



# *The Adventures of Poppy - Pinocchio Retold*

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Retold Fairy Tales

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This, dear reader, is the story of a little girl called Poppy. Poppy has always been a naughty girl. She skipped school, spent all her money on candies and lied to her mum. She never listened to Cricket, her only friend, who was much wiser than she was. Luckily for her, Cricket was infinitely patient and he never left her alone, not even when she treated him badly. He understood why Poppy always behaved in such a rebellious way: all she wanted was to be like all the other girls her age.

As you probably already figured out, Poppy was far from being a normal girl. After all, nobody would like to hear a story about a normal, boring girl – right? She was born on a cold winter day, when her mum, a kind woman named Gepetta, was feeling particularly lonely. She felt like that ever since her husband died before they had the chance to have any children and left her alone. But on that day, her loneliness seemed almost impossible to bear. Sad and chilly, Gepetta sat by the fireplace, trying to warm up. Suddenly, her eyes fell on a lump of wood she had brought home the day before, with the intention to use it for the fire. In that moment, she felt that that piece of wood was too nice to burn. She remembered how good her husband had been at carving statues out of wood and, to pass the time, she decided to try doing the same.

She found a sharp knife and began to work. At first, she was clumsy and uncertain, but soon she gained confidence as the head of a nice little puppet started to take shape under her tool. She worked all night; it was almost dawn when she finally set down her finished work and contemplated it. She looked at the nice wooden

doll and was very proud of it. 'From this day on, I will never feel lonely again,' she said, happily. 'I am going to call you Poppy.' As soon as she pronounced those words, magic happened: the puppet heard her mother's voice and sprang to life! She blinked with her large brown eyes and looked at Gepetta, who gazed amazedly at her. She couldn't believe her luck; that's because she didn't know that a good-hearted wizard has been observing her from afar for a long time and decided to award her kindness.

And that's how our story's main character was born. But as we already mentioned, she was not a sweet little girl. In fact, she told lies so frequently that the same wizard who created her felt obliged to cast another spell: he enchanted her nose so that every time she told a lie, it would grow longer and longer.

One day, when Gepetta thought her daughter was at school, but she was actually playing on the street, Poppy met a cat and a fox. As they saw this strange living puppet, the two animals thought it would be funny to take her to the puppet show: Poppy went with them gladly. As soon as they arrived, everyone stared at Poppy in amazement, for they have never seen a puppet move with no strings. Unfortunately, also the puppet-master noticed her: as he had never seen such a beautiful puppet, he caught her and put her in a cage, planning to use her for his next show.

Poppy was afraid to death. 'If I had listened to my mum and just went to school, I would have been free now,' she thought, crying. But she was luckier than she realised: Cricket, who always followed her everywhere, saw what happened, and he hurried to the kind wizard who immediately showed up at the puppet-master's tent and freed Poppy from her cage.

Poppy thanked the wizard profusely and promised to go directly to school. Now, we all know that she wasn't used to obeying and keeping her promises, but this time she actually intended to keep her word. But unfortunately – it's safe to admit at this point that our little hero had quite a lot of bad luck – she ran into Carla on her way to school.

Carla was an older girl Poppy knew from school. She was the one who always convinced Poppy to play truant. Cricket tried to warn his friend Poppy to keep away from Carla, but she never listened: she considered Carla a friend. After all, who would prefer a talking cricket to a funny playmate?

Carla told Poppy to run away with her to the mysterious Toyland, a place where school was forbidden, and children were allowed to play together all day. Poppy thought for a long time. She thought about her promise to the wizard... about her friend's Cricket's advice... and, finally, she also thought of Gepetta, her loving mum, who gave her life. She was about to say no, when a large wagon pulled by donkeys stopped right in front of

them. Carla exclaimed: 'This is how we are going to get to Toyland!' and, in the next moment, she was already pulling Poppy on the wagon beside herself.

As soon as they arrived in Toyland, Poppy forgot all the guilt about her mum. The place was a paradise for children! No one ever mentioned school, or homework; no one told them it was time to go to sleep, or that they have to eat less candies. Carla and Poppy were over the moon. They were certain that nothing bad will ever happen in their lives again.

However, nobody can remain a happy, carefree child forever. As more and more days passed without them learning anything new, they gradually started changing into mules.

Poppy woke up one day with long, hairy ears and a grey tail. When she was completely transformed, she was forced to pull the wagon together with the other kids. What had been her paradise for a few days, transformed into hell.

Nobody knows how long Poppy lived as a mule. She slowly got used to her new life, though it didn't get any easier. She was lonely; she had no idea where Carla had ended up. But, worse than that, she was weak – and she was getting weaker by the day. When the humans saw that she didn't have the force to pull the wagon anymore, they decided to get rid of her. 'We don't need a useless mule,' they said, and threw the poor animal into the sea.

Poppy fell deep underwater and was desperate to come afloat and catch her breath, but she didn't know how to swim; she was soon surrounded by scary looking fish who started gnawing at her. In that moment, for the first time in her short life, Poppy was thankful for being made of wood: the fish ate away the mule's flesh all around her, but they left the wooden puppet alone. As soon as she was free from her mule skin, Poppy was lifted on the water's surface: the wood was light enough to float easily. But, alas: our puppet didn't even get the chance to relax, for a moment later she felt a huge wave rising under her. The next thing she knew, she was surrounded by impenetrable darkness.

'Help! Heeelp!' Poppy cried desperately. 'Please, someone help me!' But of course, nobody heard her shouts. The poor wooden girl didn't even realise that the wave which had seized her was not a wave at all, but a giant whale who had swallowed her.

Lying in the darkness inside the whale's belly, Poppy began thinking about her mum. Oh, how much she missed her! The guilt she felt for what she knew Gepetta must be going through was overwhelming. 'I'm... I'm so sorry, mum,' Poppy whispered between sobs. 'I'm sorry I never listened to you... I'm sorry I was never a good

girl. B... but... I never wanted to be bad. All I wanted was to be a girl! A normal girl... I wanted to be soft and warm, not... wooden. I wanted to have long braids like all the other girls... I wanted to feel the warmth of the sun on my skin and have beautiful little freckles on my nose like Carla does...'

Poor Poppy. You can fully understand now, reader, why she has always been so naughty. She didn't know what it would take for her to become a girl. She just rebelled against a world that didn't accept her. After being swallowed by the whale, she was sure she was going to die – and the only thing she regretted was to never have the chance to apologise to Gepetta.

Of course, this story wouldn't be a good one without a happy ending: you should know, dear reader, that Poppy's life didn't end inside the whale's belly. In a way, we could say that's where her new life just began... The wizard, our hero's protector, was never too far away: he soon discovered what had happened to Poppy after she had been thrown into the sea. Hearing how desperate and sorry she felt, he decided to save her life once again: with the help of a little magic, he pulled her out of her prison and took her back home.

How sweet the encounter between Poppy and her mother was! It would bring tears to anyone's eyes. Gepetta was so thankful to have her daughter back that she forgot she should be angry with her. Poppy, on the other hand, promised never to disobey her again – and this time, she kept her promise.

The wizard gave her a week to prove her good intentions; and when her nose didn't grow any longer for seven days in a row, he decided it was finally time for a reward.

On the eighth morning, Poppy felt that something was different as soon as she woke up. She hurried to the mirror, looked up... and gasped in surprise. Instead of the wooden face she was used to seeing, she was now glancing at a real girl!

Gepetta's happiness – as she heard Poppy's cries of joy and ran upstairs – was just as great: she finally had a real daughter. And a beautiful and kind one, too. Poppy never forgot what it took to become the girl she had always wanted to be: a kind heart.

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