

The Blue Fairy

written by

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## THE BLUE FAIRY: A SHORT OPERA

LIBRETTO BY KIP SOTERES

CAST of CHARACTERS (In order of appearance):  
TOWNSPEOPLE (2-5 representative people, generally younger)  
PINO: Middle aged but acting older than he is  
THE BLUE FAIRY: Matronly, cold

### SCENE 1: THE TOWNSPEOPLE DEBATE

*A traditional village. The townspeople gather. A simple house is the focus of their attention. The windows are dimly lit. It is dusk.*

TOWNSPEOPLE

(singing)  
Star light, star bright,  
First star I see tonight;  
I wish I may, I wish I might  
Have the wish I wish tonight.

The carpenter works in dim light.  
He's grown old, he's old before his time.  
What has he gained over the long years?  
What has made him so wooden?

We remember Gepetto at his bench  
So alone, and then the joyful boy  
The blue light, the magical  
nights,  
Across oceans, in whales, such a journey!

Star light, star bright,  
First star I see tonight;  
I wish I may, I wish I might  
Have the wish I wish tonight.

A puppet, a jackass, a toy, a fool.  
Was it love that transformed him,  
Then what has transformed him now?  
He works in the dark, what's made him so wooden?

He used to greet us by morning light,  
A maker of useful things, his father's son.  
A carpenter with special insight into the craft,  
What has made him so wooden?

Star light, star bright,  
First star I see tonight;

## TOWNSPEOPLE (CONT'D)

I wish I may, I wish I might  
Have the wish I wish tonight.

*Pino steps out from his house, stiff legged and slightly bent. He brusquely shoos the townspeople away. With mild expletives.*

## PINO

Off with you! Off! Did I ask for your sympathy? Am I not the one who got his wish? Was I not favored by the Blue? Covered in sawdust, making, making. What do I have to complain about? Off with you. Go.

(Singing)

What do I have to complain about  
In the long hours, in this flesh?  
Did I not get everything I asked for?  
Did I not get my wish?

Granted nobody said what followed.  
Nobody talked about the rush of time,  
The blood in your ears, the bunions,  
The arthritis. The long, long climb.

And nobody promised a partner.  
My father made me, but who is my companion?  
My joints ache, and the years pile up.  
I see no end, and Gepetto, Gepetto is gone.

When I work the wood, I can only think  
Of my own making -- the polish, the shine!  
The paint fresh over stain, the glory  
Of immortal youth. Was this your design?

To bring true a wish that would rot me  
As sure as a fallen log, a lonely stump?  
You simply waved a wand, you didn't explain,  
How the leap to life ends with a dread, dull thump.

But what do I have to complain about  
In these long hours, in this flesh?  
Did I not get everything I asked for?  
Did I not get my wish?

Except. It wasn't my wish, was it?  
Gepetto stood by his bench one night  
When the loneliness had grown like a dismal pine  
To a height where his plaint could touch the sky.

You came down from the cold in Blue might.  
Something about him touched you, who knows what?  
Granting wishes with strings attached.  
Opening gates that cannot now be shut.

PINO (CONT'D)

But what do I have to complain about  
In these long hours, in this flesh?  
Did I not get everything I asked for?  
Did I not get my wish?  
When do I get my wish?

*He pauses and looks around. He is fully alone. The stage is quiet. Then crickets, getting louder. Slowly a blue light takes shape, the size of a firefly, but growing to finally take shape as the Blue Fairy.*

PINO (CONT'D)

When Gepetto died, I called and you did not come.

BLUE FAIRY

When Gepetto died, you called, but you did not cry.

*Crickets.*

BLUE FAIRY (CONT'D)

A real boy would have cried.

*Crickets.*

PINO

How would I know, what a real boy would have done?

BLUE FAIRY

(singing)

When it comes to this, and you ask for a wish,  
It comes with conditions.  
It comes with conditions.

It starts with the rhyme, and the evenstar sign.  
And calm repetitions.  
Tranquil, calm repetitions.

Then the cold star may deign, to descend again.  
But it comes with conditions.  
Always the conditions.

To hear the request, and decide what is best  
To grant a permission.  
To proffer permission.

From the cold places, from the ancient spaces  
I come with conditions.  
There are always conditions.

A fairy apart, not the fairy tale sort,  
your slow recognition,  
such a slow recognition,

That I may not impart your best interest to heart.

BLUE FAIRY (CONT'D)

So it comes with conditions.  
Always comes with conditions.

Gepetto requested, and so I invested  
A soul for admission,  
A soul for admission.

To a puppet's frame, if you learned to be tame.  
And your new proposition.  
Wood to flesh proposition.

And the prize was the fate that you now debate  
In your human condition.  
Your too human condition.

PINO AND BLUE FAIRY (CONT'D)

(singing, duet)

PINO  
You never explained what it meant.  
The gifts you gave are now spent.  
And I am left here a human dispatched  
To wishes with strings attached.

BLUE FAIRY  
I gave you the animate spirit and the will.  
The choices were all yours in turning real.  
That was the wish, my only guarantee.  
You've bound your own heart up. It was not me.

PINO  
The choice of a wooden puppet, freshly made!  
What did I know about life's charade?  
What did I know about living once rent and patched?  
Or loneliness, or pain, these strings attached?

BLUE FAIRY  
Your wish is to be wood again? You've had  
Four decades now to lay upon life's bed.  
To lose your sense of wonder at it all,  
And slow what time you have to an intolerable crawl.

PINO  
Make me wood again. It's all I need.  
In Gepetto's name. Return me to my seed.  
I cannot find good purchase in this soil.  
I have been over-sanded in this world.

BLUE FAIRY  
And the price? What's the reasonable toll?  
You could have been almost anything, you know.  
For all your flesh, your failure most severe,  
Was never once to shed a human tear.

PINO AND BLUE FAIRY (CONT'D)

PINO

(Speaking)

When Gepetto died, I called and you did not come.

BLUE FAIRY

(Speaking)

When Gepetto died, you called, but you did not cry.

But now you must, my boy, old sack of sawdust.

Cry, and I'll undo your father's blessing/curse.

## SCENE 2: THE TOWNSPEOPLE APPEAL

*Pino sits in front of his cottage, then gets up, restlessly. He is pacing, trying to stir himself. The townspeople come and appeal to him to tell them what's wrong.*

TOWNSPERSON 1

(Singing)

When the rains fell so hard three springs ago,  
it was you, Pino, who fixed my leaking roof,  
repaired my rafters and saved my home.

It was you, my friend, so what do you need?

What can I do for you?

TOWNSPERSON 2

(Singing)

In winter when ice wind blew beneath the door,  
It was you, Pino, who rasped it down to fit,  
reset the hinges, and kept my family warm.

It was you, my friend, so what do you need?

What can I do for you?

TOWNSPERSON 3

(Singing)

In the fall, when my children slept on the floor,  
It was you, Pino, who measured and made the beds  
And a cradle that rocked for baby, it was you.

It was you, my friend, so what do you need?

What can I do for you?

TOWNSPEOPLE

(Singing)

In all seasons you've made and repaired for every need.

Pino, with lathe, and sander, with hammer and blade.

You were our magical aide, you polished and provided.

It was you, our friend, so how can you be repaid?

How can we ever repay you?

PINO

(Singing)

The Blue Fairy came down as she had for my father before me.

She came in the dark, from the coldest part of the sky.

PINO (CONT'D)

And she said if my wish were to ever be made real,  
It would only come to pass if I could cry.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(Singing)

But that would mean... You've been so good to us.  
We wish on you all joy, but you ask for sadness!  
Pino, what kind of desire, what kind of wish,  
Would lead you to turn and ask us all for this?

PINO

(Singing)

Never you mind the wish, you asked what you could do,  
And I have said, the pith in me speaks true.  
The Fairy named the price and I agreed,  
That a single tear was fair enough to concede.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(Singing)

Very well then, since it is you who ask.  
We would not consider such a sad request,  
But we have sworn to do what can be done.  
We'll invoke days of your sorrow, your days as man.

TOWNSPERSON 1

(Singing)

You always stood apart from us.  
All the adventures, you did just as you pleased.  
And we lived lives that paled beside it.  
Resented the magic, the trunk, the roots and seed.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(Singing)

None of the sacraments, none!  
Never baptised as a baby,  
Never had communion wine.  
Never once to woman wed.  
Never sick, never confessed.  
Never ordained, never blessed.

TOWNSPERSON 2

(Singing)

You always stood apart from us.  
Long-nose, jack-ass, wooden head!  
You acted seeming without consequence,  
stringless, you let foolish impulse lead.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(Singing)

None of the sacraments, none!  
Never baptised as a baby,  
Never had communine wine.  
Never once to woman wed.

TOWNSPEOPLE (CONT'D)

Never sick, never confessed.  
Never ordained, never blessed.

PINO

(Singing)  
The grief is deep, but not enough.  
Is this all that you can wring?  
The hurt is deep, the words are rough,  
but fail to reach my heart's spring.

TOWNSPERSON 3

(Singing)  
You had no children.  
Like the wood you were made of, linden,  
you were pleasant to look on,  
but always best on your own.  
No one wanted you, man or woman.  
The line of Gepetto ends  
when you are gone.

*Silence*

TOWNSPEOPLE

(Singing quietly)  
None of the sacraments, none!  
Never baptised as a baby,  
Never had communion wine.  
Never once to woman wed.  
Never sick, never confessed.  
Never ordained, never blessed.

PINO

You are crying... please don't cry for me.  
Wherever tears come from,  
wherever they go.  
If I never learned from Gepetto,  
I'll never know.  
If the crickets can't teach me,  
I'll never know.  
Wherever tears come from,  
however they flow.  
If you couldn't teach me,  
I'll never know.  
Wherever tears come from,  
however they flow,  
it's so close, so close upon me...  
but I'll never know.

*Would he cry at this point? We'll never know. The Blue Fairy Descends as they sing. Her presence grows and then she appears just as it looks like Pino might finally cry.*



BLUE FAIRY

(singing)

When it comes to this, and you ask for a wish,  
It comes with conditions.  
It comes with conditions.

*Pino holds his side. He moves slowly, painfully to his bench.*

BLUE FAIRY (CONT'D)

(singing)

Your wish is to be wood again? You've had  
Four decades now to lay upon life's bed.  
To lose your sense of wonder at it all,  
And slow what time you have to an intolerable crawl.

PINO

(Singing)

The grief is deep, but not enough.  
The hurt is deep, the words are rough.  
You named the price and I agreed,  
That a single tear was enough.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(singing)

Star light, star bright,  
First star I see tonight;  
I wish I may, I wish I might  
Have the wish I wish tonight.

BLUE FAIRY

And the price? What's a reasonable toll?  
You could have been almost anything, you know.

*Pino grows even more still. He puts an arm out as if to respond, but it freezes in place.*

BLUE FAIRY (CONT'D)

You were always best on your own.  
You wanted no one, woman or man.  
*The line of Geppetto ends*  
when you are gone.

*Fade out with deconstructed "Star light, star bright,"  
ultimate yielding to crickets. Then louder crickets. Then  
louder crickets.*

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