



Reading and Drama: A Chapter from Pinocchio

Here is a chance to share a chapter of Carlo Collodi's original story and at the same time get a little creative drama going with your students! Included below is a famous scene from the book (and the Disney movie) when Pinocchio visits the Marionette theatre.

Procedure

- Read the chapter aloud once.
- Discuss who the characters are, where the story takes place and what the central problem of the chapter is.
- Explain to your students that they are going to create frozen images or statues of the characters and the action of the story!

Drama Exploration

- Guide students to find their own place in the room or to stand close to their own desks. On your cue ('Freeze!'), guide students to shape their bodies like each of the characters. As they create, encourage them to use more of their body to express something unique about each character.
- 'Pinocchio. 3, 2, 1, Freeze!'
- 'The Marionettes. 3, 2, 1, Freeze!'
- And, so on.

Story Drama

- Guide students to pair up.
- Tell them that you will read it again, pausing to have them create frozen pictures of important moments in the chapter.
- As you read, pause at any moment you feel has strong drama in it.
- Give the student pairs 15-20 seconds to talk about their idea.
- 'Show that moment. 3, 2, 1. Freeze!'
- If desired, have students share their frozen images.

CHAPTER BACKGROUND: Pinocchio enters the Marionette theatre. As he does, the Marionettes onstage see him and believe he is a brother of theirs.

Adapted from Chapters 10 and 11 of Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*

It is impossible to describe the shrieks of joy, the warm embraces, the knocks, and the friendly greetings with which that strange company of dramatic actors and actresses received Pinocchio.

The Marionettes made much racket, and, lifting up Pinocchio on their shoulders, carried him around the stage in triumph.

At that very moment, the Director 'Fire-Eater' came out of his room. He had such a fearful appearance that one look at him would fill you with horror. His beard was as black as pitch, and so long that it reached from his chin down to his feet. His mouth was as wide as an oven, his teeth like yellow fangs, and his eyes, two glowing red coals. In his huge, hairy hands, a

long whip, made of green snakes and black cats' tails twisted together, swished through the air in a dangerous way.

At the unexpected apparition, no one dared even to breathe. One could almost hear a fly go by. Those poor Marionettes, one and all, trembled like leaves in a storm.

"Why have you brought such excitement into my theater," the huge fellow asked Pinocchio with the voice of an ogre suffering with a cold.

"Believe me, your Honor, the fault was not mine."

"Enough! Be quiet! I'll take care of you later."

Fire-Eater went to the kitchen, where a fine big lamb was slowly turning on the spit. More wood was needed to finish cooking it. He called Harlequin and Pulcinella and said to them: "Bring that Marionette to me! He looks as if he were made of well-seasoned wood. He'll make a fine fire for this spit."

Harlequin and Pulcinella hesitated a bit. Then, frightened by a look from their master, they left the kitchen to obey him. A few minutes later they returned, carrying poor Pinocchio, who was wriggling and squirming like an eel and crying pitifully: "Father, save me! I don't want to die! I don't want to die!"

When Fire-Eater saw the poor Marionette being brought in to him, struggling with fear, he felt sorry for him and began first to waver and then to weaken. Finally, he could control himself no longer and gave a loud sneeze.

At that sneeze, Harlequin, who until then had been as sad as a weeping willow, smiled happily and leaning toward the Marionette, whispered to him: "Good news, brother mine! Fire Eater has sneezed and this is a sign that he feels sorry for you. You are saved!"

For be it known, that, while other people, when sad and sorrowful, weep and wipe their eyes, Fire Eater, on the other hand, had the strange habit of sneezing each time he felt unhappy. The way was just as good as any other to show the kindness of his heart.

After sneezing, Fire Eater, ugly as ever, cried to Pinocchio: "Stop crying! Your wails give me a funny feeling down here in my stomach and—E—tchee!—E—tchee!" Two loud sneezes finished his speech.

"God bless you!" said Pinocchio.

"Thanks! Are your father and mother still living?" demanded Fire Eater.

"My father, yes. My mother I have never known."

"Your poor father would suffer terribly if I were to use you as firewood. Poor old man! I feel sorry for him! E—tchee! E—tchee! E—tchee!" Three more sneezes sounded, louder than ever.

“God bless you!” said Pinocchio.

“Thanks! However, I ought to be sorry for myself, too, just now. My good dinner is spoiled. I have no more wood for the fire, and the lamb is only half cooked. Never mind! In your place I’ll burn some other Marionette. Hey there! Officers!”

At the call, two wooden officers appeared, long and thin as a yard of rope, with queer hats on their heads and swords in their hands.

Fire Eater yelled at them in a hoarse voice: “Take Harlequin, tie him, and throw him on the fire. I want my lamb well done!”

Think how poor Harlequin felt! He was so scared that his legs doubled up under him and he fell to the floor. Pinocchio, at that heartbreaking sight, threw himself at the feet of Fire Eater and, weeping bitterly, asked in a pitiful voice which could scarcely be heard:

“Have pity, kind sir!”

“There are no sirs here!”

“Have pity, your Excellency!”

On hearing himself addressed as your Excellency, the Director of the Marionette Theater sat up very straight in his chair, stroked his long beard, and becoming suddenly kind and compassionate, smiled proudly as he said to Pinocchio: “Well, what do you want from me now, Marionette?”

“I beg for mercy for my poor friend, Harlequin, who has never done the least harm in his life.”

“There is no mercy here, Pinocchio. I have spared you. Harlequin must burn in your place. I am hungry and my dinner must be cooked.”

“In that case,” said Pinocchio proudly, as he stood up and flung away his cap of dough, “in that case, my duty is clear. Come, officers! Tie me up and throw me on those flames. No, it is not fair for poor Harlequin, the best friend that I have in the world, to die in my place!”

These brave words, said in a piercing voice, made all the other Marionettes cry. Even the officers, who were made of wood also, cried like two babies.

Fire Eater at first remained hard and cold as a piece of ice; but then, little by little, he softened and began to sneeze. And after four or five sneezes, he opened wide his arms and said to Pinocchio: “You are a brave boy! Come to my arms and kiss me!”

Pinocchio ran to him and scurrying like a squirrel up the long black beard, he gave Fire Eater a loving kiss on the tip of his nose.

“Has pardon been granted to me?” asked poor Harlequin with a voice that was hardly a breath.

“Pardon is yours!” answered Fire Eater; and sighing and wagging his head, he added: “Well, tonight I shall have to eat my lamb only half cooked, but beware the next time, Marionettes.”

At the news that pardon had been given, the Marionettes ran to the stage and, turning on all the lights, they danced and sang till dawn.