

PROLOGUE. A WOOD.

A MAN enters, carrying the lifeless body of a child. With great care, he places the child on the ground. He begins to dig a grave for the child. It is both extremely physically tasking and heartbreaking for the man – yet he betrays no anguish of any kind. The BLUE FAIRY enters and watches the MAN (GEPETTO) dig silently for a spell. Eventually, she begins to sing.

BLUE FAIRY
THERE IS A TREE DEEP IN THE WOOD
THAT CRIES OUT FOR HIS FATHER
HIS WINDY WHISPERS DO NO GOOD
THE NOISY LEAVES DO NOT BOTHER

AS ISAAC WAS OF ABRAHAM
AND APOLLO WAS OF ZEUS
THIS TREE WAS THE SON OF A MAN
A MAN WHO KNEW LIFE'S ABUSE

FOR THIS SITE WAS MORE THAN A GRAVE
'T WAS THE RESTING PLACE OF JOY
FOR SOMEONE WHO COULDN'T BEHAVE
AN OLD MAN'S HEART, HIS SWEET BOY

The MAN finishes his grave and gently places the boy inside. He begins to pray.

THERE IS MAGIC YET IN THIS TREE
THOUGH ITS BOWS HARBOR ANGUISH
ALL THAT IT NEEDS IS CHILDISH GLEE
ALL IT NEEDS IS A FATHER'S WISH

SCENE 1. THE LUMBERJACKS

BLUE FAIRY

Years go by.
Tears would drop.
Trees grow high.
Men would chop.

A lumberjack (GIUSEPPE) enters with an axe.

GIUSEPPE

Antonio! Hurry up! We are losing daylight, my puny friend!

Another lumberjack (ANTONIO) enters. He is smaller than GIUSEPPE. He is out of breath.

ANTONIO

I'm here! I'm here! So sorry, Giuseppe.

GIUSEPPE

Antonio, being a lumberjack is hard work. It's not for weaklings who like to laze around and enjoy the scenery.

ANTONIO

(Still out of breath)

Oh no, signor. I wasn't lazing around. I've been moving as fast as I can. That last tree took a lot out of me.

GIUSEPPE

You mean the *one* tree you managed to fell today?

ANTONIO

I'm sorry, Giuseppe. I'm trying to keep up with you, honest.

GIUSEPPE

Antonio, I think it may be time for you to re-consider your future as a lumberjack.

ANTONIO

Oh no, Giuseppe –

GIUSEPPE

Antonio, I promised your uncle I would allow you to apprentice under me, but I'm afraid you're going to have to prove that you're cut out for this.

ANTONIO
How can I do that?

GIUSEPPE
A contest.

ANTONIO
A contest?

GIUSEPPE
A contest.

ANTONIO
What kind of contest? Who is competing?

GIUSEPPE
You will compete against me.

ANTONIO gulps.

I see two trees here. I see two lumberjacks, as well. I'll take this mighty oak (*indicating a tree*). Antonio, you will cut down this pine (*indicating another tree*). If you can cut your pine down faster than I can handle this oak, you will have proven yourself to be a true lumberjack.

ANTONIO
And if I fail?

GIUSEPPE
You must tell your uncle that your lumberjacking days are over.

ANTONIO
(Stiffening himself up)
Very well, Signor Giuseppe. I will do my very best.

GIUSEPPE
You better. Are you ready?

ANTONIO
(Deep breath)
Yes.

GIUSEPPE
Then, on my count, let's begin.

(A silence as they prepare their axes)

Three...two...one. GO!

The two lumberjacks work furiously at chopping down their trees. Although ANTONIO is smaller than GIUSEPPE, he manages to keep up. That is, until a small voice is heard.

VOICE (PINOCCHIO)

Ouch!

ANTONIO stops chopping.

ANTONIO

What was that?

GIUSEPPE

What was what?

ANTONIO

You didn't hear that voice?

GIUSEPPE

You had better continue with your chopping, Antonio, if you want to be a real lumberjack.

The chopping continues – even more furiously than before, until...

VOICE

Take it easy with that axe!

ANTONIO stops chopping again.

ANTONIO

OK, you had to hear it that time.

GIUSEPPE

I only hear my axe biting into this wood.

ANTONIO

You didn't hear a voice telling us to "take it easy with that axe?"

GIUSEPPE

Take it easy, Antonio? All you do is take it easy! This is your last chance. Chop...or go home.

The chopping begins anew. It continues for a long time. With each of ANTONIO's chops, we hear various sounds like "Ah! Ooh! Yikes, etc." from the VOICE. This continues until, finally...

VOICE

OWWWWWW!!!

This time, both LUMBERJACKS stop chopping.

GIUSEPPE

What's the matter with you, Antonio?!

ANTONIO

You heard the voice, too!

GIUSEPPE

Why are you crying out in pain?

ANTONIO

That wasn't me! That was the voice!

GIUSEPPE

That's enough of your tall tales, Antonio.

ANTONIO

That was the voice I've been hearing, honest!

GIUSEPPE

Ah, so you're trying to trick me! Trying to get out of this contest?!

ANTONIO

No, signor, I –

GIUSEPPE

(approaching ANTONIO's tree)

Step aside, Antonio. If you can't handle this measly pine, I'll handle it for you.

ANTONIO

But Giuseppe –

GIUSEPPE

Silence, weakling!

GIUSEPPE prepares his axe. He spits on his hands, does a few warm-up swings, etc. Eventually, he steps to ANTONIO's tree. GIUSEPPE lurches back with an enormous back swing and just as he's about to strike a mighty blow against the tree...

VOICE

Don't you dare swing that axe, you bully!

GIUSEPPE

(To ANTONIO)

How dare you speak to me with such impudence!!

ANTONIO

I assure you, Giuseppe, it was not me!

GIUSEPPE

What cowardice! You prefer to hide behind silly ghost stories?!

Suddenly, ANTONIO's tree branches grab GIUSEPPE.

VOICE

Yes, it was the tree, you fool! I don't want you chopping me up and turning me into furniture! Now, put that axe down before I squirt you with some sap!

A moment as GIUSEPPE takes this all in, then...

GIUSEPPE

Aaaah!! A ghost!! The forest is haunted!! Help!!!!

GIUSEPPE runs off screaming.

VOICE

That's right, ya big meanie!! It's all fun and games until the trees fight back!

ANTONIO

Who...what are you?

VOICE

Quiet, you, I'm relishing my victory.

(In the direction of GIUSEPPE)

Not so big and tough now, are ya, smelly lumberjack!!

ANTONIO

Are you *(he can't believe he's about to ask this)* a talking tree?

A tree?! I'm a little boy!

VOICE

I'm sorry, but you look like a tree to me.

ANTONIO

That's because I'm trapped.

VOICE

Trapped?

ANTONIO

Yes, trapped! I'm trapped in the wood of this tree.

VOICE

How...how do we get you out?

ANTONIO

Well, you could start by chopping me down.

VOICE

But...I thought that hurt you.

ANTONIO

That's because you were chopping at my belly. You need to chop where I tell you. Not too high...and not too low.

VOICE

OK.

ANTONIO

So, pick up your axe.

VOICE

OK. *(He does so.)*

ANTONIO

And aim for the base of my trunk.

VOICE

You mean like this?

ANTONIO

ANTONIO chops at the tree.

VOICE

Heaven's sakes, no! Those are my toes! Aim lower.

ANTONIO

How about this?

ANTONIO chops at the tree again, but lower this time.

VOICE

Perfect! I didn't feel a thing!

ANTONIO begins to chop at the tree with full confidence now. It becomes a joyous dance. Eventually, the tree falls into ANTONIO's arms.

VOICE

You are amazing with that axe of yours! You must be the strongest lumberjack alive!

SCENE 2. A HOMECOMING

BLUE FAIRY

Old man works
Puppets are made
A log full of quirks
Patience is frayed

The interior of a woodshop. An old man, GEPETTO, enters, carrying a cord of wood, which is quite heavy for him. Two marionettes (SAILOR and MAID) are mounted on the wall. They speak to GEPETTO, but he cannot hear them.

SAILOR

Old man! You're back!

MAID

Of course he's back! Old man loves us!

GEPETTO

Good morning, my babies. Ugh, if only one of you could come down here and help me with all of this wood.

SAILOR

Ay ay, cap'n! Be right down.

The SAILOR struggles but can't hop down off the wall.

MAID

As I keep telling you, he can't hear us. We can only hear him.

GEPETTO places the cord of wood in a basket near the fire.

GEPETTO

Now, let's see...which of you is for carving and which is for burning.

GEPETTO sorts through the wood.

MAID

Oh, how I hate this part. Can't they all be for carving? There's a beautiful soul in every tree.

GEPETTO

(Indicating various logs)

You'll do. You'll burn. I'll carve this one. This one will keep me warm...

SAILOR

Maybe he'll make me a ship for me!

MAID

Maybe he'll make me a rolling pin!

GEPETTO

Ah...this one. This is a peculiar one. You look awful strange.

(he bangs the log against something)

Seems sturdy. I wonder if it's made of cherry?

VOICE

No, mother, I'm too tired for school. I need more sleep, please.

MAID

There's something very special about that log.

GEPETTO

Bah...sounds hollow. I should toss it on the fire.

MAID

NO!!

SAILOR

What is it?! Do you see a great kraken?! Give me my harpoon!

MAID

Don't you see? The old man is going to put that log on the fire.

SAILOR

And why shouldn't he? We need extra propulsion in the hull.

MAID

That log is one of our own!!

SAILOR

One of our own?!

MAID

Didn't you hear the boy's voice?

GEPETTO

All of this pile is for burning, starting with this one.

GEPETTO is about to toss the magic log on the fire.

VOICE

Mother, it's quite warm in here. Could you open a window?

MAID

You have to do something!

SAILOR

Me? Why not you?!

MAID

You're the one with the harpoon!

GEPETTO brings the magic log closer to the fire.

VOICE

Mother, please don't put me in the stew!

The MAID takes the harpoon from the SAILOR and throws it at the log, stopping it from being tossed in the fire.

VOICE

Ouch!! That hurts!

GEPETTO

What was that sound?

The MAID takes the SAILOR's anchor and tosses it at GEPETTO's head.

Ouch!! What just hit me?

VOICE

Please take your fork out of me!!

GEPETTO

There's that sound again. It sounds like a voice...

MAID

He hears him!

He hears him?
SAILOR

You hear me?
VOICE

I hear you!
GEPETTO

Then please kindly remove your fork from me.
VOICE

Is this...a talking log?
GEPETTO

A talking log?! Why I'm a boy! A boy with a fork stuck in his bottom!
VOICE

I must be dreaming.
GEPETTO

Well, I was dreaming only moments ago myself. And then I awoke to find you roasting my poor toes!
VOICE

(looks around to see if anyone else is there)
GEPETTO

Is this some kind of prank? Giuseppe, is that you? That lumberjack just loves to play tricks on me.

Giuseppe? Is he some kind of pirate?! Let me at him!
SAILOR

No, my name isn't Giuseppe!
VOICE

I'm talking to a log. They'll put me away forever.
GEPETTO

I've told you, I'm no log. I'm a boy!
VOICE

GEPETTO

But you're made of wood.

MAID

As am I!

SAILOR

And I!

VOICE

So I'm made of wood. I'm still a boy!

GEPETTO

But, I don't see a little boy in front of me – only a log.

VOICE

That's because you still have to carve me, silly.

GEPETTO

Carve you?!

VOICE

Of course! Just like the other little ones you have hanging on your wall.

GEPETTO

Other little ones?

VOICE

Of course, I mean the brave sailor and lovely maid that have been talking the whole time.

MAID

That boy can hear us?

VOICE

Of course, I can hear you! You two have been making such a terrible racket all afternoon!

SAILOR

Who hears us?! Is it the evil hydra?! Where did my harpoon go?

GEPETTO

Who are you talking to?

VOICE

The Maid and the Sailor on the wall!

GEPETTO

Oh, you mean my marionettes?

VOICE

What's a "mary-net?"

GEPETTO

It's a marionette. It's a kind of puppet. But they can't talk on their own.

SAILOR

Prepare the cannons!!

VOICE

Of course they can – and they're most definitely not puppets!

GEPETTO

Oh but they are puppets, my little pine nut. Here, let me show you.

(GEPETTO picks up the MAID and SAILOR marionettes and begins to puppet them, creating a little scene between them. As the SAILOR puppet...)

"Good day to you, miss. Lovely weather we're having."

(As the MAID puppet...)

"Indeed, 'tis a fine day. Are you setting sail soon, Mr. Sailor?" You see? It's just a trick of the puppeteer.

MAID

Ugh, I hate it when he does that.

SAILOR

Help, my lads! The evil Hydra has me! It's controlling my every move and putting words in my mouth and thoughts in my brain!!

GEPETTO

Would you like me to make you like one of them? To carve you into whatever shape you like?

VOICE

What other shape would there be?

GEPETTO

Why any shape is possible, my little pine nut. You could be a powerful king, a great artist, a hard-working farmer, or even a great athlete!

VOICE

So many choices. I don't know what I'd want to be.

GEPETTO

Choose anything you like, my little pine nut.

VOICE

"Pine nut." Why do you keep calling me that?

GEPETTO

Oh, please forgive me. It's just that you remind me of my little boy – who I lost long ago. I used to call him pine nut or, rather, Pinocchio, as my late wife used to say in our mother tongue.

VOICE

That's it, then. I want to be Pinocchio – a real boy.

GEPETTO

And so you shall be...Pinocchio.

Music. A dance happens as GEPETTO carves the log into PINOCCHIO.

GEPETTO

My finest work yet.

PINOCCHIO

I feel quite fine indeed!

GEPETTO

You look remarkably like my lost boy.

PINOCCHIO

Hey, Mr. Old Man, may I call you papa?

GEPETTO

Nothing would make me happier.

SCENE 3. THE CRICKET

BLUE FAIRY

Happiness reigns
Which leads to tricks
Geppetto trains
A cricket's in the mix.

Nighttime. The woodshop is empty. GEPETTO enters, dragging PINOCCHIO, who is kicking, biting, hitting, and otherwise resisting GEPETTO.

GEPETTO

Stop, you naughty boy. That is quite enough.

PINOCCHIO

No, no, no! I tell you, I don't deserve this kind of abuse!

GEPETTO

Pinocchio, my boy, you stole a rooster from Signora Pelandrone's hen house!

PINOCCHIO

I was just freeing the bird, papa. I heard it cry out "kook-a-roo" and I knew that it meant it wanted to be released.

GEPETTO

You ripped up all of Signor Brontolone's petunias!

PINOCCHIO

I was merely harvesting them for all the hungry rabbits.

GEPETTO

You stole the wig off the magistrate's head!

PINOCCHIO

Well, he shouldn't have called me a wooden hoodlum!!

GEPETTO

Pinocchio, this will not do. You're being punished now. Tonight, you will go to bed without any dessert.

PINOCCHIO

No tapioca pudding?

GEPETTO

Absolutely not.

PINOCCHIO

What about a little biscotti?

GEPETTO

Out of the question.

PINOCCHIO

Not even a teensy bit of plum cake?

GEPETTO

No, Pinocchio. Tonight, you must stay in here and think about what you've done. You must stay here with no stories, no music, and no sweets. You have been naughty and you need to grow a conscience before it's too late.

GEPETTO exits.

PINOCCHIO

Papa! Papa, please don't leave me in here! I need some toys and games to keep me entertained, papa!

(beat)

How dare he?! I just wanted to have a bit of fun, after all.

(beat)

Discipline, he says. He says I need discipline or I'll never grow a conscience. Well, what good is a conscience, anyway?

(yelling)

YOU'LL BE SORRY, PAPA!! ONE DAY, I'LL RUN AWAY AND THEN YOU'LL SEE HOW WRONG YOU WERE!!

(beat. He begins to cry)

I thought papa saw me as his little boy, his treasure among treasures. I suppose not. I suppose I'm nothing but a bother to the old man. I'll show him one day. I'll leave and run away and that'll show him!

VOICE (CRICKET)

[You shouldn't talk that way.]

PINOCCHIO

What? Who's there?

VOICE

[Me, you fool!]

PINOCCHIO

Mr. Sailor? Is that you?

VOICE

[No, it's me! Right here on your shoulder!]

PINOCCHIO sees a CRICKET on his shoulder.

PINOCCHIO

What...what are you?

CRICKET

[A cricket!]

PINOCCHIO

A cricket?

CRICKET

[Haven't you ever seen a cricket before?]

PINOCCHIO

No, I've never seen a cricket, but I've heard crickets before.

CRICKET

[Your papa loves you very much.]

PINOCCHIO

If papa loves me so much, why would he make me go to bed without any dessert?!

CRICKET

[He's trying to teach you to be a good boy.]

PINOCCHIO

He doesn't need to teach me to be a good boy! I'm the best boy! I can do backflips and jump higher than any other boy in the village. See?

PINOCCHIO demonstrates these things.

CRICKET

[Being good means being kind to others.]

PINOCCHIO

Be kind to others? Why would I do that? I entertain everyone – isn't that good enough?

[You must develop a conscience.] CRICKET

What is a conscience anyway? PINOCCHIO

[A little voice inside you.] CRICKET

A little voice inside me? PINOCCHIO

[And it tells you to do the right thing.] CRICKET

Do the right thing? PINOCCHIO

[Yes!] CRICKET

Hey, what if *you* did that for me? PINOCCHIO

[Did what?] CRICKET

You could be my conscience! PINOCCHIO

[Me?] CRICKET

Sure! You're already good at telling me not to do all the things I want to do. PINOCCHIO

[I don't know...] CRICKET

But how will I ever be a real boy? How will I ever make papa happy? Won't you please help me be good and kind? PINOCCHIO

CRICKET thinks for a moment.

CRICKET

[All right, I'll do it!]

PINOCCHIO

Yahoo!!! You're gonna be the best conscience, Mr. Cricket!

CRICKET

[But on ONE condition...]

PINOCCHIO

Condition? What condition?

CRICKET

[You must promise to do as I say.]

PINOCCHIO

Oh, of course, Mr. Cricket! Anything you say! I promise to always do what you say.

PINOCCHIO's nose grows a bit.

Oh! My nose!

CRICKET

[What about it?]

PINOCCHIO

Look at it! It just grew!