



Pinocchio

Synopsis

Act One

The musical opens in a dirty, squalid marketplace in Tuscany and establishes immediately this is not a children's musical. Here, everyone is a cheat or a thief, and everywhere you look is corruption, bribery, debauchery and conflict.

(Nobody Breaks Any Law) Pinocchio gets caught stealing, but escapes by diving into a traveling puppet-show wagon, where his fellow puppets are charmed by the way his nose grows when he lies. **(A Lovely Little Lie)** Disturbing their merriment, however, is the sorceress Madrina, who transforms herself into a fearsome giant in order to punish Pinocchio for stealing. **(Promises Kept)** Sensing that there is still some possibility of redemption left in Pinocchio, however, Madrina softens, giving Pinocchio five gold pieces, and bidding him to go straight home to his father, Gepetto. But on the way home, Pinocchio runs into two beggars, Blindcat and Cripplefox, who almost succeed in conning Pinocchio out of his gold. **(A Thousand Scoundrels)**

Gepetto, meanwhile, despairs that he is unable to provide a happy home for his son, and doesn't blame him for not wanting to come home at night. Pinocchio finally does come home, but Gepetto can't bring himself to discipline the boy; instead, he calls upon Pinocchio to rehearse his funny dance which he and Gepetto intend to perform in the marketplace on Sunday, begging for coins. **(Che Bella Vita)** Their merriment is interrupted, however, when Blindcat and Cripplefox come to Gepetto's door with a policeman who swoops in and arrests Gepetto (on the charge of raising a thief for a son). Pinocchio tries to free his father from the policeman, but Gepetto is hauled away to prison, leaving Pinocchio in the clutches of Blindcat and Cripplefox. Madrina appears again, this time in the form of a cricket, warning Pinocchio about the con artists, but Pinocchio rebels against Madrina's nagging morality and strict rules **(Promises Kept Reprise)**. He rejects Madrina and follows Blindcat and Cripplefox, whose attempts to scam a free meal from Tuscany's most expensive restaurant misfires badly. **(The Red Crayfish Inn)**

After dinner, Blindcat and Cripplefox show their true colors. In an attempt to get Pinocchio's five gold coins, they lure Pinocchio into a dismal, dead forest, and pounce on him with knives, burn his feet and eventually hang him by the neck. **(Night Creature Ballet)** Frustrated the noose still doesn't kill Pinocchio, Blindcat and Cripplefox leave him alone for the night, hanging from the tree.

Act Two

The second act begins in the Hall of Justice, in which Gepetto is unsuccessful in defending himself. **(Let the Punishment Fit the Crime)** Gepetto is sentenced to five months in prison. Pinocchio, meanwhile, alone with his thoughts, still hanging from the tree, regrets having been such a disappointment to his father **(Vergogna, Pinocchio)**. Pinocchio is once more saved at the last minute by Madrina, whose doctors are comically unconvinced that Pinocchio is really still alive.

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(Is He Dead?) Madrina vows that she will forgive Pinocchio just once more, but warns him she will not forgive him a third time. She gives him enough gold to pay for Gepetto's bail. However, the jail is closed until the morning, and Pinocchio grows restless waiting on the steps of the prison. He unwisely yields to the temptation to join a bunch of his schoolchums in an eerie midnight ferry ride to "Donkey Island" amusement park, promising himself that he will be back by morning.

From his prison cell, Gepetto shouts after Pinocchio not to run away to Donkey Island, but he understands why his son wants to escape. **(Who Can Blame the Children?)** Meanwhile, Pinocchio loses track of time, eating, playing, and stuffing himself with chocolate **(Donkey Island)** and five months go by before he remembers his promise to rescue his father. But it's too late: he and the other lazy boys have begun turning into donkeys to be skinned and sold at market. Rather than suffer that horrible fate, however, Pinocchio leaps into the sea.

Released at last from prison, Gepetto attempts to rescue Pinocchio from Donkey Island, but in the turbulent waters surrounding the Island lives a terrible sea monster, Pescecane, who swallows Gepetto whole. Pinocchio suffers a similar fate, just in time to rescue his father, even though it means he himself might drown in the attempt. **(Pescecane)** It takes Pinocchio's last breath, but he pulls Gepetto to safety on the shore. For behaving selflessly the first time in his life, Madrina rewards Pinocchio by turning him into a real boy. **(Finale)**