

PINOCCHIO

Carlo Collodi translated by Emma Rose

As soon as it stopped snowing, Pinocchio set off for school, his brand-new copybook under his arm. As he walked along, his little brain built endless castles in the air, each more wonderful than the last.

"Today I'm going to learn to read," he said to himself, "tomorrow I'll learn to write, and the day after tomorrow I'll learn to do my sums. Then I'll earn lots of money, and with my very first coins I'll buy Father a smart new jacket. Not any old jacket - a silver and gold one, with jewels for buttons. After all, he's in shirtsleeves so that I can have a book for school. And it's so cold at the moment! Only a father would do such a thing..."

Just as he was feeling deeply moved, he heard the faint sound of pipes and drums in the distance: Toot, toot, toot! Boom, boom, boom!

He stopped to listen. The music was coming from the end of a very long side-road, which led to a village by the sea.

I wonder what that is? he thought. What a pity that I have to go to school, otherwise...

He stood in the road, dithering, torn between school and music.

"I'll go and hear the music today, and start school tomorrow," he finally decided with a shrug.

"There's plenty of time for learning."

And he ran off down the side-road, as fast as his legs would carry him.