



**LE AVVENTURE DI PINOCCHIO (THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO)** is a theatrical film compression of a three hundred minute Italian television miniseries. Below is Kino Ken's review of the dvd version of that abbreviated theatrical release.

16 of a possible 20 points

\*\*\*\* of a possible \*\*\*\*\*

Key: \* indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance

(j) designates a juvenile performer

Italy 1972 color 126 minutes (edited from a 300-minute original television miniseries)  
 subtitled live action feature fantasy Bavaria Film TV / Bavaria Film / International Film  
 Company / Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française (ORTF) /  
 RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana / San Paolo Film Producer: Attilio Monge

**Points:**

- 1 Direction: Luigi Comencini
- 2 Editing: Nino Baragli\*
- 2 Cinematography: Armando Nannuzzi\*
- 2 Lighting
- 1 Teleplay: Suso Cecchi D'Amico and Luigi Comencini based on the book by Carlo Collodi
- 2 Music: Fiorenzo Carpi\*
- 1 Production Design: Massimo Patrizi
- Set Decoration: Arrigo Breschi\*
- Costume Design: Piero Gherardi\*
- Makeup: Otello Fava\*, Stefano Fava\*, and Peter Tenoglio\*
- 2 Sound: Massimo Anzellotti\*
- 2 Acting
- 1 Creativity

**16 total points**

**Cast: Andrea Balestri\* (j) (Pinocchio), Nino Manfredi\* (Geppetto), Gina Lollobrigida (Fatina Azzurra, the Blue Fairy), Domenico Santoro (j) (Candlewick), Franco Franchi (Cat), Ciccio Ingrassia (Fox), Ugo D'Alessio (Master Cherry), Lionel Stander (Fire-eater), Pietro Gentili (a corporal), Mario Ercolani (Farmer), Mimmo Olivieri (another corporal), Antonio Danesi (Coachman), Vittorio De Sica (Judge), Mario Adorf (Ringmaster), Furio Meniconi (Farmer), Ferdinand Murolo (Mason), Mario Scaccia (First Doctor), Luigi Leoni (Teacher), Galliano Sbarra (Cellmate), Mario Colombaioni (Buyer of the Donkey), Peter Fumelli (Director), Vera Drudi (Wife of Fire-eater), Mario Ercolani (Farmer), Mario Scaccia (First Doctor), Jacques Herlin (Second Doctor), Natale Siddi (Beggar), Walter Buschoff (Butcher), Orazio Orlando (Marshall), Carlo Bagno (Master Melampo, a dog), Enzo Cannavale (Innkeeper), Paola Natale (Laundress), Siria Betti (Candlewick's mother), Nazzareno Caldarelli (Doughnut Seller), Orlando D'Ubaldo (Man offering to buy book), Franca Scagnetti (Laundress), others**

**Never available officially on Region 1 dvd in the United States, LE AVVENTURE DI PINOCCHIO (THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO) is a one hundred thirty-five minute edited theatrical release of an original Italian television mini-series from 1972. Fusing Italian neo-realist backgrounds with fantasy characters from the classic novel by Carlo Lorenzini written under the nom de plume of Carlo Collodi, this live action picaresque tale is well worth seeking out.**

**Two impressive lead performances anchor a briskly-paced seriocomedy.**

**Nino Manfredi is compellingly endearing as impoverished, humble Geppetto, willing to work from another's cast-off wood in exchange for food and warmth. He finds himself befuddled, bemused, paternal when a handmade pinewood puppet incarnates as a boy, potentially the son he never had but always desired.**

**Andrea Balestri, a roguish, ravenous liar, quickly sets himself on a career of distracting non-conformity, rejecting school, honesty, labor, and kindness. It's hard to imagine what meddlesome Fatina Azzurra sees in that character worth rewarding. After all, one of the first actions Pinocchio takes is to murder his chirruping conscience, here shown as merely a vocal silhouette. So addicted to devilry is the lad even a hanging of his timber persona fails to deter him from further troublemaking. Eventually adopting scapegrace Candlewick as a mentor, Pinocchio gleefully accompanies the older layabout to the Land of Toys, a place designed as catch-all for selfish, greedy, slothful children.**

**Transformed as punishment into donkeys, only intervention by guardian Blue Fairy saves obstinate rapsallion with underdeveloped conscience from a watery tomb. Her magic turns similarly unrepentant Candlewick into a fish, very convenient for later plot developments.**

Finally displaying real courage when swallowed by a dogfish shark, Pinocchio reunites in its belly with his creator father. Geppetto contentedly, in true stoic fashion, makes a comfortable existence for himself there out of necessity. His son craves escape to additional adventures. All Papa wants is food, shelter, peace.

Conservative stagnation grates against liberal restlessness. Ultimately, can the living dead be badgered back into vitality?

A screenplay bypassing nineteenth-century moral strictures skirts issues of virtue and vice, treating villainous duo of Cat and Fox as comic relief rather than tempting demons bent on traducing gullible hero. There's no character development, only a series of incidents cumulatively confirming the protagonist's independence. He is what he is, likeable or not. Though evidencing several positive traits of humanity, such as sympathy and humor, Pinocchio never grows into responsible helper or serious student. Always the curving path leads him willingly astray, perhaps an autobiographical reflection of director Luigi Comencini's own personality.

Armando Nannuzzi's fluid camera movements keep viewers tracking swiftly along through rural settings where hardscrabble poverty of villagers coexists with encompassing natural bounty and beauty. Augmented with generously luminous lighting and jaunty, melodic music score, excellent cinematography counters inflated rubber shark and tawdry dinginess permeating a minimalist Land of Toys. Massimo Anzellotti's masterful recording of both sound effects and dialogue is another notable asset.

The film also features Gina Lollobrigida as Fatina Azzurra and veteran actor-director Vittorio De Sica as a magistrate, two treats for adult viewers.

Overall, it's an energetic, involving, praiseworthy adaptation, probably the best live action version of Pinocchio's story accessible. This reviewer recommends viewing only by teens and adults, however, due to toilet humor, profanity, vulgar language, and decidedly marked enthusiasm for irresponsible behavior.