

Pinocchio 5000

By Craig and Heather Bitterling

Characters:

PINOCCHIO 5000

CRICKET (*voice over- conscience that only PINOCCHIO can hear. Prop for "CRICKET" must be easily visualized*)

G. PETTO

MAYOR

SALESMAN

FOXY

KAT

HELEN

SUSAN

POLICEMAN

GRANT (*MAYOR's son*)

JIMMY

RALPHIE

TEACHER (*voice over*)

FAIR MANAGER

MOE

LARRY

CURLY

Other Children at the Fair

SHORTY

IMUS

PERSON 1

PERSON 2

Other People in the Crowd

SCENE 1: Meet PINOCCHIO 5000

G. PETTO's workshop/apartment

G. PETTO/PINOCCHIO/MAYOR

The play begins in G. PETTO's workshop/apartment. Modern day. He makes childrens' toy robots and repairs technological gadgets in his workshop. He has been working for years to perfect a life-size robot boy that will be a "real" boy. The backdrop should be a rotatable platform so the scenes can change quickly. One side serves as the workshop, while the other side is used in the Fair scene (described later). The hard flats are attached to the platform in the center. In the platform there is a door on the SR side a a window SL. . Minimal set beginning with a cot or small couch, a table, and a bench. Robot parts and other "junk" is tossed about the stage. "O Sole Mio" plays at rise and then softens to underscore this scene)

G. PETTO: (*sings the song "O Sole Mio"*) O, Sole Mio...I'm a making a boy...he's not like any...any other toy. I make children happy...gadgets galore...Oh, Sole Mio...I'm a making my booooyyy....(*continues to hum as he screws and tinkers with "Pinocchio 5000", a robot*)

G. PETTO: (*finishing the robot*) There! After 3 long years, my boy is a-finished!

PINOCCHIO 5000: Hey there, pops! Get me a coke.

G. PETTO: *(scratching his head)* What?

PINOCCHIO: *(very rudely)* I'm thirsty, man. Hurry up!

G. PETTO: *(going back over building the robot in his head)* No. No. This is not right. I configured the main frame with all of the appropriate...

PINOCCHIO: Helloooo? Is anyone home??? *(tapping on G.'s head)* Do you have an Xbox, man? *(or whatever game station is popular at the time)*

G. PETTO: *(still figuring out the problem)* Wha...what? No *(shakes his head in confusion)*... according to precise instructions...and then I added the gigabytes to the...hmmm...and I, oooohhhh...Ah hah! That's the problem. *(Points to his chest)*

PINOCCHIO: *(raising his voice)* Yeah I need something to do...Listen, pops,I'm going to make this noise until you get me a coke. *(Waits for a beat and then makes a noise that sounds like an alarm clock under G's lines)*

G. PETTO: I forgot the "Cricket." *(Turns him off. PINOCCHIO stops noise and "shuts down". G. holds the "CRCT" motherboard looking gadget up as he says this to make it very clear to audience)* The "Cricket" is what helps my boy to know right from wrong. I programmed it so he would know how to behave. Yeesh! What a pain that would have been. To have a child telling me how it was gonna be, huh? Now I just open him up...and insert the "Cricket" board...and voila! *(Turns PINOCCHIO back on)*

PINOCCHIO: *(Politely)* Hello, Papa! How are you today? Do you need help with anything?

G. PETTO: Ah! My boy. My boy! *(sigh of relief)* Now, what should I call you? Uh.....ummm...*(searching for a name)*

(G. PETTO looks PINOCCHIO up and down for inspiration. PINOCCHIO mimicks his movements head movements. Then PINOCCHIO grabs a pen from behind G.'s ear)

PINOCCHIO: What is that called? *(pointing at a pen behind G.'s ear)*

G. PETTO: That is called a pen.

PINOCCHIO: Ohhhhh....

G. PETTO: *(slowly this time, sounding it out and holding up the pen)* P-eehh-nnn.

PINOCCHIO: Ohhhhhhhhhhhhh.....

G. PETTO: *(getting an idea from the sounds "pen" and "ohhhh")* Pen...ohhhh...pen....ohhhh. Yes. That's it. ...Pin-o-cchio! Pinocchio 5000!

PINOCCHIO: It's called a "pinocchio"?

G. PETTO: No, no. That is called a pen. *(sticks it behind his ear)* You are called a Pinocchio. You like it?

PINOCCHIO: Sure, Father. That sounds like a good name.

G. PETTO: And you will be a good boy to go with a good name. Ya?

PINOCCHIO: Yes, Father.

G. PETTO: Good, good. Now listen to me, Pinocchio. I'm gonna make it very easy for you to be a good boy. I'm only gonna give you three rules to remember, okay?

PINOCCHIO: Three rules.

G. PETTO: That's right. Now, I'm gonna give you these rules because I love you, and I want the best for you. These rules will protect you from dangers that you can't see.

PINOCCHIO: Three rules.

G. PETTO: Yes. And the first rule is you gotta "trust and obey."

PINOCCHIO: Trust and obey.

G. PETTO: That's right. If your Papa tells you to do something, or not to do something, you gotta trust that there is a good reason for it, and you gotta obey - even if it does not make sense to you.

PINOCCHIO: Trust and obey.

G. PETTO: Very good. Now, the second rule is "Beware of strangers."

PINOCCHIO: Beware of strangers?

G. PETTO: Yes, Pinocchio. Strangers are people that you don't know. People that may not love you like your Papa does, and they may be willing to let you get hurt for their own selfishness. That means you gotta be careful not to believe everything they say. If a stranger tell you to do something, you think to yourself, "What would Papa say?"

PINOCCHIO: He'd say, "Beware of Strangers."

G. PETTO: Exactly! Oh, I know you are going to be a very good boy. Now, one more rule and we will have some dinner. That is when we eat yummy foods. The third rule is, "Listen to Cricket."

PINOCCHIO: Listen to who?

G. PETTO: No, no, no. "Listen to whom."

PINOCCHIO: I don't know, Papa. Don't you know?

(There is a knock on the door)

G. PETTO: Oh, that must be a customer. *(yelling to the knock)* We're cloooooosed!

MAYOR: It's the Mayor!

G. PETTO: Oh. The Mayor! Pffff! What a time for him to show his ugly head! Pinocchio, please answer the door for me. It's the Mayor. I have to pick this place up. Oy!

PINOCCHIO: O.k., Father. *(goes to the door)*

MAYOR: *(starts to speak to G. PETTO without looking)* Gepett...ooohhhh. *(stops and stares at PINOCCHIO)* You're not G. Petto!

PINOCCHIO: No. I'm 5000 pens.

G. PETTO: Pinocchio. Remember? *(nervous laugh)* This is my boy, Pinocchio 5000.

MAYOR: I didn't know you had a son. Why did I not know this? You've never been married. No girl is crazy enough...

G. PETTO: No. He's, uh. He's my invention. *(proudly)* I created him. Uh, he's a robot. Pinocchio 5000! But, I have designed this robot like no other. *(This is a jab to the mayor)* He has a conscience.

MAYOR: Impossible. Robots do what *we* tell them. That's all they know. They don't make decisions. They don't have feelings. That's why they're so great. They just do what we tell them to do.

G. PETTO: Well, this one is just like a real boy. *(MAYOR gives a questioning look)* Well, he will be. And he's mine. *My* boy.

MAYOR: You know, tax breaks don't apply to robot boys. Does he have health insurance?
(Awkward silence)

PINOCCHIO: Papa?

G. PETTO: *(happy that the silence was broken)* Yes, son?

PINOCCHIO: When are we going to have our dinner? I really want to eat yummy foods.

MAYOR: You programmed him to eat???

G. PETTO: I programmed him to do lots of things. He knows all the basics now, but that's what I'm telling you...I programmed him to eventually be able to learn new things on his own.

MAYOR: Hmm...well, then. He *must* start school immediately.

G. PETTO: Of course. He will. But I need him to be with me for a while.

MAYOR: The law is that children *must* go to school. If you break the law, you go to jail.

G. PETTO: Mayor? Is there something that you wanted?

MAYOR: Oh. Oh, yes. My son Grant's I-magination *(said like eye-magination)* is broken. Can you fix it by tomorrow? *(hands him an I-pad looking gadget)*

G. PETTO: I can take a look at it. But if I have to get Pinocchio ready for school, it will take a little longer for me to fix it.

MAYOR: Well, Grant would never be able to do a thing without his I-magination. Fix it first. Then, I'll allow you to start Pinocchio 5000 in school the day after tomorrow.

G. PETTO: Thank you, sir. I will fix your son's I-magination first thing in the morning.

MAYOR: Good day, uh, gentlemen?

PINOCCHIO: Good day, Mayor. It was nice to meet you, and see your ugly head.

MAYOR: What?!?!?!?

G. PETTO: He said it is time for bed. Beddy bye! Got to catch his zzz's. Bye, bye Mayor!

(MAYOR exits and G. PETTO bursts into laughter. Pinocchio mimicks his laughter, not really sure why they are laughing)

(music rises. Lights out)

SCENE 2: Out into the Night

G. PETTO's workshop/apartment

PINOCCHIO/CRICKET/G.PETTO

(At rise, PINOCCHIO 5000 is plugged into the wall standing up. The stage is dimly lit. He wakes up. PINOCCHIO unplugs himself.. He also accidentally unplugs G. PETTO's alarm clock which is plugged into the same socket and is sitting on a small table. G. PETTO is asleep on the couch the entire scene. PINOCCHIO goes toward the door as if to exit. He freezes when CRICKET speaks)

CRICKET: *(This is a voice over that is not seen, but heard during all of PINOCCHIO's decision making points and acts as his inner voice)* I wouldn't do that if I were you.

PINOCCHIO: What? Who said that?

CRICKET: I did.

PINOCCHIO: *(grabs a flashlight, turns it on and shines it around the room)* I don't see anyone. Where are you?

CRICKET: Turn the light toward yourself.

(PINOCCHIO shines the flashlight on himself and blinds himself with the flashlight)

CRICKET: Here I am. I'm Cricket.

(PINOCCHIO Reacts, thinking there is a talking cricket on his shirt. He does a 'heeby jeeby' dance and tries to get it off)

CRICKET: No, no, no. I'm not a cricket *on* you. I'm in you. I'm actually your CRCT-board, or "Cognitive Realignment Conscience... uh... Thing," but you can just call me "Cricket."

PINOCCHIO: What are you doing in there?

CRICKET: I'm a part of you! Your Papa put me here in the heart of your programming to help you understand right and wrong, and to remind you of the rules so you can make good decisions and make your Papa proud of you.

PINOCCHIO: Well, I want my Papa to be proud of me. (*PINOCCHIO Shines the flashlight to his heart*) Does that mean you're going to come with me?

CRICKET: Of course - but where is it that you are wanting to go, Pinocchio?

PINOCCHIO: I don't know. I just want to go outside. I wanna see what's out there into the *great big world!*

CRICKET: Well, that might not be such a good idea. I'm not sure you are ready. And what about the first rule your Papa gave you?

PINOCCHIO: Don't tell the mayor he has an ugly head?

CRICKET: No, before that. The very *first* rule – "Trust and Obey."

PINOCCHIO: Oh yeah, "Do what Papa says."

CRICKET: That's right.

PINOCCHIO: But Papa didn't say, "Don't go outside."

CRICKET: Well, no, but he did tell you to rest here and charge your batteries.

PINOCCHIO: That's right, and I did that. I *did* rest, and now I'm going to go outside. Come with me so you can help me make good decisions.

CRICKET: I'm trying to help you now. Your Papa wants you to stay plugged into that socket.

(*Not responding, PINOCCHIO turns off his flashlight and exits out the door as CRICKET continues*)

CRICKET: Wait, Pinocchio! Rule number three – "Listen to Cricket!"

SCENE 3: The iKnow

A city street at night

PINOCCHIO/CRICKET/SALESMAN/Other People in the Crowd

A city street. A vendor cart is on one side of the stage, loaded with various electronic devices and manned by a SALESMAN, who is tending his wares. On the opposite side of the

stage is a tight group of young people, all very busy with their handheld devices. They are obviously together, but do not acknowledge one another or PINOCCHIO, as he enter, moving toward them.

PINOCCHIO: A stop sign! And what's that, Cricket?

CRICKET: That is a park bench, Pinocchio.

PINOCCHIO: A park bench! And what's... *(he sees the group of young people)* Ooh – people! What are they doing, Cricket?

CRICKET: Well – I suppose some would classify their activity as “communicating” or even “socializing.”

(PINOCCHIO stops between the group and the vendor cart, striking a pose that exactly mimics the boy next to him, and pauses a moment, pantomiming the hand motions the boy is doing)

PINOCCHIO: Socializing? Whatever it is, it doesn't seem very interesting.

SALESMAN: *(who has been watching PINOCCHIO)* Ahhh - that's because you don't have the necessary equipment.

PINOCCHIO: *(turning toward the SALESMAN)* Equipment?

SALESMAN: Absolutely. This is a fast paced world, young man, *(PINOCCHIO takes another look at the young people, who haven't moved)* and a hip kid like you needs the best and newest technology to stay on top of it all!

PINOCCHIO: I do? *(he crosses to the SALESMAN)*

SALESMAN: Of course you do. The world's not going to stop moving just to let you know what's going on. You've got dive in and chase after it - be the first to know, the first to see, and the first to experience. You're missing out on a great big, wonderful world, young man.

PINOCCHIO: Oh no!

CRICKET: Pinocchio, I believe this falls under rule number...

SALESMAN: Now, feast your eyes on the very latest generation of the iKnow, your gateway to the knowledge storehouses of the world. Anything you want to know is just a finger stroke away.

PINOCCHIO: *(reaching out to touch the iKnow)* Wow!

CRICKET: *(warning)* Pinocchio...

SALESMAN: *(grabbing PINOCCHIO's arm suddenly as it catches his eye)* And look at this! You already have a complete compatibility port installed – so your iKnow can be fully integrated instantly, giving you more knowledge that you could ever imagine.

PINOCCHIO: My Papa must have put that there!

SALESMAN: Then your papa is a smart man, but not half as smart as you're going to be, once you have the iKnow! Even your papa will be amazed at your brilliance. The iKnow will make you the envy of everyone you meet!

PINOCCHIO: I want it. I want it.

SALESMAN: Of course you do, young man. *(he clicks the iKnow onto PINOCCHIO's arm as he continues)* An excellent decision. Why not go ahead and try it out.

(PINOCCHIO turns to face the group of young people. He pushes a few buttons on his iKnow, accompanied by electronic beeping sounds. Additional electronic sounds are heard from the large group, representing Pinnochio's message being received. All of the young people suddenly become animated, smiling and laughing, as they turn towards Pinnochio and simultaneously begin typing on their devices. Another resounding electronic sound is heard, causing Pinnochio to look back down at his arm and smile)

PINOCCHIO: They like me! This is great!

SALESMAN: I knew you would be pleased, sir. That will be \$499 dollars now, and then we'll get you set up for a subscription plan at \$75 a month. May I have your credit card, please?

PINOCCHIO: I don't have a credit card.

SALESMAN: *(horrificed)* You don't?!

PINOCCHIO: *(realizing this must not be an acceptable answer)* I mean, I have one, but I left it at home.

(At this statement computer beeping is heard with a voice saying "verification error." PINOCCHIO looks startled and begins looking around his body for the source of the noise)

SALESMAN: *(grabbing PINOCCHIO's arm)* Well, I am afraid that's a deal breaker, young man. Come back when you have money to spend.

(he carelessly rips the iKnow off PINOCCHIO's arm with a cracking sound followed by the sound of sparks and static. PINOCCHIO twitches a bit with the sound)

PINOCCHIO: Ouch! Hey, that's not fair! *(The SALESMAN ignores PINOCCHIO and goes about his work once more)* Give it back!

(Pinnochio suddenly twitches again with the accompanying sound effect)

PINOCCHIO: Ow. What is going on?

CRICKET: *(his voice is breaking up)* It looks like ... device has..... with some... programming virus... Y... should ...g... back to ... your Papa.

Pinoccio: But I haven't seen the world yet. This isn't f... *(he twitches again)* Oh, alright, I'll go back to Papa. Maybe he'll give me the money for the iKnow.. *(he exits)*

SCENE 4: KAT and FOXY

A city street at night

KAT/FOXY/PINOCCHIO/CRICKET

FOXY and KAT, are sitting on a curb. KAT is looking off into the distance, while FOXY rests with his eyes closed.

KAT: Hey, Foxy.

FOXY: Yeah?

KAT: You ever seen a little boy made out of metal before?

FOXY: *(keeping his eyes closed)* Nope. *(long pause)* You?

KAT: Nope.

FOXY: *(long pause)* Any particular reason you're asking?

KAT: No. Except that there's one coming this way.

FOXY: What? *(he sits up and turns to look as PINOCCHIO enters happily, taking in all of his surroundings with awe.)* Well, I'll be - I don't see any metal boy, Kat.

KAT: You don't?

FOXY: Nope, I see our ticket to the top.

KAT: It looks like a boy to me.

FOXY: I'm telling you Kat, that boy is a gold mine.

KAT: He is?

FOXY: Absolutely – and with a gimmick like that, we could be overnight celebrities.

KAT: A gimmick? It is a boy, right?

(they stand to greet PINOCCHIO as he crosses to them)

FOXY: Hello there, young man. You're out a little late tonight, aren't you?

PINOCCHIO: Am I?

FOXY: You know, these streets are thick with thieves and con men. Why, it's not safe for you to wonder around alone. What's your name, son?

PINOCCHIO: Pinocchio 5000. *(he twitches)*

FOXY: Pinocchio, eh? *(bowing)* Well, my friend, I am Sir Reginald Foxwald, III, but you may call me Foxy - and this is my friend Kat.

KAT: Hiya Pinnocle!

CRICKET: Pinocchio, remember the second rule – “Beware of strangers!”

PINOCCHIO: *(aside)* These aren’t strangers, Cricket. This is Foxy and Kat – my friends.

FOXY: Tell me, boy, do your parents know you are out and about on this fine evening?

PINOCCHIO: Oh sure. Of course they do. *(as PINOCCHIO lies, computer beeping is heard with a voice saying “verification error.” FOXY and KAT look at him oddly)* I mean, my Papa lets me go outside all the time. *(the beeping and error message repeat. PINOCCHIO covers his mouth)* Um. Excuse me.

KAT: Gesundheit!

CRICKET: *(breaking up)* Be careful, Pin.... Your logic circuits are not programmed to ... lies. You could ... overload your processors if you ... this up.

PINOCCHIO: My Papa is home in bed. He’s not worried about me. I came out to see the great big world.

FOXY: Why then, we are happily met, my boy. Kat and I were just about to go out on the town and have a little fun.

KAT: We were? *(FOXY elbows her in the ribs)* Ow – yeah, we’re gonna have a little fun.

PINOCCHIO: Ooo - what’s fun? Can I have some?

FOXY: Fun, Pinnocchio is the meaning of life.

(PINOCCHIO twitches again, quite violently)

FOXY: Looks like you’ve got a bit of a problem there, my friend. Does it hurt?

PINOCCHIO: A little.

FOXY: Well, then, fun is what you need, indeed. Yes, the best remedy for a sea of troubles is a mountaintop of pleasures. Shall we? *(offers PINOCCHIO his arm)*

CRICKET: This is not good, Pinocchio! Beware of strangers!

PINOCCHIO: *(taking FOXY’s arm)* Papa didn’t say not to have fun. *(to FOXY)* Let’s go!

KAT: Where are we going?

FOXY: On a little publicity tour, Katrina. This young man is our passport into any and every club in town!

KAT: *(as the three are exiting)* Passport? And I thought he was just a little boy made out of metal.

SCENE 5: The Morning After