

A KNOTTY BOY

by

Walt Dis'me

FADE IN

EXT. A TUSCAN VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT (CIRCA 1880)

A full moon shines bright over the quiet mountain village square. The cobblestone streets are deserted and all the shops are closed for the evening.

An oil lamp, within a toy shop, creates silhouettes on the storefront window of hanging puppets and marionettes.

INT. TOY SHOP - NIGHT

The oil lamp is on a table near the back of the shop. The toy maker, GEPETTO (60), sleeps in a bedside rocking chair. Streaks of tears wet his cheeks.

On the bed is PINOCCHIO, a wooden puppet with donkey ears and a tail. He lies still with eyes closed.

A smartly dressed cricket, JIMINY, sleeps in a match box on a shelf above the bed.

All is quiet until a soft blue glow begins to brighten the room and slowly envelope Pinocchio.

ENTITY (OS)

Poor, Pinocchio. Tsk, tsk, tsk.

Pinocchio begins to stir. He rubs his little wooden knuckles in his eyes, yawns, and stretches.

As he opens his eyes, he recognizes the blue glow and sits bolt upright. He begins joyfully, but-

PINOCCHIO

The Blue...Fairy?

-is bewildered when he sees-

PINOCCHIO

Who are you?

- a middle-aged man wearing a black suit, string tie, and a derby stands in front of him. He stands with his shiny black shoes spaced apart.

His white gloved hands rest on a cane with a glowing blue gemstone on top. Meet LUCIFER.

LUCIFER

Why, Pinocchio. Don't you remember me? We had a deal.

Pinocchio frowns and shakes his head.

Behind Pinocchio, Jiminy is now awake. He peeks over the match box edge and watches in horror.

PINOCCHIO

No, sir. You must have me mistaken with some other Pinocchio. I had a deal with the Blue Fairy!

Lucifer smiles and shakes his head.

LUCIFER

Oh, you poor little sap. You see, I take many forms -

He taps his cane on the floor and POOF! He turns into a cloven-hoofed DEVIL with ram horns.

He taps again and turns into a skeleton, shrouded in red with a glowing crown. The CRIMSON KING.

Another tap, and he becomes the BLUE FAIRY, albeit with a sinister grin.

A final tap, and he is once again, the man in black.

LUCIFER

- But, you see, Pinocchio? You would never have agreed to any one of my other incarnates, now, would you?

Pinocchio rapidly shakes his head.

PINOCCHIO

No, no, no! You tricked me. I would never have made any deal with you, Mister...

LUCIFER

Ah, yes. How rude of me. The name is Lucifer.

While Lucifer bows slightly and tips his hat, Jiminy hops off the shelf and onto Pinocchio's back.

Pinocchio's mouth is agape and he smacks an open palm to his forehead that results in a hollow log THUNK.

LUCIFER

Pinocchio, you look stumped. Oh sorry, that was unkind.

Jiminy creeps up to Pinocchio's shoulder and whispers an idea in his ear.

PINOCCHIO

But...I'm a hero! I saved father!

LUCIFER

A single act of bravery does not negate your selfishness, disobedience, and lies. And what did your smoking cigars and drunken debauchery get you?

Lucifer reaches out and flicks his donkey ears.

PINOCCHIO

Ouch!

LUCIFER

It's really not your fault, though. Don't you realize where the name Pinocchio comes from? You're made of Pin Oak. A wood without a single straight grain in all its length. You're inherently knotty!

Lucifer smiles, then starts to laugh uncontrollably while Pinocchio scratches his noggin.

LUCIFER

Don't you get it? Knotty?

(beat)

Oh, come on, NAUGHTY!

Pinocchio is not amused and furrows his brow.

LUCIFER

Well, anyway, time to pay the piper, eh?

PINOCCHIO

Wha-what do you mean?

Lucifer pokes Pinocchio in the chest with his finger.

LUCIFER

You failed. I win.

PINOCCHIO

You win what?

LUCIFER

You come with me to spend an eternity in hell.

Pinocchio's eyes go wide in shock, but then they start to narrow.

Jiminy whispers to him once again. A grin grows from ear to ear. He points at Lucifer and starts to laugh.

PINOCCHIO

Ha-ha-ha!

Lucifer is befuddled and frowns.

LUCIFER

I don't understand. What's so funny?

PINOCCHIO

I'm made of wood, you fool. I'd be the shortest guest YOU'VE ever had! I'd be nothing but ash in seconds!

Lucifer strokes his chin in deep thought. A moment later, he SNAPS his fingers with a devilish grin.

LUCIFER

Ah! I know what I'll do.

Pinocchio stops laughing as Lucifer leans in close to get face-to-face.

LUCIFER

I believe, my little knothed, that I WILL grant your wish. After all, the eternal writhing screams of a little boy in hell is never tiresome.

Pinocchio shakes his head violently back and forth. Jiminy hooks his umbrella to his collar and barely holds on.

PINOCCHIO

No, no, no! I don't want to be a real boy!

LUCIFER

You get your wish and I, my prize.

Lucifer extends the glowing gemstone to Pinocchio's chest and BAM! He turns into a real boy.

Pinocchio looks at and strokes his arms. He pinches his rosy little cheeks and can't help but to smile.

PINOCCHIO

I...I'm a real boy!

LUCIFER

Yes, well, enjoy it while you can.

Jiminy whispers to Pinocchio once again.

Lucifer reaches out to grab his arm and Pinocchio recoils.

PINOCCHIO

Wait!

LUCIFER

What now?

PINOCCHIO

I'm basically a newborn, right?

LUCIFER

(shrugs)

Well, yes.

PINOCCHIO

I'm innocent! I've a clean slate!

You can't take me now!

Lucifer grabs his arm and taps his cane on the floor. Nothing happens. He taps again and again. Still nothing.

Lucifer is furious. He morphs from the man in black to a massive winged beast before resuming his human form.

LUCIFER

Okay. Alright. Be a boy. Endure a life of heartbreak and pain. Go ahead and suffer...life.

(pokes him in the chest)

You've already proven yourself to be vile and easily tempted with vice.

Lucifer taps his cane and begins to fade into a floating blue sprite.

LUCIFER

Yes. I'll see you again and, next time, it won't be such a happy ending.

POOF! Lucifer disappears.

Pinocchio turns to look at Jiminy on his shoulder.

PINOCCHIO

That was a close one, huh?

Jiminy wipes sweat off his brow and they're both giddy with relief.

Pinocchio pauses, squirms a bit, and appears to look uncomfortable.

He pulls at his crotch and looks in the front of his shorts with a look of surprise.

PINOCCHIO

Jiminy Crickets! I've got acorns!

Jiminy whispers in his ear.

PINOCCHIO

Oh! Ha-ha! Nuts!

FADE OUT