joined the old legs.

When the work was finished, Pinocchio opened his eyes.

The moment he saw that he had feet again, he jumped from the table and began to run around the room.

He kicked his legs high in the air.

He turned in circles.

He jumped and danced with joy.

“To thank you for what you have done for me,” he said happily to Geppetto, “I want to go to school right away.”

Geppetto smiled.

“Good boy,” he said.

But Pinocchio suddenly stopped.

“To go to school,” he continued, “I need some clothes.”

Geppetto was very poor. He did not even have a single coin in his pocket.

Still he wanted to help his puppet.

So he made a little suit from bright colored paper.

He made shoes from the bark of a tree.

And he made a small hat from the soft inside of bread.

When the clothes were ready, Pinocchio ran to look at himself in a bowl full of water that served as a mirror.

He admired himself from every side.

“I really look like a fine gentleman,” he said proudly.

Geppetto shook his head gently.

“Remember this,” he said. “Fine clothes do not make a gentleman. Clean clothes make a gentleman.”

Pinocchio nodded, but then he remembered something.

“There is still something missing,” he said.

“What is that?” asked Geppetto.

“I need a school book.”

“You are right,” said Geppetto. “But how can we get one?”

“It is easy,” said Pinocchio. “We go to a book shop and buy one.”

“And the money?”

Pinocchio lowered his head.

“I do not have any.”

“And neither do I,” said the old man sadly.

For a moment both of them were silent.

Even cheerful Pinocchio became serious.

True poverty is something that everyone can understand, even children.

Suddenly Geppetto stood up.

“Wait here!” he said.

He put on his old coat, which was covered with patches and repairs, and hurried out of the house.

After a short time he returned.

In his hand he held a small school book for learning letters.

But he no longer wore his coat.

The poor man stood there in his shirt sleeves, even though snow was falling outside.

Pinocchio noticed it immediately.

“Father,” he asked, “where is your coat?”

“I sold it.”

“Why did you sell it?”

Geppetto smiled.

“Because I felt too warm.”

Pinocchio understood the truth at once.

His heart filled with love.

He jumped into Geppetto’s arms and covered his face with kisses.

The next morning the snow stopped falling.

Pinocchio placed his new school book under his arm and began to walk toward the school.

As he walked along the road, he imagined many wonderful things in his mind.

He spoke quietly to himself.

“Today at school I will learn how to read. Tomorrow I will learn how to write. The day after that I will learn numbers. Then I will earn money with my knowledge. And with the first money I earn I will buy my father a beautiful coat. Not a simple coat. No. I will buy him a coat made of gold and silver, with shining buttons like diamonds. My poor father deserves it. To buy my school book he sold his only coat. And in this cold weather too. Only fathers can make such sacrifices.”

As he said these words he felt very proud.

Suddenly he heard music in the distance.

It was the sound of pipes and drums.

“Pi-pi-pi... Pi-pi-pi... Boom boom boom...”

Pinocchio stopped walking and listened carefully.

The music came from a long road that led to a small village near the sea.

“What can that music be?” he asked himself.

Then he remembered something.

“What a pity that I must go to school. Otherwise...”

He stopped again.

He had to make a decision.

Should he go to school?

Or should he go and listen to the music?

After thinking for a moment he shrugged his shoulders.

“Today I will go and listen to the music,” he decided. “Tomorrow I will go to school. There is always time for school.”

With that he turned into the side road and began to run quickly.

The faster he ran, the clearer the music became.

“Pi-pi-pi... Pi-pi-pi... Boom boom boom...”

Soon he arrived in a large square full of people.

In the center stood a big wooden building covered with bright painted cloth.

Pinocchio turned to a boy standing nearby.

“What is that building?” he asked.

“Read the sign,” the boy answered, “and you will know.”

“I would gladly read it,” said Pinocchio, “but today I cannot read.”

The boy laughed.

“Very good! Then I will read it to you. It says: GREAT PUPPET THEATER.”

“Has the show already begun?” asked Pinocchio.

“It is starting now.”

“How much does it cost to enter?”

“Four small coins.”

Pinocchio felt a strong desire to see the show.

Without feeling any shame he asked the boy:

“Would you lend me four coins until tomorrow?”

The boy laughed again.

“I would like to lend them to you,” he said, “but today I cannot.”

Pinocchio began to think quickly.

“I will sell you my jacket for four coins,” he said.

“What would I do with a paper jacket?” the boy replied. “If it rains, I could never take it off.”

“Will you buy my shoes?”

“They are only good for starting a fire.”

“How much will you give me for my hat?”

“A hat made from bread? The mice would eat it from my head!”

Pinocchio began to feel desperate.

At last he said:

“Will you give me four coins for my new school book?”

The boy shook his head.

“I am a boy,” he said. “I never buy things from other boys.”

But a man who sold old clothes had heard the conversation.

“I will buy the book for four coins,” he said.

And so the book was sold at once.

And poor Geppetto stayed at home, cold and shaking without his coat, because he had sold it to buy that book.

Part 6

With the four coins in his hand, Pinocchio quickly went to the entrance of the puppet theater. The building was large and colorful. Many people stood outside waiting to enter. Some were laughing, some were talking loudly, and others were already pushing toward the door so they would not miss the beginning of the show.

Pinocchio paid the four coins and went inside.

The room was full of noise and excitement. The seats were crowded with people. Children and adults sat side by side, waiting for the performance to begin.

The curtain was already raised.

On the stage two puppets were arguing loudly with each other. One of them was Harlequin, and the other was Punchinello. They waved their arms and shouted angrily, just as puppets always do in such plays.

The audience laughed loudly at their quarrel.

The two puppets threatened each other again and again, promising to hit one another with sticks or slap each other across the face.

Their voices were so lively and their movements so real that the people in the theater laughed harder and harder.

Suddenly something strange happened.

Harlequin stopped speaking.

He turned toward the audience and pointed toward the back of the theater. His voice became full of surprise.

“Heavens above!” he cried. “Am I dreaming or awake? That person down there is Pinocchio!”

Punchinello turned quickly.

“It really is Pinocchio!” he shouted.

A puppet named Rosaura appeared from behind the stage curtain.

“It is Pinocchio! It is truly him!” she cried.

In a moment all the puppets ran out from behind the stage.

They jumped and shouted together.

“Pinocchio! Pinocchio! Our brother Pinocchio!”

“Come up here!” cried Harlequin. “Come and throw yourself into the arms of your wooden brothers!”

Pinocchio could not resist such a warm invitation.

With one quick jump he climbed over the seats of the audience. With another jump he landed on the head of the orchestra leader. From there he leaped onto the stage.

The puppets surrounded him immediately.

They hugged him.

They pulled his neck with affection.

They pinched his cheeks like old friends.

Some of them even knocked their wooden heads gently against his.

It was a true celebration among wooden brothers.

The sight was very touching.

But the audience began to grow impatient. The play had stopped completely. Soon people began shouting.

“We want the play!”

“Continue the show!”

But the puppets did not listen.

Instead they lifted Pinocchio onto their shoulders and carried him proudly across the stage.

At that moment someone appeared who changed everything.

The puppet master came out.

He was a very frightening man. His face alone was enough to make people afraid. His long black beard covered his chest and legs like a large cloth. It was so long that when he walked he sometimes stepped on it.

His mouth was wide like an oven.

His eyes looked like two red lanterns with lights burning behind them.

In his hand he held a large whip made from twisted snakes and fox tails.

The moment he appeared, every puppet fell silent.

Not a single voice could be heard.

Even the puppets began to shake with fear.

The puppet master looked directly at Pinocchio and spoke with a deep, rough voice.

“Why have you come to cause trouble in my theater?”

Pinocchio trembled but tried to answer politely.

“Please believe me, sir, it was not my fault.”

The puppet master waved his hand.

“Enough. Tonight we will settle our accounts.”

The show continued, though the puppets were still nervous.

When the play finally ended, the puppet master went into the kitchen behind the stage. There a large lamb was slowly turning on a spit above the fire. The meat smelled very good.

But the fire was growing weak.

The puppet master needed more wood.

So he called two puppets.

“Harlequin! Punchinello!” he shouted.

The two puppets quickly appeared.

“Bring me that puppet hanging on the hook,” the master ordered. “He is made of dry wood. He will burn well and make a good fire for my roast.”

Harlequin and Punchinello hesitated.

They were afraid.

But the puppet master gave them such a terrible look that they quickly obeyed.

Soon they returned carrying poor Pinocchio.

Pinocchio struggled like a fish taken from water. He cried loudly and moved his arms and legs in fear.

“Father! Save me!” he shouted. “I do not want to die! I do not want to die!”

The puppet master’s name was Mangiafoco.

At first he looked like a terrible man. With that long beard and angry face he seemed very dangerous.

But in truth his heart was not cruel.

When he saw Pinocchio crying and begging, he began to feel sorry.

He tried to remain strong and serious, but at last he could not control himself.

Suddenly he sneezed.

“Ah-choo!”

When Harlequin heard the sneeze, his face brightened. He leaned toward Pinocchio and whispered quietly.

“Good news, brother. When the master sneezes it means he feels pity. You will be saved.”

This was because most people show pity by crying or wiping their eyes.

But Mangiafoco showed his feelings by sneezing.

After sneezing, the puppet master tried to look stern again.

“Stop crying!” he shouted at Pinocchio. “Your crying makes my stomach feel strange. I feel something here inside... ah-choo! ah-choo!”

He sneezed two more times.

“Health to you,” said Pinocchio politely.

“Thank you,” said Mangiafoco.

Then he asked, “Is your father still alive?”

“Yes,” said Pinocchio. “My father is alive. I never knew my mother.”

Mangiafoco sighed.

“Who knows how sad your old father would be if I threw you into the fire,” he said. “Poor old man. I feel sorry for him. Ah-choo! Ah-choo! Ah-choo!”

He sneezed three times again.

“Health to you,” said Pinocchio.

“Thank you,” said the puppet master.

Then he continued speaking.

“Still, you must also feel sorry for me. As you see, I have no wood left to cook my lamb. To tell the truth, you would have been very useful. But now I feel pity, and I must accept it. Instead of you, I will burn another puppet from my company. Guards!”

Immediately two tall wooden guards appeared.

They were thin and stiff. Each wore a tall hat and carried a sword.

Mangiafoco pointed toward the stage.

“Bring me Harlequin,” he said. “Tie him well and throw him into the fire. I want my lamb properly cooked.”

Poor Harlequin was so frightened that his legs bent beneath him. He fell flat on the floor.

When Pinocchio saw this terrible sight, he ran forward and threw himself at the puppet master’s feet.

Tears fell onto the long black beard.

“Please have mercy!” Pinocchio cried.

“There are no gentlemen here,” Mangiafoco replied roughly.

“Please, sir knight!”

“There are no knights here.”

“Please, honored sir!”

“There are no honored sirs here.”

“Please... Your Excellency!”

When Mangiafoco heard the title “Your Excellency,” he immediately softened. His voice became kinder.

“Well then,” he said. “What do you want from me?”

“Please spare poor Harlequin!”

Mangiafoco shook his head.

“No mercy. I spared you, so another puppet must burn.”

Pinocchio suddenly stood up proudly.

He threw his small bread hat to the ground.

“Then I know my duty,” he said bravely. “Come, guards. Tie me and throw me into the fire. It is not right that my friend Harlequin should die in my place!”

His words were strong and noble.

All the puppets watching the scene began to cry.

Even the wooden guards cried like small lambs.

Mangiafoco stood still like a statue.

But slowly his eyes softened.

Then he sneezed again.

Once.

Twice.

Three times.

Four times.

Five times.

Finally he opened his arms.

“You are a brave boy,” he said warmly. “Come here and give me a kiss.”

Pinocchio climbed up the long beard like a small squirrel and kissed the puppet master on the nose.

“So the pardon is granted?” asked Harlequin with a weak voice.

“Yes,” said Mangiafoco. “The pardon is granted.”

Then he sighed.

“Very well. Tonight I will eat the lamb only half cooked. But next time, anyone who causes trouble will not be forgiven.”

When the puppets heard this news, they rushed onto the stage.

They lit the lamps and candles like a great celebration.
And they began dancing with joy.
The morning sun rose.
And still they were dancing.

Part 7

The next morning Mangiafoco called Pinocchio aside.

The theater was quiet after the long night of dancing. Many of the puppets were resting after their celebration. The morning light entered through the open door, and the smell of the sea came softly through the air.

Mangiafoco looked at Pinocchio carefully and asked in a calmer voice than before.

“What is your father’s name?”

“Geppetto,” answered Pinocchio.

“And what work does he do?”

“He is poor,” said Pinocchio simply.

Mangiafoco raised his thick eyebrows.

“Does he earn much money?”

Pinocchio shook his head.

“He earns just enough to have nothing left in his pocket. Imagine this: to buy me my school book he had to sell the only coat he owned. That coat was full of patches and repairs.”

Mangiafoco listened quietly.

At last he sighed.

“Poor man,” he said. “I almost feel sorry for him.”

Then he reached into his pocket and pulled out five gold coins. The coins shone brightly in the morning light.

He placed them into Pinocchio’s hand.

“Take these five gold coins,” he said. “Go home at once and give them to your father. And greet him kindly for me.”

Pinocchio could hardly believe his good luck.

He thanked Mangiafoco again and again. Then he went to say goodbye to all the puppets in the theater. He hugged them one by one, even the wooden guards.

Full of happiness, he started the journey home.

The road was quiet and peaceful.

Pinocchio walked along happily, holding the gold coins tightly in his hand.

But he had not gone even half a kilometer when he met two strange travelers.

One of them was a Fox who walked with a limp in one leg. The other was a Cat who appeared to be blind in both eyes.

They moved slowly along the road together like two poor companions helping each other.

The Fox leaned on the Cat while walking. The Cat allowed the Fox to guide him.

When they saw Pinocchio, the Fox greeted him politely.

“Good morning, Pinocchio.”

Pinocchio stopped in surprise.

“How do you know my name?” he asked.

“I know your father very well,” said the Fox.

“Where did you see him?”

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

“And what was he doing?”

“He was standing there without a coat and shaking from the cold.”

Pinocchio felt sad.

“My poor father,” he said. “But if heaven wishes it, from today on he will no longer feel cold.”

The Fox tilted his head.

“Why is that?”

Pinocchio lifted his chin proudly.

“Because I have become a great gentleman.”

The Fox suddenly began to laugh loudly. His laugh sounded sharp and mocking.

The Cat also began to laugh, but to hide it he pretended to clean his whiskers

with his paws.

Pinocchio felt a little angry.

“There is nothing to laugh about,” he said. “You may not believe me, but if you understand money, you will see that these are five beautiful gold coins.”

He opened his hand and showed them the coins Mangiafoco had given him.

The moment the coins made their pleasant sound, the Fox stretched out the leg that had seemed weak. The Cat opened his eyes wide for a moment. They shone like two green lamps.

But the Cat quickly closed them again so that Pinocchio did not notice.

The Fox spoke again.

“Tell me, Pinocchio,” he asked kindly, “what do you plan to do with those coins?”

Pinocchio answered proudly.

“First I will buy my father a beautiful new coat made from gold and silver cloth, with shining buttons. Then I will buy another school book for myself.”

“For yourself?” asked the Fox.

“Yes,” said Pinocchio. “Because I want to go to school and study well.”

The Fox shook his head sadly.

“Look at me,” he said. “Because of the foolish desire to study, I lost one of my legs.”

The Cat spoke next.

“Look at me,” he said. “Because of the foolish desire to study, I lost the sight in both my eyes.”

Just then a white bird sitting on a bush near the road spoke.

It was a white Blackbird.

“Pinocchio,” the bird said, “do not listen to the advice of bad companions. If you do, you will regret it.”

The poor bird had hardly finished speaking when the Cat made a great jump. He caught the bird and swallowed it in one bite, feathers and all.

After eating it, he calmly cleaned his mouth and closed his eyes again, pretending to be blind.

Pinocchio looked shocked.

“Poor bird!” he said. “Why did you treat him so badly?”

The Cat answered calmly.

“I did it to teach him a lesson. Next time he will learn not to put his nose into other people’s conversations.”

The three travelers continued walking down the road together.

After they had gone a little farther, the Fox suddenly stopped.

He looked at Pinocchio with a clever smile.

“Would you like to double your gold coins?”

Pinocchio’s eyes opened wide.

“What do you mean?”

The Fox lowered his voice mysteriously.

“Would you like five coins to become ten? Ten to become one hundred? And one hundred to become one thousand?”

Pinocchio stared at him in wonder.

“Yes... but how can that happen?”

The Fox looked around carefully as if he were sharing a great secret.

“Very easily,” he said.

“How?”

“You must plant them.”

“Plant them?” asked Pinocchio.

“Yes,” said the Fox. “You must plant the coins in a special field. It is called the Field of Wonders.”

Pinocchio listened with great curiosity.

“And what happens in this field?” he asked.

The Fox continued speaking slowly.

“You dig a small hole in the ground. Then you place the gold coins inside the hole. After that you cover them with earth. You water the ground with two buckets of water from the well.”

The Cat nodded seriously as if this were the most natural thing in the world.

The Fox continued.

“Then you go to sleep. The next morning, when you return, you will find a beautiful tree growing from the ground.”

Pinocchio leaned forward.

“A tree?”

“Yes,” said the Fox. “And on the branches of that tree there will be many gold coins. As many coins as there are leaves on a tree in spring.”

Pinocchio’s mouth opened with amazement.

“If I plant my five coins,” he asked slowly, “how many coins will I find in the morning?”

The Fox answered calmly.

“At least two thousand.”

Pinocchio’s heart beat fast.

“Two thousand coins!” he cried happily. “Then I would become very rich!”

The Fox smiled quietly.

“Exactly.”

Pinocchio began to dream of wonderful things.

“With two thousand coins,” he said, “I could buy my father a beautiful palace. And I would have a thousand coats. And I would eat sweets every day.”

The Fox nodded.

“You see how wise this idea is.”

Pinocchio hesitated only a moment.

“Where is this Field of Wonders?” he asked eagerly.

The Fox pointed down the road.

“Not far from here. In the City of Simple People.”

Pinocchio’s curiosity was stronger than his caution.

Without thinking about the danger, he said:

“Let us go there at once.”

And so the three travelers continued down the road together.

The three travelers continued walking together along the road. The sun moved slowly across the sky, and the day grew warmer. Pinocchio walked between the Fox and the Cat, holding the five gold coins carefully in his hand.

From time to time he opened his fingers just to look at them again. Each time he saw the bright gold shining in the light, his heart beat faster.

The Fox watched him from the corner of his eye. The Cat walked quietly beside them, pretending to be blind.

After they had walked for some time, the Fox said in a friendly voice, "We should stop soon and eat something. A long walk is tiring."

Pinocchio nodded. He was not very hungry, but he did feel tired.

Soon they arrived at a small inn. Over the door hung a wooden sign that read: *THE RED LOBSTER INN.*

"Let us go inside," said the Fox. "We can rest a little and then continue our journey."

They entered the inn and sat at a table.

The Fox called loudly, "Innkeeper! Bring us something good to eat!"

The innkeeper came to the table.

"What would you like?" he asked.

The Fox began to order many things.

"Bring us two roasted chickens, four plates of cooked meat, three loaves of bread, and some fruit. And bring wine as well."

The Cat nodded seriously as if he agreed with every word.

Pinocchio looked surprised.

"Are you very hungry?" he asked.

"Very hungry," answered the Fox. "A traveler must keep his strength."

Soon the food arrived.

The Fox and the Cat began eating immediately. They ate quickly and with great pleasure. They chewed loudly and swallowed piece after piece.

Pinocchio ate only a small piece of bread and a few nuts. His thoughts were not on the food.

His mind was full of dreams about the tree of gold coins.

When the meal was finished, the Fox leaned back in his chair.

“Now we will sleep for a short time,” he said. “Then we will continue our journey to the Field of Wonders.”

Pinocchio nodded.

But before they went to sleep, the innkeeper came to the table.

“Who will pay for the meal?” he asked.

The Fox answered immediately.

“The gentleman with the gold coins.”

Pinocchio jumped in surprise.

“But I did not eat much!” he cried.

The Fox shrugged.

“A true gentleman always pays for his friends.”

Pinocchio did not know what to say. He slowly took one gold coin from his hand and gave it to the innkeeper.

After this they went to rest.

The Fox and the Cat lay down on two beds and began snoring loudly. Pinocchio sat quietly in a chair.

He did not want to sleep for long. He wanted to reach the Field of Wonders quickly.

After a short time the Fox suddenly woke up.

“It is time to leave,” he said. “The journey is still long.”

The Cat stood up and stretched his arms like someone who had just awakened.

The three travelers left the inn and continued walking along the road.

The sun slowly moved toward the horizon, and the sky began to grow darker.

After a while the Fox stopped walking.

“From here,” he said, “the road becomes difficult.”

“Why?” asked Pinocchio.

“Because we must pass through a dark forest. It is safer if we go slowly.”

Pinocchio looked toward the trees ahead. The forest seemed deep and quiet.

Still he felt brave enough to continue.

“Let us go,” he said.

They walked into the forest.

The trees were tall and close together. Their branches blocked much of the fading light. The road became narrow and shadowy.

After a short time the Fox said, "My friend Pinocchio, we must leave you here for a moment."

"Why?" asked Pinocchio nervously.

"Because we have a small matter to attend to," the Fox replied. "Wait here. We will return soon."

The Cat nodded seriously.

Before Pinocchio could ask another question, the two companions disappeared among the trees.

Pinocchio waited.

The forest was very quiet.

A cold wind moved through the branches above him. The leaves rustled softly.

Pinocchio began to feel uneasy.

"Perhaps I should continue walking," he said to himself.

So he began to walk along the road alone.

The forest seemed darker with every step.

Suddenly he heard the sound of leaves moving behind him.

He stopped and listened.

At first he heard nothing more.

Then again he heard the same sound.

It was as if someone were following him.

Pinocchio turned quickly.

In the dim light he saw two tall figures running toward him.

They wore black sacks over their heads with holes cut for their eyes. In their hands they held long knives.

The two figures shouted loudly.

"Your money or your life!"

Pinocchio understood at once.

These were thieves.

Without saying a word he quickly placed the four remaining gold coins into his mouth.

Then he began to run as fast as he could.

The thieves ran after him.

Pinocchio's wooden legs moved quickly. He jumped over stones and roots as he ran deeper into the forest.

But the thieves were strong and fast.

Soon they began to gain on him.

Pinocchio looked around desperately.

In front of him he saw a tall pine tree.

With one quick movement he climbed the trunk and sat on a high branch.

The thieves arrived a moment later.

They looked up and saw him.

"Come down!" they shouted.

Pinocchio shook his head.

The thieves tried to climb the tree, but Pinocchio moved higher.

Finally the thieves gathered dry branches and wood from the forest floor.

They piled the wood at the base of the tree.

Then they lit a fire.

The flames began to rise.

The smoke climbed toward the branches where Pinocchio sat.

The heat grew stronger.

The thieves called up to him again.

"Come down at once!"

Pinocchio did not answer.

But the smoke was growing thick, and he began to cough.

Just then a large bird flew down from the sky.

It was a Falcon.

The Falcon spoke kindly.

"What are you doing there, Pinocchio?"

"Do you not see?" answered Pinocchio. "These thieves want to burn me."

The Falcon looked down at the fire and then back at Pinocchio.

“Climb onto my back,” he said. “I will carry you away.”

Pinocchio did not hesitate.

He climbed onto the Falcon’s back, and the strong bird flew quickly into the air.

The flames and the thieves grew smaller below them.

Soon the forest disappeared beneath the night sky.

The Falcon flew far away and gently placed Pinocchio on the ground near a quiet road.

“Thank you, my good friend,” said Pinocchio gratefully.

The Falcon nodded once.

Then he spread his wings and flew away into the darkness.

Pinocchio stood alone again.

The road stretched quietly before him.

And somewhere ahead lay the City of Simple People and the Field of Wonders.

Part 9

Pinocchio stood alone on the quiet road. The night was dark, and the air felt cold around him. For a moment he did not move. His heart was still beating quickly from fear.

He looked behind him, but the forest was far away now. The thieves were gone.

Slowly he began to walk again.

The road was narrow and silent. Only the sound of his wooden feet touching the ground could be heard. From time to time the wind moved softly through the grass beside the road.

Pinocchio kept the four gold coins safely inside his mouth. He did not dare to remove them, because he feared the thieves might appear again.

He walked for a long time.

The moon rose into the sky and gave a little light to the road. At last Pinocchio saw a small white house standing alone beside the path.

A faint light shone from one of its windows.

“Perhaps someone lives there,” Pinocchio thought. “Maybe they will help me.”

He walked closer and knocked on the door.

No one answered.

He knocked again.

Still no answer.

Then he knocked a third time, louder than before.

At last the window slowly opened. A beautiful girl appeared at the window. Her hair was blue, and her face was pale like a piece of white marble.

She looked down at Pinocchio quietly.

“Is anyone at home?” Pinocchio asked.

The girl answered softly.

“In this house no one is alive. All are dead.”

Pinocchio felt frightened.

“Then why does the window open?” he asked.

“Because I am dead also,” said the girl calmly.

After saying these strange words, the window closed again.

Pinocchio stood in the road, shaking with fear.

Suddenly he heard footsteps behind him.

He turned quickly.

The two thieves were running toward him again.

The sacks still covered their heads, and the knives still shone in their hands.

Pinocchio tried to run, but he was too tired. The thieves caught him easily.

“Open your mouth!” they shouted.

Pinocchio kept his mouth tightly closed.

The thieves tried to force it open, but he resisted.

At last one thief pulled out a large knife and said angrily, “If you will not open your mouth, we will open it for you.”

Pinocchio struggled desperately.

The thieves tried again and again to reach the coins inside his mouth, but they could not.

Finally they became furious.

“Very well,” said one thief. “If we cannot take the money, we will hang him.”

They found a tall oak tree beside the road.

With a strong rope they tied Pinocchio by the neck and pulled him up into the air.

Then they sat on the ground and waited.

“Soon he will grow tired,” they said. “Soon he will open his mouth.”

Pinocchio hung from the branch.

The rope pressed tightly around his neck.

The wind moved slowly through the tree leaves above him.

His body swayed gently back and forth.

At first he tried to kick and move his arms.

But little by little his strength left him.

His eyes began to close.

The world around him grew dark.

Just before he lost his senses completely, he whispered softly:

“Oh father... if you were here...”

Then everything became silent.

Time passed.

The two thieves waited a long time. But Pinocchio did not move.

Finally they stood up.

“Let us go,” said one of them. “Tomorrow we will return. By then he will be dead, and his mouth will be open.”

The two thieves disappeared into the darkness of the forest.

The night became quiet again.

Pinocchio still hung from the branch of the oak tree.

The moon moved slowly across the sky.

Hours passed.

Early in the morning a large Falcon flew through the air above the forest.

The bird noticed something strange hanging from the tree.

The Falcon flew closer.

When he saw that it was Pinocchio, he immediately understood what had

happened.

The Falcon flew quickly to a nearby house where a beautiful blue-haired girl lived.

He knocked at her window with his strong beak.

The girl opened the window.

“What is it?” she asked.

The Falcon spoke quickly.

“There is a poor puppet hanging from a tree in the forest. He is still alive, but only just. You must come quickly if you wish to save him.”

The girl did not waste a moment.

She clapped her hands three times.

Immediately a small carriage appeared. It was pulled by white mice.

The girl climbed into the carriage and said, “Quickly!”

The mice began to run.

The carriage moved quickly along the road and soon reached the oak tree where Pinocchio hung.

The girl stepped down and looked up at him.

“Poor puppet,” she said quietly.

She called to the Falcon.

“Cut the rope.”

The Falcon flew up and cut the rope with his sharp beak.

Pinocchio fell gently into the arms of the blue-haired girl.

She carried him into the carriage.

Then the carriage returned quickly to the white house.

Inside the house the girl placed Pinocchio on a bed.

She called three doctors to examine him.

The first doctor was a Crow.

The second doctor was an Owl.

The third doctor was a Talking Cricket.

The same Cricket whom Pinocchio had once struck with a hammer.

The doctors looked carefully at the puppet.

The Owl spoke first.

“In my opinion,” he said, “the puppet is already dead.”

The Crow disagreed.

“In my opinion,” he said, “the puppet is still alive.”

The Talking Cricket spoke last.

“When a puppet answers his doctor with rude words,” he said, “it usually means he has a bad illness.”

Just then Pinocchio suddenly sneezed loudly.

The blue-haired girl smiled.

“The puppet is not dead,” she said. “He is alive.”

The doctors nodded.

Soon Pinocchio slowly opened his eyes.

He looked around the room in confusion.

The first thing he saw was the kind face of the blue-haired girl.

“Where am I?” he asked weakly.

“You are in my house,” she answered.

“And who are you?”

The girl smiled gently.

“I am the child of this house.”

Pinocchio looked around again.

“Where is my father?” he asked.

“I do not know,” she said.

Pinocchio suddenly remembered the gold coins in his mouth.

He quickly swallowed them.

Then he asked nervously:

“And the two thieves?”

“They ran away,” said the girl.

Pinocchio felt relief.

He lay quietly in the bed, thinking about everything that had happened.

The strange adventure had almost cost him his life.

Yet even now he still dreamed of the Field of Wonders and the tree of gold coins.

Part 10

Pinocchio lay in the soft bed and looked around the room. The walls were white and clean. A gentle light came through the window, and the air smelled fresh. The blue-haired girl stood beside the bed and watched him quietly.

For a moment Pinocchio did not speak. His head still felt heavy, and his body felt weak from the terrible night in the forest.

At last the girl asked kindly, "Tell me the truth. Why were those thieves chasing you?"

Pinocchio hesitated. He did not want to speak about the gold coins.

"The thieves wanted to take my school book," he said slowly.

The girl looked at him carefully.

"And where is this school book now?"

"I... I lost it," Pinocchio replied.

"Where did you lose it?"

"In the forest," said Pinocchio.

As soon as he finished speaking, something strange happened.

His nose began to grow.

It grew longer and longer until it became so long that Pinocchio could hardly turn his head without hitting the wall.

The girl watched quietly.

"Pinocchio," she said gently, "why are you telling lies?"

"I am not lying!" cried Pinocchio.

But the moment he said those words, his nose grew even longer.

It stretched forward across the room like a long wooden branch.

Pinocchio became frightened.

He tried to cover his face with his hands.

"Oh dear!" he cried. "What is happening to my nose?"

The blue-haired girl laughed softly.

"There are two kinds of lies," she explained calmly. "Some lies have short legs,

and some lies have long noses. Your lies are the kind with long noses.”

Pinocchio felt deeply ashamed.

“I beg you to forgive me,” he said.

The girl clapped her hands twice.

Immediately a group of small woodpeckers flew into the room through the open window.

They landed on Pinocchio’s nose and began pecking at it with their beaks.

Tap, tap, tap!

Little by little the long nose became shorter.

In a short time it returned to its normal size.

The woodpeckers flew away again.

Pinocchio rubbed his nose carefully and looked at the girl with gratitude.

“Thank you,” he said.

But the girl continued speaking seriously.

“Now tell me the truth. How did the thieves discover that you had money?”

This time Pinocchio decided to speak honestly.

He told her everything.

He spoke about Mangiafoco and the five gold coins. He spoke about the Fox and the Cat. He spoke about the Field of Wonders and the plan to plant the coins in the ground.

When he finished the story, the girl shook her head slowly.

“Poor Pinocchio,” she said. “You allowed yourself to be deceived.”

“Deceived?” asked Pinocchio.

“Yes,” she answered. “Those two travelers were not your friends. They were thieves.”

Pinocchio felt confused.

“But they told me that gold coins grow into trees,” he said.

The girl smiled gently.

“No such field exists in the world.”

Pinocchio opened his eyes wide.

“Then the gold tree will not grow?”

“No,” said the girl.
Pinocchio sighed deeply.
For a moment he said nothing.
Then he suddenly remembered something.
“Where are the gold coins now?” asked the girl.
Pinocchio placed his hand on his stomach.
“I swallowed them,” he admitted.
The girl laughed softly.
“That was a clever idea,” she said.
Just then a small servant entered the room carrying a glass.
Inside the glass was a dark medicine.
The blue-haired girl took the glass and held it toward Pinocchio.
“Drink this medicine,” she said.
Pinocchio looked at the glass and made a terrible face.
“It is bitter!” he cried.
“Yes,” said the girl calmly. “But it will make you well again.”
“I do not want it,” Pinocchio replied.
“You must drink it.”
“No, no, no!”
Pinocchio pushed the glass away.
Just then the door opened.
Four black rabbits entered the room.
They carried a small black coffin on their shoulders.
The rabbits walked slowly toward the bed.
“What do you want?” asked Pinocchio nervously.
The largest rabbit spoke.
“We have come for you.”
“For me?”
“Yes,” said the rabbit. “If you do not drink the medicine, you will die. Then we will place you inside this coffin.”
Pinocchio looked at the black coffin.

Fear filled his heart.

He jumped up in the bed and grabbed the glass.

“I will drink it!” he cried.

And in one quick moment he swallowed the entire medicine.

The rabbits nodded politely and carried the coffin away again.

The blue-haired girl smiled.

“You see,” she said kindly, “sometimes a little courage is needed.”

After drinking the medicine, Pinocchio began to feel better.

His strength slowly returned.

Later that day he sat up in bed and spoke happily.

“I want to return home to my father.”

The girl nodded.

“You may go tomorrow,” she said.

Pinocchio smiled with joy.

But that night he began thinking again about the gold coins in his stomach.

And slowly another foolish idea began to grow in his mind.

Perhaps... perhaps the Field of Wonders was real after all.

Perhaps the Fox and the Cat had spoken the truth.

And if that were true, then five gold coins could become two thousand.

The thought filled his head.

By morning Pinocchio had almost forgotten the danger of the thieves.

Instead he dreamed again about the wonderful tree of gold.

And so the next adventure was already waiting for him.

Part 11

The next morning Pinocchio felt strong again. The medicine had helped him, and his body no longer felt weak. The sun shone through the window, and the room was warm and quiet.

The blue-haired girl came to the bedside and spoke kindly.

“Today you may return home,” she said.

Pinocchio jumped happily from the bed.

“Thank you!” he cried. “I want to see my father again. He must be worried about me.”

The girl nodded.

“Before you go,” she said, “I will send someone with you to guide you along the road.”

She clapped her hands.

A small dog entered the room. The dog wore a hat and stood on his back legs like a servant.

“This dog will guide you,” said the girl. “Follow him carefully.”

Pinocchio thanked her and prepared to leave.

Before he stepped outside, the girl looked at him once more.

“Remember,” she said gently, “always tell the truth and always be careful with strangers.”

Pinocchio nodded quickly.

“I promise,” he said.

Then he left the house and began walking along the road with the small dog leading the way.

At first Pinocchio walked quickly and happily. The air was fresh, and the sky was bright. Birds flew above the fields, and the road stretched peacefully ahead.

But after walking for some time, Pinocchio’s thoughts began to wander again. He remembered the five gold coins.

Four of them were still inside his stomach.

“What if the Fox was telling the truth?” he thought.

“What if the Field of Wonders really exists?”

The more he thought about it, the more excited he became.

“If I plant the coins,” he said to himself, “I could become rich. I could help my father. I could buy everything we need.”

Soon his imagination became stronger than his good sense.

When the road reached a crossing, Pinocchio suddenly stopped.

The dog continued walking, but Pinocchio turned in another direction.

“The City of Simple People must be this way,” he said quietly.

And so he left the road that led home and began walking down another path.

After some time he reached the entrance of a small city.

A wooden sign stood beside the road.

It read: *CITY OF SIMPLE PEOPLE*

Pinocchio felt excited.

“This must be the place,” he said.

The streets of the city were quiet. The houses looked simple and old. People walked slowly along the road, speaking softly to one another.

Pinocchio searched for the Fox and the Cat.

Soon he saw them standing near a corner of the street.

The Fox limped along the road as before. The Cat still pretended to be blind.

When they saw Pinocchio, they greeted him warmly.

“Welcome, dear friend!” said the Fox.

“We were worried about you,” added the Cat.

Pinocchio felt relieved to see them again.

“I had a terrible adventure,” he said.

“Yes, yes,” said the Fox quickly. “We heard about it.”

“Those terrible thieves!” said the Cat.

“But now everything will be better,” continued the Fox. “You have arrived at the right place.”

Pinocchio looked around the city.

“Where is the Field of Wonders?” he asked eagerly.

“It is just outside the city,” answered the Fox.

“Follow us.”

The three travelers walked together through the streets and soon left the city behind them.

They arrived at a large empty field.

The ground looked dry and dusty.

The Fox pointed toward the middle of the field.

“Here it is,” he said proudly. “The Field of Wonders.”

Pinocchio looked around with excitement.

“Now what must I do?” he asked.

The Fox explained carefully.

“First you must dig a small hole in the ground.”

Pinocchio quickly dug a hole with his hands.

“Now place the gold coins inside the hole,” said the Fox.

Pinocchio opened his mouth and took out the four coins. He placed them carefully into the hole.

“Good,” said the Fox.

“Now cover them with earth.”

Pinocchio pushed the soil back into the hole and pressed it down firmly.

“Excellent,” said the Fox.

“Now you must water the place.”

“With what?” asked Pinocchio.

“There is a well nearby,” said the Fox. “Bring two buckets of water.”

Pinocchio ran to the well and filled two buckets. He carried the water back and poured it over the ground.

The soil became dark and wet.

“Perfect,” said the Fox.

“Now you must leave the field and return tomorrow morning.”

“And the tree will grow?” asked Pinocchio.

“Of course,” said the Fox.

The Cat nodded seriously.

“Tomorrow morning you will see a beautiful tree full of gold coins.”

Pinocchio felt very happy.

“Thank you, my good friends,” he said.

The Fox bowed politely.

“We will return tomorrow to admire the tree together.”

After saying goodbye, the Fox and the Cat slowly walked away.

But they did not go far.

They hid behind a group of bushes and began laughing quietly.

“The puppet is a fool,” whispered the Fox.

“A complete fool,” agreed the Cat.

Meanwhile Pinocchio left the field and walked toward the city.

He felt proud and excited.

All evening he thought about the wonderful tree that would grow during the night.

“Tomorrow,” he said to himself, “I will be rich.”

But he did not know that the Fox and the Cat planned to return during the night and steal the coins from the ground.

And so Pinocchio waited happily for the morning, dreaming of gold.

Part 12

The next morning Pinocchio woke very early. The sun had only just begun to rise, and the sky still looked pale and quiet. But Pinocchio could not sleep any longer.

His mind was full of excitement.

“Today the tree will be there,” he said to himself. “Today I will see it with my own eyes.”

He jumped out of bed and ran quickly out of the small house where he had spent the night. Without stopping even for breakfast, he hurried along the road toward the Field of Wonders.

His wooden legs moved fast. Dust rose from the road as he ran.

Soon he reached the empty field.

His heart beat loudly in his chest.

He looked toward the place where he had planted the coins.

But when he arrived, he stopped suddenly.

The ground looked exactly the same as before.

There was no tree.

There were no branches.

There were no shining gold coins.

There was only the same dry earth.
Pinocchio stood still and stared at the spot.
For a long moment he said nothing.
Then he ran to the place and began digging in the ground with his hands.
He dug quickly and nervously.
But the more he dug, the clearer the truth became.
The coins were gone.
Someone had taken them during the night.
Pinocchio felt cold fear inside his chest.
“My coins!” he cried. “My four gold coins!”
At that moment a green Parrot sitting on a tree branch nearby began to laugh loudly.
“Ha! Ha! Ha!” laughed the Parrot.
Pinocchio looked up angrily.
“Why are you laughing?” he asked.
The Parrot flapped his wings.
“Because I feel like laughing,” he said.
“If you know something,” said Pinocchio, “tell me at once.”
The Parrot nodded slowly.
“While you were sleeping,” he said, “the Fox and the Cat returned to the field. They dug up the coins and ran away with them.”
Pinocchio felt dizzy.
“Then the Field of Wonders was a lie?”
“Of course,” said the Parrot.
“But they told me—”
“They told you a story to trick you,” said the Parrot calmly.
Pinocchio fell to the ground and began to cry.
He cried loudly and bitterly.
“My poor coins!” he shouted. “My poor father!”
After crying for a long time, he finally stood up again.
“I must go to the city,” he said. “I will tell the judge what happened.”

With that he ran quickly toward the City of Simple People.
When he reached the city, he hurried to the courthouse.
The judge of the city was a large monkey wearing black clothes and a white wig.
He sat behind a tall desk and looked very serious.
Pinocchio bowed politely and told the whole story.
He spoke about Mangiafoco and the five gold coins.
He spoke about the Fox and the Cat.
He explained how he planted the coins and how they were stolen.
The judge listened carefully.
When Pinocchio finished, the judge nodded slowly.
“I understand,” said the monkey.
Then he turned to the guards standing nearby.
“Take this poor boy away,” he ordered.
“Put him in prison.”
Pinocchio stared in shock.
“But why?” he cried. “I am the one who was robbed!”
The judge spoke calmly.
“That is exactly why.”
The guards stepped forward and grabbed Pinocchio by the arms.
“Come with us,” they said.
Poor Pinocchio did not understand anything.
Still the guards led him away and locked him inside a dark prison.
The prison was cold and unpleasant.
Many other prisoners sat inside the room.
Some were thieves.
Some were robbers.
Some were tricksters.
And now poor Pinocchio sat among them.
Days passed.
Pinocchio remained in prison for four long months.

At last one day something unusual happened.
The city announced a great celebration.
The young prince of the city had won a great victory.
To celebrate the event, the ruler decided to show kindness to the people.
All the prisoners would be released.
The guards opened the prison doors.
One by one the prisoners walked outside into the sunlight.
When it was Pinocchio's turn, the guard looked at the list and asked:
"What crime did you commit?"
Pinocchio answered honestly.
"I was robbed."
The guard nodded.
"Then you may go free," he said.
Pinocchio stepped outside.
The warm sunlight felt wonderful after the dark prison.
He stretched his arms and took a deep breath.
"Now I must finally return home to my father," he said.
And so he began walking along the road again.
But the road of Pinocchio's life was full of strange events.
And new adventures were waiting for him very soon.

Part 13

After leaving the city, Pinocchio began walking quickly along the road. The sun was bright, and the warm air made him feel hopeful again.

"Now I will go home," he said to himself. "This time I will truly return to my father."

He walked for a long time. The road passed through fields and small hills. Birds sang in the trees, and the wind moved softly through the grass.

After a while Pinocchio reached a quiet forest.

The trees stood tall and close together, and the road became narrow and dark.

As he walked through the forest, he suddenly heard a weak voice.

“Pinocchio... Pinocchio...”

The voice sounded tired and far away.

Pinocchio stopped and looked around.

“Who is calling me?” he asked.

The voice spoke again.

“Pinocchio... help me...”

Pinocchio followed the sound until he reached a tall oak tree.

There he saw a strange sight.

A small puppet hung from one of the branches. The puppet’s body was thin and pale, and his face looked tired and sad.

“Who are you?” asked Pinocchio.

“I am your old friend,” said the puppet weakly. “I am the Talking Cricket.”

Pinocchio felt ashamed.

He remembered how he had once thrown a hammer at the Cricket.

“Are you still alive?” he asked in surprise.

“Yes,” said the Cricket. “But I am very weak.”

Pinocchio stepped closer.

“Why are you hanging there?” he asked.

“Because someone hung me here as a warning,” said the Cricket. “A warning to boys who refuse to listen to good advice.”

Pinocchio lowered his head.

“You tried to warn me before,” he said quietly.

“Yes,” said the Cricket. “But you did not listen.”

The Cricket continued speaking in a slow and serious voice.

“Boys who refuse to listen to wise advice usually come to a bad end.”

Pinocchio felt uncomfortable.

“But I have suffered enough already,” he said. “I was chased by thieves. I was almost burned in a fire. I spent four months in prison.”

The Cricket nodded.

“Yes,” he said. “And yet you still do not learn.”

Pinocchio looked surprised.

“What do you mean?”

The Cricket looked at him carefully.

“You still think only about easy money,” he said. “You still believe foolish promises.”

Pinocchio did not know what to answer.

The Cricket sighed softly.

“Listen to me, Pinocchio,” he said. “Return home. Obey your father. Go to school and learn. Only hard work brings good results.”

Pinocchio thought about these words.

At last he nodded.

“You are right,” he said. “From now on I will be good.”

The Cricket smiled weakly.

“I hope so,” he said.

Just then the wind moved strongly through the trees. The branch where the Cricket hung began to shake.

Pinocchio quickly climbed the tree and untied the rope that held the Cricket.

The small puppet fell gently to the ground.

“Thank you,” said the Cricket.

“You saved me once with your advice,” said Pinocchio. “Now I have helped you.”

The two stood quietly for a moment.

Then the Cricket spoke again.

“Before you continue your journey, I must warn you about something.”

“What is it?” asked Pinocchio.

“Along the road ahead you will meet many people,” said the Cricket. “Some will be honest. Others will try to deceive you.”

Pinocchio nodded seriously.

“I will be careful,” he said.

The Cricket looked pleased.

“Good,” he said.

Pinocchio began walking again along the forest road.

The Cricket watched him go.

After some distance the road left the forest and entered an open field.

In the distance Pinocchio saw a group of boys running and shouting with excitement.

Curious, he walked closer.

The boys were gathered around a wagon painted in bright colors.

A man stood beside the wagon. He wore a wide hat and had a cheerful smile.

“Come, boys!” the man shouted happily.

“Come with me to the Land of Toys!”

The boys cheered loudly.

“In the Land of Toys,” the man continued, “there is no school. There are no books. There are no teachers.”

The boys laughed with joy.

“Every day is a holiday!” the man said.

“You can play all day long!”

Pinocchio listened carefully.

His heart began to beat faster again.

“No school?” he said quietly.

“No school at all!” shouted one of the boys happily.

Another boy spoke.

“We will have games, music, and fun all day!”

Pinocchio began to feel tempted.

He remembered the promise he had made to return home and study.

But the idea of endless play seemed very exciting.

The man beside the wagon smiled kindly at him.

“Would you like to come too?” he asked.

Pinocchio hesitated.

“Is it really true?” he asked.

“Of course,” said the man. “In the Land of Toys every boy is free and happy.”

The boys began climbing onto the wagon.

They laughed and pushed each other with excitement.
Pinocchio watched them.
The wagon looked bright and cheerful.
The boys looked happy.
For a moment he tried to remember the wise words of the Cricket.
But the sounds of laughter were stronger.
At last Pinocchio climbed onto the wagon.
The man smiled and cracked his whip in the air.
The wagon began to move along the road.
The boys sang and shouted with joy.
And so Pinocchio left the road that led home once again.

Part 14

The wagon moved slowly along the road toward the Land of Toys. The boys sat together inside, laughing and shouting with excitement. Some sang songs. Others played small games with stones and sticks.

Pinocchio sat among them, smiling happily.

The man who drove the wagon walked beside the horses. He watched the boys with a friendly face. From time to time he spoke cheerful words to them.

“Soon you will arrive,” he said. “Soon you will reach the happiest place in the world.”

The road became longer and longer.

Evening came, and the sky turned red and gold. The wagon continued moving through the night.

At last, just before morning, the wagon reached a large gate.

Above the gate hung a bright sign.

It read: *LAND OF TOYS*

The gate opened, and the wagon entered the town.

The sight inside amazed Pinocchio.

Everywhere he looked, boys were playing.

Some climbed trees.
Some ran through the streets.
Others rode small carts or flew paper kites in the air.
There were music sounds everywhere.
Pipes played cheerful songs.
Drums beat loudly.
Boys laughed and shouted from every corner of the town.
There were no schools.
There were no books.
There were no teachers.
Only games and noise and endless play.
Pinocchio felt wonderful.
“This place is perfect!” he cried.
The boys jumped down from the wagon and ran into the streets.
Pinocchio ran with them.
From that day on he forgot everything about school.
Every morning he woke early to begin playing.
Every night he fell asleep from tiredness after a long day of games.
Days passed.
Weeks passed.
Months passed.
Pinocchio played constantly with the other boys.
Among them he became close friends with a boy named Candlewick.
Candlewick was tall and thin. His hair stood straight up like the flame of a candle.
He loved games and hated school more than anyone else.
One evening Pinocchio and Candlewick sat together on a small wall.
They watched other boys running and laughing in the street.
Candlewick stretched his arms happily.
“This life is wonderful,” he said.
Pinocchio nodded.

“Yes,” he agreed. “I am very happy here.”

Candlewick laughed loudly.

“No school,” he said. “No lessons. No books.”

Pinocchio smiled.

“I will never return to school again,” he said proudly.

At that moment something strange happened.

Pinocchio suddenly felt a sharp pain in his head.

“Oh!” he cried.

“What is wrong?” asked Candlewick.

Pinocchio touched the sides of his head.

“My head hurts,” he said.

Candlewick laughed.

“Perhaps you played too much today.”

But the pain grew stronger.

Pinocchio touched his head again.

Suddenly he felt something new.

Two small bumps had appeared above his ears.

He rubbed them carefully.

The bumps were growing larger.

“What is this?” he asked nervously.

Candlewick looked closer.

His eyes opened wide with surprise.

“Your ears!” he shouted.

“What about them?” asked Pinocchio.

“They are growing!”

Pinocchio ran to a nearby mirror.

When he saw his reflection, he gasped in fear.

His ears had grown long and pointed.

They looked exactly like the ears of a donkey.

“This cannot be!” he cried.

But the change continued.

His nose became longer.

His face began to change shape.

A strange rough hair began to grow on his skin.

Pinocchio felt terrified.

“Help me!” he cried.

Candlewick began to tremble.

“My ears!” he said.

Pinocchio turned toward him.

Candlewick’s ears were also growing long.

Both boys stared at each other with fear.

“What is happening to us?” asked Pinocchio.

Just then the man who had brought them to the Land of Toys appeared in the street.

He watched the boys calmly.

“Do not worry,” he said.

“This happens to every boy who refuses to study and spends all his time playing.”

Pinocchio felt cold fear inside his heart.

“You tricked us!” he cried.

The man laughed loudly.

“Of course,” he said.

“Boys who hate school are easy to trick.”

The transformation continued.

Pinocchio’s arms changed.

His legs changed.

His voice became rough and strange.

Soon he could no longer speak clearly.

Instead he made a loud sound.

“Hee-haw! Hee-haw!”

Pinocchio had become a donkey.

Candlewick had also changed completely.

The man tied ropes around their necks.
“Now you will work,” he said.
“Donkeys are very useful animals.”
Pinocchio felt deep sadness.
Tears ran from his eyes.
But now he could only cry like a donkey.
“Hee-haw... hee-haw...”
And so the happy games of the Land of Toys ended in misery.

Part 15

The next morning the man who had tricked the boys returned to the stable where the new donkeys were kept. The stable smelled of hay and dust, and the animals stood quietly in their places.

Pinocchio stood among them.

His body was now the body of a donkey. Long ears stood on his head. His skin was covered with rough hair. His hands and feet had become hard hooves.

But inside he was still the same puppet.

His mind still remembered everything.

He remembered Geppetto.

He remembered the blue-haired girl.

He remembered the mistakes he had made again and again.

Tears ran from his large donkey eyes.

“Hee-haw... hee-haw...” he cried sadly.

The man entered the stable with a rope in his hand.

“Come out!” he shouted.

One by one the new donkeys were taken outside.

The man looked at them carefully.

Some were strong.

Some were weak.

When he reached Pinocchio, he smiled.

“This one is strong,” he said. “He will bring good money.”
Pinocchio felt the rope tied around his neck.
The man led him away from the stable.
Soon they reached a large town.
In the center of the town stood a great circus tent.
Colorful flags moved in the wind above the entrance.
The man sold Pinocchio to the circus master.
The circus master was a large man with a loud voice and a thick beard.
He looked at Pinocchio carefully.
“This donkey looks strong,” he said. “He will be useful for my show.”
Pinocchio was taken inside the circus.
There he saw many other animals.
Horses.
Dogs.
Monkeys.
And even a few donkeys.
The animals were trained to perform tricks for the audience.
Soon Pinocchio began his training.
The circus master held a long whip.
“Jump!” he shouted.
Pinocchio did not understand at first.
The whip cracked loudly in the air.
“Jump!” the master shouted again.
Pinocchio jumped.
Day after day he practiced.
He learned to run in circles.
He learned to stand on two legs.
He learned to jump through a large hoop.
The hoop was covered with bright paper flowers.
When the circus opened to the public, many people came to watch.
The tent filled with laughter and excitement.

The band began to play music.
The show started.
When it was Pinocchio's turn, he ran into the center of the ring.
The audience clapped loudly.
Pinocchio ran in circles.
He jumped over small fences.
He stood on his back legs.
Finally he ran toward the hoop and jumped through it perfectly.
The audience cheered.
"What a clever donkey!" they shouted.
But inside Pinocchio felt deep sadness.
"I deserve this," he thought. "If I had listened to good advice, this would never have happened."
The show continued for many weeks.
One evening something terrible happened.
During the performance Pinocchio was running across the ring when he slipped.
His leg twisted badly.
He fell to the ground.
The pain was sharp and terrible.
The audience gasped.
The circus master ran forward.
He looked at Pinocchio's leg and shook his head.
"This donkey is useless now," he said coldly.
A donkey that cannot work has no value.
The next day the circus master sold Pinocchio to a man who made drums.
The drum maker looked at Pinocchio's skin carefully.
"This skin will make a fine drum," he said.
Pinocchio heard these words and felt horror.
"Hee-haw! Hee-haw!" he cried desperately.
But no one understood his cries.
The drum maker tied a heavy stone around Pinocchio's neck.

Then he took him to the edge of the sea.
The waves moved slowly against the shore.
The wind carried the smell of salt water.
The man pushed Pinocchio into the sea.
“Stay there until you drown,” he said. “Then I will take your skin.”
The water closed around Pinocchio.
The heavy stone pulled him downward.
He sank deeper and deeper into the sea.
Fish began swimming around him.
Small fish.
Large fish.
Hundreds of them.
They began biting at his skin.
Little by little the donkey skin disappeared.
The fish ate all the rough hair.
They ate all the donkey body.
Soon nothing remained except the wooden puppet inside.
The rope broke.
The stone fell away.
Pinocchio floated upward through the water.
At last his head rose above the surface of the sea.
Once again he was a wooden puppet.
He looked at his arms and legs in surprise.
“I am Pinocchio again!” he cried with joy.
But before he could celebrate, a large shadow moved beneath the water.
Something huge was swimming toward him.
A gigantic fish opened its mouth wide.
In one moment the creature swallowed Pinocchio whole.
The world became dark.
And Pinocchio found himself inside the belly of an enormous sea monster.

Part 16

Everything around Pinocchio was dark.

The enormous sea monster had swallowed him in a single moment. One second he had been floating in the open sea, and the next second he found himself sliding down into a deep and silent darkness.

For a moment he felt very afraid.

The air inside the creature was warm and heavy. Water dripped slowly from the walls. The sound of the sea outside moved like distant thunder.

Pinocchio stood still and tried to understand where he was.

“Where am I?” he asked quietly.

His voice echoed softly in the darkness.

He stretched out his hands and began walking carefully. The ground beneath his feet felt soft and uneven.

After a few steps he saw a faint light far away.

The light moved gently like the flame of a small lamp.

Pinocchio felt hope.

“Perhaps someone is there,” he said.

He walked slowly toward the light.

As he moved closer, the light became clearer. It came from a small lamp standing on a wooden box.

Beside the lamp sat an old man.

The man looked thin and tired. His beard was long and white. His clothes were old and worn.

The old man looked up when he heard the sound of footsteps.

“Who is there?” he asked.

Pinocchio looked carefully at the man.

His heart began to beat quickly.

The face seemed familiar.

Suddenly he cried out loudly.

“Father!”

The old man stood up in surprise.

“Pinocchio?” he said.

“Yes, father! It is me!”

Geppetto stared at him with wide eyes.

For a moment he could not speak.

Then he opened his arms.

Pinocchio ran forward and jumped into them.

The two embraced each other with great joy.

Tears filled their eyes.

“My dear son!” cried Geppetto.

“My dear father!” cried Pinocchio.

For a long moment they held each other tightly.

At last Pinocchio asked, “How did you come here?”

Geppetto sighed.

“After you ran away,” he explained, “I could not rest. I searched for you everywhere. I looked in towns, villages, and forests. At last I heard that you had been seen near the sea.”

Geppetto continued his story.

“So I built a small boat and sailed across the water to find you. But a terrible storm came. A huge sea monster appeared and swallowed my boat.”

Pinocchio looked around the dark place.

“So we are inside the monster now?”

Geppetto nodded.

“Yes. I have lived here for many months.”

“But how did you survive?” asked Pinocchio.

Geppetto pointed toward the boxes near the lamp.

“The monster sometimes swallows ships,” he said. “Inside those ships there were food and supplies. That is how I stayed alive.”

Pinocchio felt both happy and sad.

He was happy to find his father again.

But he was sad that they were trapped inside the monster.

“We must escape,” he said.

Geppetto shook his head.

“Escape?” he replied. “It is impossible. The monster is too strong.”

Pinocchio thought carefully.

Suddenly an idea came to him.

“Father,” he said, “when the monster sleeps, it opens its mouth.”

Geppetto listened closely.

“If we wait until that moment,” Pinocchio continued, “we can swim out through its mouth.”

Geppetto looked uncertain.

“The sea is very dangerous,” he said.

Pinocchio stood proudly.

“Do not worry,” he said. “I am a strong swimmer. I will carry you on my back.”

Geppetto looked at his son with pride.

“Very well,” he said at last. “We will try.”

They waited patiently.

Time passed slowly.

At last the sea monster began to sleep.

A deep rumbling sound came from its throat.

The enormous mouth slowly opened.

A faint light from the sea entered the darkness.

“Now!” whispered Pinocchio.

He helped Geppetto climb onto his back.

Then he ran quickly toward the opening.

In one great leap he jumped into the sea.

The cold water closed around them.

Pinocchio began swimming with all his strength.

The waves moved strongly around them.

But he continued swimming.

“Hold on tightly, father!” he shouted.

Geppetto held his shoulders.

For a long time they struggled through the water.
At last Pinocchio saw land in the distance.
With his last strength he swam toward the shore.
Finally his feet touched the sand.
He carried Geppetto onto the beach.
Both of them lay on the ground, breathing heavily.
The sea monster disappeared back into the deep water.
After resting for a while, Geppetto looked at his son.
“Pinocchio,” he said softly, “you saved my life.”
Pinocchio smiled.
“You once gave your coat for me,” he answered.
“Now it was my turn to help you.”
The two walked slowly along the shore together.
The sky above them was bright and clear.
For the first time in a long while, Pinocchio felt that his life might truly change.
And this time he truly wished to become a good son.

Part 17

After resting on the beach for a long time, Pinocchio helped Geppetto stand up. The old man still felt weak after many months inside the sea monster. His legs trembled, and he leaned heavily on Pinocchio’s arm.

The sea stretched quietly behind them. The waves moved gently against the shore, and the wind carried the smell of salt and sea plants.

“We must find a place to rest,” said Pinocchio.

Geppetto nodded.

“Yes, my son. I am very tired.”

They began walking slowly along the sandy shore. Pinocchio supported his father carefully so that he would not fall.

After some time they reached a small path that led away from the sea and into the countryside.

The road passed through quiet fields. The sun shone warmly, and birds flew across the sky.

At last they saw a small house near the road.

Smoke rose gently from the chimney.

“Perhaps someone lives there,” said Pinocchio.

They walked toward the house and knocked on the door.

A kind woman opened it. She looked at the two travelers with surprise.

“What do you need?” she asked.

Pinocchio spoke politely.

“My father is very tired,” he said. “May we rest here for a little while?”

The woman looked at Geppetto’s pale face and nodded kindly.

“Come inside,” she said.

She gave them some bread and warm milk.

Geppetto sat quietly and ate slowly.

After the meal the woman showed them a small room where Geppetto could rest.

Pinocchio sat beside the bed and watched his father sleep.

As he looked at the old man’s thin face, he felt deep sadness.

“My poor father,” he thought. “All his suffering happened because of me.”

Tears filled his eyes.

At that moment Pinocchio made a strong decision.

“From today on,” he said quietly to himself, “I will change my life.”

The next morning Pinocchio woke early.

Geppetto still slept peacefully.

Pinocchio left the house quietly and went into the town nearby.

There he found work.

A farmer needed someone to carry water from the well.

Pinocchio worked all day.

He carried heavy buckets again and again.

His arms became tired, but he did not stop.

At the end of the day the farmer gave him a small coin.

Pinocchio held the coin carefully.

“This is the first money I have ever earned,” he said proudly.

He returned to the house and gave the coin to Geppetto.

“Father,” he said, “this is for you.”

Geppetto looked at the coin with emotion.

“My son,” he said softly, “you are working very hard.”

Pinocchio smiled.

“I want to take care of you,” he said.

Days passed.

Pinocchio continued working every day.

He woke early in the morning and returned home only in the evening.

Little by little he saved money.

One day he bought Geppetto a warm coat.

When the old man tried it on, tears filled his eyes.

“You remembered,” he said.

“Of course,” answered Pinocchio. “I promised long ago.”

Pinocchio also began studying again.

In the evenings he read books and practiced writing.

The blue-haired girl sometimes visited them quietly.

She watched Pinocchio’s new life with gentle pride.

One night, after a long day of work and study, Pinocchio fell asleep at the table.

The lamp still burned beside him.

As he slept, something wonderful happened.

A soft light filled the room.

The blue-haired girl entered silently.

She looked at the sleeping puppet with kindness.

“This poor boy has truly changed,” she said softly.

She touched Pinocchio’s head gently.

“For his good heart and his hard work,” she continued, “he deserves a great reward.”

The light in the room grew brighter.

The wooden puppet slowly changed.
His arms softened.
His hands became real hands.
His wooden face became the face of a real boy.
When morning came, Pinocchio woke up.
At first he felt strange.
His body felt warm and soft.
He looked at his hands in surprise.
They were no longer made of wood.
They were real human hands.
“What is this?” he cried.
He ran to the mirror.
A real boy looked back at him.
Pinocchio laughed with joy.
He ran to Geppetto.
“Father!” he shouted.
Geppetto looked up.
For a moment he did not understand.
Then he saw the truth.
“Pinocchio!” he cried.
The two embraced happily.
The long story of the wooden puppet had come to its end.
Through mistakes, suffering, and learning, Pinocchio had finally become what
he always wished to be.
A real boy.