

LECTURE TWELVE

12

Pinocchio

Chapter 3

As soon as he gets home, Geppetto fashions the Marionette and calls it Pinocchio. The first pranks of the Marionette.

Little as Geppetto's house was, it was neat and comfortable. It was a small room on the ground floor, with a tiny window under the stairway. The furniture could not have been much simpler: a very old chair, a rickety old bed, and a tumble-down table. A fireplace full of burning logs was painted on the wall opposite the door. Over the fire, there was painted a pot full of something which kept boiling happily away and sending up clouds of what looked like real steam.

As soon as he reached home, Geppetto took his tools and began to cut and shape the wood into a Marionette.

"What shall I call him?" he said to himself. "I think I'll call him *Pinocchio*. This name will make his fortune. I knew a whole family of Pinocchi once--Pinocchio the father, Pinocchia the mother, and Pinocchi the children-- and they were all lucky. The richest of them begged for his living."

After choosing the name for his Marionette, Geppetto set seriously to work to make the hair, the forehead, the eyes. Fancy his surprise when he noticed that these eyes moved and then stared fixedly at him. Geppetto, seeing this, felt insulted and said in a grieved tone:

"Ugly wooden eyes, why do you stare so?"

There was no answer.

After the eyes, Geppetto made the nose, which began to stretch as soon as finished. It stretched and stretched and stretched till it became so long, it seemed endless.

Poor Geppetto kept cutting it and cutting it, but the more he cut, the longer grew that impertinent nose. In despair he let it alone.

Next he made the mouth.

No sooner was it finished than it began to laugh and poke fun at him.

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

"Stop laughing, I say!" he roared in a voice of thunder.

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

Not wishing to start an argument, Geppetto made believe he saw nothing and went on with his work. After the mouth, he made the chin, then the neck, the shoulders, the stomach, the arms, and the hands.

As he was about to put the last touches on the finger tips, Geppetto felt his wig being pulled off. He glanced up and what did he see? His yellow wig was in the Marionette's hand. "Pinocchio, give me my wig!"

But instead of giving it back, Pinocchio put it on his own head, which was half swallowed up in it.

At that unexpected trick, Geppetto became very sad and downcast, more so than he had ever been before.

"Pinocchio, you wicked boy!" he cried out. "You are not yet finished, and you start out by being impudent to your poor old father. Very bad, my son, very bad!"

And he wiped away a tear.

The legs and feet still had to be made. As soon as they were done, Geppetto felt a sharp kick on the tip of his nose.

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

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

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

When his legs were limbered up, Pinocchio started walking by himself and ran all around the room. He came to the open door, and with one leap he was out into the street. Away he flew!

Poor Geppetto ran after him but was unable to catch him, for Pinocchio ran in leaps and bounds, his two wooden feet, as they beat on the stones of the street, making as much noise as twenty peasants in wooden shoes.

"Catch him! Catch him!" Geppetto kept shouting. But the people in the street, seeing a wooden Marionette running like the wind, stood still to stare and to laugh until they cried.

At last, by sheer luck, a Carabineer[2] happened along, who, hearing all that noise, thought that it might be a runaway colt, and stood bravely in the middle of the street, with legs wide apart, firmly resolved to stop it and prevent any trouble.

[2] A military policeman

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

The Carabineer grabbed him by the nose (it was an extremely long one and seemed made on purpose for that very thing) and returned him to Mastro Geppetto.

The little old man wanted to pull Pinocchio's ears. Think how he felt when, upon searching for them, he discovered that he had forgotten to make them!

All he could do was to seize Pinocchio by the back of the neck and take him home. As he was doing so, he shook him two or three times and said to him angrily:

"We're going home now. When we get home, then we'll settle this matter!"

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

Some said one thing, some another.

"Poor Marionette," called out a man. "I am not surprised he doesn't want to go home. Geppetto, no doubt, will beat him unmercifully, he is so mean and cruel!"

"Geppetto looks like a good man," added another, "but with boys he's a real tyrant. If we leave that poor Marionette in his hands he may tear him to pieces!"

They said so much that, finally, the Carabineer ended matters by setting Pinocchio at liberty and dragging Geppetto to prison. The poor old fellow did not know how to defend himself, but wept and wailed like a child and said between his sobs:

"Ungrateful boy! To think I tried so hard to make you a well-behaved Marionette! I deserve it, however! I should have given the matter more thought."

What happened after this is an almost unbelievable story, but you may read it, dear children, in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 4

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

Very little time did it take to get poor old Geppetto to prison. In the meantime that rascal, Pinocchio, free now from the clutches of the Carabineer, was running wildly across fields and meadows, taking one short cut after another toward home. In his wild flight, he leaped over brambles and bushes, and across brooks and ponds, as if he were a goat or a hare chased by hounds.

On reaching home, he found the house door half open. He slipped into the room, locked the door, and threw himself on the floor, happy at his escape.

But his happiness lasted only a short time, for just then he heard someone saying:

"Cri-cri-cri!"

"Who is calling me?" asked Pinocchio, greatly frightened.

"I am!"

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

"Tell me, Cricket, who are you?"

"I am the Talking Cricket and I have been living in this room for more than one hundred years."

"Today, however, this room is mine," said the Marionette, "and if you wish to do me a favor, get out now, and don't turn around even once."

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

"Tell it, then, and hurry."

"Woe to boys who refuse to obey their parents and run away from home! They will never be happy in this world, and when they are older they will be very sorry for it."

"Sing on, Cricket mine, as you please. What I know is, that tomorrow, at dawn, I leave this place forever. If I stay here the same thing will happen to me which happens to all other boys and girls. They are sent to school, and whether they want to or not, they must study. As for me, let me tell you, I hate to study! It's much more fun, I think, to chase after butterflies, climb trees, and steal birds' nests."

"Poor little silly! Don't you know that if you go on like that, you will grow into a perfect donkey and that you'll be the laughingstock of everyone?"

"Keep still, you ugly Cricket!" cried Pinocchio.

But the Cricket, who was a wise old philosopher, instead of being offended at Pinocchio's impudence, continued in the same tone:

"If you do not like going to school, why don't you at least learn a trade, so that you can earn an honest living?"

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

"And what can that be?"

"That of eating, drinking, sleeping, playing, and wandering around from morning till night."

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

"Careful, ugly Cricket! If you make me angry, you'll be sorry!"

"Poor Pinocchio, I am sorry for you."

"Why?"

"Because you are a Marionette and, what is much worse, you have a wooden head."

At these last words, Pinocchio jumped up in a fury, took a hammer from the bench, and threw it with all his strength at the Talking Cricket.

Perhaps he did not think he would strike it. But, sad to relate, my dear children, he did hit the Cricket, straight on its head.

With a last weak "cri-cri-cri" the poor Cricket fell from the wall, dead!

Chapter 5

Pinocchio is hungry and looks for an egg to cook himself an omelet; but, to his surprise, the omelet flies out of the window.

If the Cricket's death scared Pinocchio at all, it was only for a very few moments. For, as night came on, a queer, empty feeling at the pit of his stomach reminded the Marionette that he had eaten nothing as yet.

A boy's appetite grows very fast, and in a few moments the queer, empty feeling had become hunger, and the hunger grew bigger and bigger, until soon he was as ravenous as a bear.

Poor Pinocchio ran to the fireplace where the pot was boiling and stretched out his hand to take the cover off, but to his amazement the pot was only painted! Think how he felt! His long nose became at least two inches longer.

He ran about the room, dug in all the boxes and drawers, and even looked under the bed in search of a piece of bread, hard though it might be, or a cookie, or perhaps a bit of fish. A bone left by a dog would have tasted good to him! But he found nothing.

And meanwhile his hunger grew and grew. The only relief poor Pinocchio had was to yawn; and he certainly did yawn, such a big yawn that his mouth stretched out to the tips of his ears. Soon he became dizzy and faint. He wept and wailed to himself: "The Talking Cricket was right. It was wrong of me to disobey Father and to run away from home. If he were here now, I wouldn't be so hungry! Oh, how horrible it is to be hungry!"

Suddenly, he saw, among the sweepings in a corner, something round and white that looked very much like a hen's egg. In a jiffy he pounced upon it. It was an egg.

The Marionette's joy knew no bounds. It is impossible to describe it, you must picture it to yourself. Certain that he was dreaming, he turned the egg over and over in his hands, fondled it, kissed it, and talked to it:

"And now, how shall I cook you? Shall I make an omelet? No, it is better to fry you in a pan! Or shall I drink you? No, the best way is to fry you in the pan. You will taste better."

No sooner said than done. He placed a little pan over a foot warmer full of hot coals. In the pan, instead of oil or butter, he poured a little water. As soon as the water started to boil--tac!--he broke the eggshell. But in place of the white and the yolk of the egg, a little yellow Chick, fluffy and gay and smiling, escaped from it. Bowing politely to Pinocchio, he said to him:

"Many, many thanks, indeed, Mr. Pinocchio, for having saved me the trouble of breaking my shell! Good-by and good luck to you and remember me to the family!"

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

The poor Marionette stood as if turned to stone, with wide eyes, open mouth, and the empty halves of the egg- shell in his hands. When he came to himself, he began to cry and shriek at the top of his lungs, stamping his feet on the ground and wailing all the while:

"The Talking Cricket was right! If I had not run away from home and if Father were here now, I should not be dying of hunger. Oh, how horrible it is to be hungry!"

And as his stomach kept grumbling more than ever and he had nothing to quiet it with, he thought of going out for a walk to the near-by village, in the hope of finding some charitable person who might give him a bit of bread.

Chapter 8

Geppetto makes Pinocchio a new pair of feet, and sells his coat to buy him an A-B-C book.

The Marionette, as soon as his hunger was appeased, started to grumble and cry that he wanted a new pair of feet.

But Mastro Geppetto, in order to punish him for his mischief, let him alone the whole morning. After dinner he said to him:

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

"I promise you," answered the Marionette, sobbing, "that from now on I'll be good--"

"Boys always promise that when they want something," said Geppetto.

"I promise to go to school every day, to study, and to succeed--"

"Boys always sing that song when they want their own will."

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

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

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

"Close your eyes and sleep!" Geppetto then said to the Marionette.

Pinocchio closed his eyes and pretended to be asleep, while Geppetto stuck on the two feet with a bit of glue melted in an eggshell, doing his work so well that the joint could hardly be seen.

As soon as the Marionette felt his new feet, he gave one leap from the table and started to skip and jump around, as if he had lost his head from very joy.

"To show you how grateful I am to you, Father, I'll go to school now. But to go to school I need a suit of clothes."

Geppetto did not have a penny in his pocket, so he made his son a little suit of flowered paper, a pair of shoes from the bark of a tree, and a tiny cap from a bit of dough.

Pinocchio ran to look at himself in a bowl of water, and he felt so happy that he said proudly:

"Now I look like a gentleman."

"Truly," answered Geppetto. "But remember that fine clothes do not make the man unless they be neat and clean."

"Very true," answered Pinocchio, "but, in order to go to school, I still need something very important."

"What is it?"

"An A-B-C book."

"To be sure! But how shall we get it?"

"That's easy. We'll go to a bookstore and buy it."

"And the money?"

"I have none."

"Neither have I," said the old man sadly.

Pinocchio, although a happy boy always, became sad and downcast at these words. When poverty shows itself, even mischievous boys understand what it means.

"What does it matter, after all?" cried Geppetto all at once, as he jumped up from his chair. Putting on his old coat, full of darns and patches, he ran out of the house without another word.

After a while he returned. In his hands he had the A-B-C book for his son, but the old coat was gone. The poor fellow was in his shirt sleeves and the day was cold.

"Where's your coat, Father?"

"I have sold it."

"Why did you sell your coat?"

"It was too warm."

Pinocchio understood the answer in a twinkling, and, unable to restrain his tears, he jumped on his father's neck and kissed him over and over.

Chapter 9

Pinocchio sells his A-B-C book to pay his way into the Marionette Theater.

See Pinocchio hurrying off to school with his new A-B-C book under his arm! As he walked along, his brain was busy planning hundreds of wonderful things, building hundreds of castles in the air. Talking to himself, he said:

"In school today, I'll learn to read, tomorrow to write, and the day after tomorrow I'll do arithmetic. Then, clever as I am, I can earn a lot of money. With the very first pennies I make, I'll buy Father a new cloth coat. Cloth, did I say? No, it shall be of gold and silver with diamond buttons. That poor man certainly deserves it; for, after all, isn't he in his shirt sleeves because he was good enough to buy a book for me? On this cold day, too! Fathers are indeed good to their children!"

As he talked to himself, he thought he heard sounds of pipes and drums coming from a distance: pi-pi-pi, pi-pi-pi. . .zum, zum, zum, zum.

He stopped to listen. Those sounds came from a little street that led to a small village along the shore.

"What can that noise be? What a nuisance that I have to go to school! Otherwise. . ."

There he stopped, very much puzzled. He felt he had to make up his mind for either one thing or another. Should he go to school, or should he follow the pipes?

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

No sooner said than done. He started down the street, going like the wind. On he ran, and louder grew the sounds of pipe and drum: pi-pi-pi, pi-pi-pi, pi-pi-pi . . .zum, zum, zum, zum.

Suddenly, he found himself in a large square, full of people standing in front of a little wooden building painted in brilliant colors.

"What is that house?" Pinocchio asked a little boy near him.

"Read the sign and you'll know."

"I'd like to read, but somehow I can't today."

"Oh, really? Then I'll read it to you. Know, then, that written in letters of fire I see the words:

GREAT MARIONETTE THEATER.

"When did the show start?"

"It is starting now."

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

"Four pennies."

Pinocchio, who was wild with curiosity to know what was going on inside, lost all his pride and said to the boy shamelessly:

"Will you give me four pennies until tomorrow?"

"I'd give them to you gladly," answered the other, poking fun at him, "but just now I can't give them to you."

"For the price of four pennies, I'll sell you my coat."

"If it rains, what shall I do with a coat of flowered paper? I could not take it off again."

"Do you want to buy my shoes?"

"They are only good enough to light a fire with."

"What about my hat?"

"Fine bargain, indeed! A cap of dough! The mice might come and eat it from my head!"

Pinocchio was almost in tears. He was just about to make one last offer, but he lacked the courage to do so. He hesitated, he wondered, he could not make up his mind. At last he said:

"Will you give me four pennies for the book?"

"I am a boy and I buy nothing from boys," said the little fellow with far more common sense than the Marionette.

"I'll give you four pennies for your A-B-C book," said a ragpicker who stood by.

Then and there, the book changed hands. And to think that poor old Geppetto sat at home in his shirt sleeves, shivering with cold, having sold his coat to buy that little book for his son!

