

The Story
of
Pepita
and
Corindo



Richard Cowper

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by
Richard Cowper

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Cheap Street
New Castle, Virginia

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THE STORY OF PEPITA AND CORINDO

When the Toyman's pea-green caravan rattled noisily into the town all the children left the games they were playing and all the dogs gave up their fruitless searchings after bones, and hurried after it. The children laughed and shouted, the dogs barked, and between them they managed to give the Toyman a great welcome, which was just what he wanted. He drove his caravan once round the market place and then along a little winding street to the shop owned by Doctor Chizello. With a great rattling and shouting the Toyman reined up him two horses and climbed stiffly down to the cobbled street. He beat his hands across his chest for they had grown cold holding the reins, and the children clamoured round his asking innumerable questions. He looked down at them and rubbed his forefinger slyly against his nose, then he slipped his hand into the breast of his coat and pulled out a sheaf of coloured bills.

He looked from the bills in his hand to the children. "Who's going to do a bit of poster-sticking for the Old Toyman?" he asked. "Me! Me!" a dozen hands stetched

towards him and the children jumped up and down in their excitement. As though he was doing them a great favour the Toyman divided out the bills amongst them, saying: "Now you do from Tupenny's Corner to the Guildhall. And you from the Guildhall to the Blue Donkey. And you along the High Street. And you round the Square," and as they received their posters the children scampered off with the dogs chasing after them.

The Toyman stood for a moment watching the last one vanish round the street corner, then he brushed his hands down his trousers and walked into the shop owned by Doctor Chizello.

The Toyman was large, but beside Doctor Chizello he seemed monstrous, for the Doctor was a little hunch-backed dwarf. Although everybody called him "Doctor" he knew nothing about medicine. He was, in fact, a toymaker. Nobody knew how old he was (some said over a hundred), but it would have taken a month to count all the wrinkles on his face. He wore a pair of glasses with very thick lenses and he used to peer over the tops of them at the children pressing their noses against the shop window. "*Atchak!*" he would say, "*Tfpoo!* Run away you little monsters", but they never paid any attention to him and just went on staring at his wonderful toys. And what toys they were! Wooden soldiers which could be wound up so that they saluted; toy guns which fired with little puffs of real smoke; dolls whose eyes opened and shut; tiny windmills which ground up coffee beans like real flour — there was no end to the marvels in the shop window of Doctor Chizello!

But the Toyman was not interested in the window. He called: "Chizello! I'm in town again!"

There was a shuffling and a snuffling from the darkness at the back of the shop and a querulous voice piped: "Eh? Eh? Who's making all the din?"

“It’s me, Chizello! The Toyman! Did I wake you up?”

“Eh? The Toyman, eh? Well well, well well,” and Chizello came into the room blinking his eyes and rubbing his spectacles on his dusty sleeve. He looked the Toyman up and down and said: “How long? Six months? A year? *Ptchk!* Time! Who care for Time; he is an old thief. Come on in,” and he lifted up the gate in the counter and the Toyman squeezed through.

“How long you staying?” asked Chizello.

The Toyman shrugged his shoulders: “A week — two, maybe. It depends. How’s business?”

“Business? *Ach! Business.* Who wants *toy* guns? Who wants *toy* soldiers? *Pah!* But — well, you know how it is — the children must play. They are the wise ones, children. Men is — *ach! Tfpoo!* Have some snuff.”

“Got anything for me, Chizello?” asked the Toyman wiping the snuff stains from his chin with a large spotted neck-cloth.

“For you?” the old toymaker sounded surprised. “For you? Now what should I have for you?”

The Toyman laughed loudly but did not answer the question. Chizello went on, “You and your dolls. *Tch, tch, tch,*” and he gave a little dry wheezy laugh. “A big man like you playing with dolls . . . *heh, heh, heh!* Yes, maybe I have though. Maybe Chizello has a surprise for his old friend. He will see.”

The Toyman waited, wondering what the surprise could be, while the old man shuffled off. The shop came alive with a thousand tickings as all the clocks suddenly made themselves heard. *Tick-tock, tick-tock,* for all the world like a tiny factory. Then, *dong! dong! dong! ping-ping-ping! cuckoo! cuckoo! cuckoo!* they all struck three o’clock. The Toyman yawned and stretched. Chizello re-entered the room carrying something wrapped

up in a white cloth.

The Toyman craned forward as the old man began carefully to unwrap the mysterious bundle, saying as he did so: "What are dolls? Wood and paint and cloth and string. What is wood? Trees. Trees grow; trees live; dolls do not live. What is paint? Crushed-up earth; crushed-up plants; crushed-up insects. Paint does not live. Cloth is wool. Wool is from sheep. Sheep live; wool does not live. String too. None lives. *Ptfoo!* But you, with the skill at the tips of your fingers, can make a doll seem to live. You pull a string, a doll's hand moves. You pull another: its head wags. So, so. See!" and he unwrapped the last cloth.

The Toyman gasped: "*Ayeeha!*" he whistled through his teeth.

"Go on, take them up," said Chizello.

The Toyman put his finger softly on one of the two dolls. "Chizello!" he cried rapturously, "they are magnificent!" He bent and examined the dolls more closely.

Chizello said: "The girl is Pepita. The boy is Corindo.

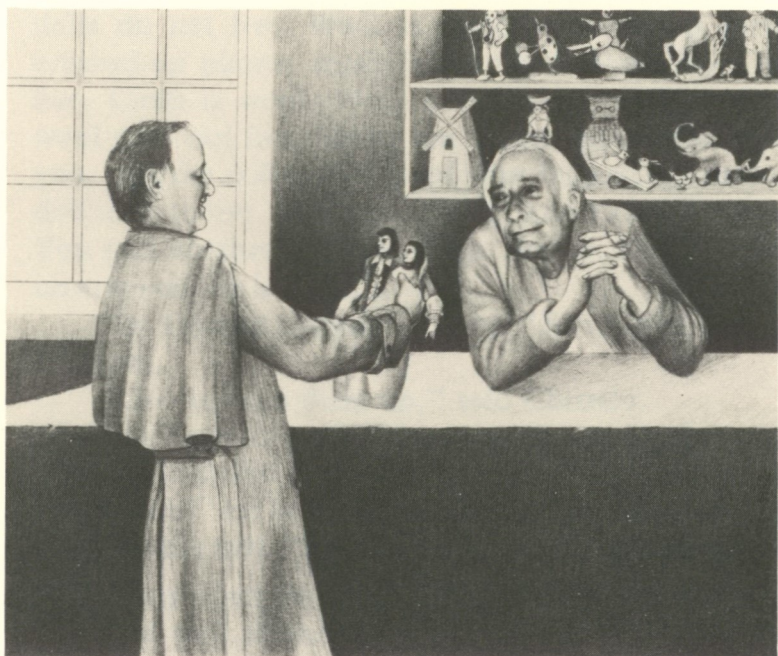
"They might almost be alive," whispered the Toyman.

And well might the Toyman say so. Pepita and Corindo were superb. All the skill from a life-time of experience had gone into the fashioning of their limbs. Their hair was real hair and each separate finger of the hands would move like a real finger. Pepita was a dancer; Corindo a gypsy prince with little gold earrings at each ear and a tiny dagger at his hip.

The Toyman took the wooden controls that Chizello offered him and lifted the two marionettes gently to their feet. He moved the strings, first a little one way, then a little the other, until he had become accustomed to them.

"Now make them act!" cried Chizello.

The Toyman nodded, and, as he did so, life seemed



to flow down the strings into Pepita and Corindo. "Music," said the Toyman. Chizello started a musical box. As though awakening from a long sleep, the two dolls stretched their arms. Then Corindo's feet began to tap in time to the tune and his hands to clap, and Pepita poised on her toes for a moment and then began to pirouette. Corindo caught her hand, swung her round, then off in another direction, twisting, turning, gliding, darting and all in perfect time. It was a brilliant performance.

"Bravo! Bravo!" cried Chizello shaking with laughter while the two dolls bowed politely to the two men and the watching toys. "Bravo! my friend. And now a little tragedy."

The Toyman said not a word but he twitched at the strings again and his fingers flickered sinisterly above Pepita and Corindo. Chizello stared, scarcely breathing.

Ah! What is this? Corindo is looking darkly at Pepita. He suspects! She throws her arms about him but he is cold to her embrace. She wrings her hands. What has she done? Why is he jealous? Slowly she walks away. Corindo stands looking at her. She walks more slowly. Her feet drag. She glances over her shoulder at Corindo. Quickly he walks after her. His doubts have resolved themselves. He catches her by the arm, drags her round to face him. She struggles. His grip is hurting her. So! His hot gypsy blood is roused; his mind made up. His hand flashes to his hip; rises: strikes! Ah! Poor Pepita, the innocent one! She falls, clasping her breast. Remorse surges through Corindo. What has he done? He falls on his knees beside her. She is limp in his arms. Dead. He crosses her hands on her breast. Alas Pepita, no tears can bring you back to him. He rises. His head is bowed low on his chest. Sadly he wanders away. A broken man!

“Well?” said the Toyman.

Chizello gazed up with a start, and brushed a guilty tear away with his coat sleeve. He looked down once more and saw Pepita and Corindo holding hands and bowing as before. He sighed. “Never should I have believed it. You are wonderful, my friend.”

The Toyman laughed. “It is they, not I, who are wonderful. Chizello, old friend, how much do you ask for the dolls Pepita and Corindo?”

Eh? No, no, not a penny. They are yours. Do they not live for you? For me? No. In my hands they are dolls, in yours they are lovers, dancers, actors. Take them. A present.”

“But —”

“*Ptchk! But! Tfpoo! But!* I shall come and watch you tonight. Not another word. Have some snuff. I will get a glass of wine. A curse on this old thief Time, he makes my joints so stiff.”



So Pepita and Corindo left the toyshop of Doctor Chizello and joined the troupe of marionettes run by the Toyman. It was not long before people began to flock to the caravan to see these marvellous actors and their fame spread far and wide. The market place was crowded long before the performance was due to begin and the Toyman took more money in a single night than previously he had done in a week. And every night Chizello had the best seat, right in front of the stage, while after each performance he would go and take supper with the Toyman in his caravan.

“Every night, those two become more human,” he would say to the Toyman. “Why, if only I were a little younger I would come for a holiday in your caravan just to see them act.” But when the Toyman applauded this idea he would sigh and shake his head. “No, no. I am too old now. Too old,” and would let his eyes, round with wonder, linger on Pepita, as though to say, “Did *I* really make *her*?”

But at last the Toyman decided he must be moving on. He said farewell to the old Doctor with many promises to return as soon as possible and, after one last gala performance, closed up the caravan, harnessed the horses and set off through the countryside.

As he journeyed on, he was constantly thinking out new ways of presenting Pepita and Corindo to the public, and at every town he visited he tried out some novel act. But, oddly enough, he found that these two dolls were very different from any of the others in his troupe. For instance, neither would act properly unless it was with the other. He first discovered this when he wanted to put Pepita into a ballet with some other dolls.

She was to be the principal dancer and he took great pains devising her dance, but when it came to the performance, somehow everything seemed to go wrong. Her strings became tangled with each other and instead of fluttering as lightly as a butterfly she dragged along like a dead weight.

The same thing happened when he wanted Corindo to perform on his own. But it was not until one very peculiar experience that he realized finally that these two dolls were quite extraordinary. It happened in this way.

One day, in lifting Pepita from the stage at the end of a performance he accidentally dragged her against a nail and tore her dress. It was a nuisance but not a calamity and he laid her on one side to mend later. Unfortunately one thing happened on top of another and the outcome was that he found himself at the act that old Doctor Chizello had called a "little tragedy". It was impossible for Pepita to play her role and, rather than abandon the act, which was very popular, he put on another doll in her place.

Corindo acted magnificently. Not a murmur came from the audience. This was the real thing! And when his hand flashed to his hip, a sigh like the wind breathing through a field of corn rippled across the market place. The temporary Pepita fell dead and the people who had seen the act on previous nights waited for Corindo to drop on his knees beside her. But Corindo did no such thing. He wiped his knife on his trousers, stuck it back into his belt and sauntered off the stage as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened. The audience gasped once and then applauded frenziedly. What acting! Marvellous! Stupendous! But the Toyman had turned quite grey and was shaking like a leaf. He knew that Corindo's action had been none of *his* doing. True, his hand had held the strings, but for the first time

in his life the strings had controlled the hand! He managed to get Corindo back on to the stage for his bow but then, strangest of all, when he lifted the other doll to her feet, she hung for all the world as though she really *were* dead. Losing no time the Toyman removed them both from the stage and explained to the audience that he was feeling unwell and would be unable to continue that evening.

When he had recovered a little from the shock, the Toyman made a careful examination of both the dolls. It was to no avail. The doll which Corindo had stabbed was useless for further acting. The Toyman made the sign of the Cross over her and laid her at the bottom of his box. He did not pretend to understand what had happened but, all the same, he decided to let Pepita and Corindo act together in future.

Days became weeks and weeks months, until at last a full year had passed since the Toyman had first acquired Pepita and Corindo from Doctor Chizello. In honour of the occasion he decided to give a free performance in the town where he was then staying. Bills were posted accordingly and a great crowd assembled to watch this famous show. Play after play the dolls performed and each was applauded more loudly than the one that preceded it, and when, at the end, all the dolls in the troupe crowded on to the stage and bowed to their patrons the cheers could have been heard a mile away. As the curtain fell for the last time a tall man dressed all in black thrust himself through the dispersing crowd and rapped on the door of the caravan.

“Yes? What can I do for you?” said the Toyman appearing at the door in his shirt sleeves.

“Allow me to present my card,” said the man in black.

The Toyman took the proffered card and peered at it. “*Ayeeha!*” he exclaimed and looked swiftly from the card to the man and back again. “*Ayeeha! The Empress!*”

“Precisely.”

“Then? . . . but? . . . this is an order?” asked the Toyman.

The tall man coughed discreetly: “*Ahem!* It would, I think, be sagacious to regard it as such.”

“But, a *week!*—I haven’t the clothes—and the dolls . . .” The Toyman made a hopeless gesture.

The tall man made a brusque movement with an immaculately gloved hand: “Go to Rodenski’s. Mention my name. It is on the card.”

“A week,” muttered the Toyman. “I don’t see how—a *week!*”

“It would be wise,” said the tall man. “The Empress . . .” and again he waved his hand.

“I shall be there,” said the Toyman and shrugged resignedly.

The tall man bowed and vanished into the darkness. For a moment the Toyman opened his mouth as though to call after him but thought better of it and went back into the caravan, closing the door softly behind him.

Early next morning the pea-green caravan rattled out of the town on the road leading to the capital city. Sitting in front, holding the reins, the Toyman felt alternately elated and depressed. A command to appear before the Empress and her court was fame indeed, but what if something should go amiss? The Toyman felt

quite ill at the thought.

Two days later he reached the capital.

He drove along the main streets gazing about him. Elegant carriages swept past, their drivers cracking long whips over the heads of beautiful horses. Everywhere was bustle and activity. How different from the little market towns the Toyman had been accustomed to.

At last he reined up beside a cab and inquired of the driver the way to Rodenski's. The man seemed surprised when he mentioned the name but though he regarded the Toyman narrowly he told him the direction civilly enough. The Toyman thanked him, shook up his horses and moved on.

Rodenski's stood in a quiet little street away from the main throng of traffic. It looked very old and distinguished. The Toyman straightened the cravat he had donned specially for the occasion, pushed open the door and went inside.

Although it was barely noon, candles were burning in the shop and assistants appeared to flit like ghostly moths among the pools of shadow. One of them floated up to the Toyman: "Are you being attended to, sir?"

The Toyman explained his business and mentioned the name of the tall man.

"If you will be so good as to follow me?" said the assistant and floated down the room to a door at the end. He knocked and entered. In a moment he reappeared and beckoned the Toyman to enter. "Mr. Rodenski," he explained in a whisper.

A long thin man rose from behind a desk and bowed to the Toyman. Then he dismissed the assistant with a wave of his hand. "The gentleman who is to be presented," he murmured. "Yes, yes. Now, if you would be so *vee-ry* kind," and with one swift twitch he had removed the Toyman's jacket. All the time he was

measuring the Toyman he kept up a conversation with himself:

“The waistcoat—flowered satin would be well—roses perhaps? And you are the gentleman with the *leetle* dolls, eh? I have heard of those dolls of yours. The arm up a *leetle*, *M’sieur*—and do they really behave like real people? Perhaps a *vee-ry* fine *cord-du-roi* for the jacket: in claret, and the buttons embroidered? They say you have a *leetle* lady doll, so *vee-ry* tiny, who dances—*sans pareil!*—the head *theese* way a *leetle*—*merci!*—and a tiny prince too? They are lovers, no? *Ach*, so even dolls must love and hate. The breeches: satin: *jaune-de-crème*. And you call these mannikins, which? *Porindo et Cepita*? Eh? Ah those southern names and passions . . . *che sara sara*, love; hate; and the shoes wide buckled—*magnifique!* Three days *M’sieur*; good morning *M’sieur*; I myself shall attend; *adieu, M’sieur, adieu!*”

And the Toyman found himself in the street once more, dazed, but with a feeling that he had left the business in capable hands.

He parked his caravan a little way outside the city and began to rehearse for the coming performance. He set an old woman to stitching new clothes for each doll and he painted new scenery as he thought befitted the surroundings of the court. The day before his presentation the man in black appeared once more and gave him final instructions.

“The court carpenters have made you a small stage in the Royal Theatre,” he said. “You will bring your dolls there tomorrow morning. The caravan may be lodged in the stables. I will attend to your welfare personally”. So saying, he bowed and left the Toyman to his tasks.



Next morning, dressed in his beautiful new suit, the Toyman drove up to the palace and was duly installed in his miniature theatre. He spent the afternoon arranging his dolls and scenery. Half an hour before the performance was due to begin he lifted Pepita and Corindo out of their basket and addressed them in these words:

“My children, Pepita and Corindo, today is the greatest day of my life—of *our* lives; for, as you know, you are to perform before the Empress and her court. In the past you have acted well—nay, magnificently!—but tonight you must act like Gods and Angels, you must excel yourselves.” He paused and looked at them. Pepita was dressed in crimson silk, dusted with tiny silver stars. In her hair was a small white flower. To the excited Toyman it seemed as though she lived and breathed. Corindo wore a velvet coat of the deepest blue with breeches of cream satin. Around his neck was a tiny lace cravat. He looked the perfect dandy! Surveying them both the Toyman wanted to take them in his arms and embrace them, but he felt instinctively that the action would be lacking proper dignity. Instead he contented himself with a

courtly bow and, whether or not it was the wind which did it, Pepita and Corindo both swayed a little at the waist—a gesture of the most perfect grace! The Toyman was so moved he had to blow his nose loudly to conceal his emotion.

In the theatre, beyond the curtains, the courtiers were beginning to take their seats for the performance. The orchestra played waltzes and minuets and the murmur of conversation sounded like the hum of a meadowful of bees on a summer afternoon. The man in black appeared in order to make sure that everything was as it should be. The Toyman climbed up on to his platform behind the stage and the orchestra struck up the National Anthem. The Empress had entered the theatre!

The anthem ended with a fanfare and there was a wild burst of clapping. The Toyman trembled in agitation. Now! But no, the Empress was speaking. The Toyman mopped his forehead. More clapping then at last only the faintest whisper. The orchestra began to play very softly. The lights in the auditorium winked out and the curtain whispered open. The performance had begun!

In a moment of inspiration the Toyman had decided to give Pepita and Corindo only one play and that at the very end. Of course, if there *should* be an encore, but that was a matter for speculation. But tonight, even the almost ordinary dolls seemed to perform better than they had ever done and the Toyman completely forgot to be nervous, losing himself in the antics of the little people controlled by his flickering fingers.

The court was entranced. “Charming! Charming!” murmured the beautiful ladies and fluttered their silken fans. Every act was applauded to the echo. Hearing the clapping the Toyman wondered how they would receive his masterpiece. He felt no anxiety. There was an interval of fifteen minutes during which liveried servants carried

silver trays of refreshments to the audience. Behind the stage the Toyman was drinking a glass of wine and conversing in low tones with the leader of the orchestra. Both nodded sagely from time to time and pledged one another in their wine. Somewhere a bell rang. The leader of the orchestra finished his wine, nodded to the Toyman, and disappeared at the side of the stage. A moment later the orchestra struck up again, the lights were extinguished and the second half of the performance commenced.

First there was a comic drinking scene and after that a tiger hunt. The audience rocked with laughter when the tiger began to hunt the hunter. The tiger had a special encore all to himself. He was a huge success!

The audience was still laughing when the last act was announced. The Toyman called it, quite simply, "Minuet". The curtain parted silently showing the smooth terrace of a great house. A broad flight of steps swept back from the centre and led up to a balcony. A great white moon shone down from a clear sky dappling the terrace with silver. The stage was set. Very, very softly, as though the music was creeping out from inside the house itself, the orchestra began to play a minuet. And on to the stage wandered Pepita and Corindo. His arm was about her waist and her dark head was laid lightly upon his shoulder. A faint murmur of amazement sounded from the darkened auditorium but it died away as the music grew a little louder. As though hearing the music for the first time Pepita raised her head and seemed to whisper to Corindo. He nodded, and releasing his arm, walked a few paces across the terrace then turned to face her. The music paused and Corindo bowed towards Pepita. Pepita curtsied to Corindo. The music swelled again and they began to dance a minuet. Five hundred people were watching the performance but so

still were they that even at the back of the hall it was possible to hear, in the pauses of the music, the faint tapping of little shoes as those two advanced and retreated, bowed and curtseyed, on their miniature terrace beneath the light of that brilliant moon. The dance came to an end but still no sound escaped the enraptured watchers. They saw Pepita slowly ascend the stairs to the balcony. They saw Corindo kneel in supplication on the terrace below. They saw a tiny flower fall like a snowflake. They saw Corindo raise it to his lips, spread wide his arms and gaze up at Pepita, a slim silhouette against the moon. They heard a voice—was it Corindo's?—singing:

*“Softer than any snow your cheek,
Fragile as Summer skies,
I see Love's reflection lying
Lightly in your eyes.”*

And another—was it Pepita's?—for surely it was sweeter far than any human voice—sang in reply:

*“Soft, indeed, is snow, but cold.
A rose is warmer, so I'm told.
Yet snow melts, and with the years,
A rose's perfume disappears.”*

Then the two voices sang together while Corindo slowly climbed the stairs to the balcony:

*“When Love beckons turn and follow,
Always follow.
Lingering is courting sorrow,
Always sorrow.”*



*Fear not lest he should deceive you,
Neither heed where he may lead you,
And when you wake
'Tis wise to break
Old bonds lest they impede you,
And make your love untrue.
And make your love untrue."*

And as the last note died away, the curtain silently hid the two lovers from view. For perhaps five seconds there was silence and then the applause began. Beside this, the ovation that had greeted the earlier acts was a whisper. With one accord the courtiers rose to their feet and cheered: "Encore! Encore! Encore!" The curtain rose on Corindo and Pepita holding hands. They bowed stiffly, first to the audience and then to each other. "A song! A song!" came the insistent cry, but the dolls paid no attention, only bowing as before. Then the whole troupe filed on to the stage to take *their* bow, but the cry remained the same: "Pepita! Corindo!" like the waves of a great sea pounding on the shore. At last, however, it became apparent that there would be no encore and the courtiers moved out of the theatre into the vast reception hall, chattering like monkeys.

Behind the stage a very pale Toyman was drinking glass after glass of brandy. He looked like a man who has seen a ghost. The leader of the orchestra was fluttering round him wringing his hands and repeating again and again: "Yes, yes, but who *are* your singers? Why did you not tell me before? Why? Why? *Why?*" While the Toyman pointed to Corindo and Pepita and shrugged his shoulders.

The man in black appeared, smiling faintly as he heard the frenzied questions of the musician. He coughed to attract the Toyman's attention: "Ahem! Her Highness will receive you in thirty minutes. She wished me to express her pleasure—ahem!—her *great* pleasure."

The leader of the orchestra turned upon him. "Those singers, sir. Do *you* know who they are?"

The tall man appeared to think back. "Singers? *ah, um*, yes, to be sure. Quite charming, *quite* charming. A most excellent performance. *Most* excellent."

At his words the musician seemed to swell. "Heh?" he squeaked, "'Charming'? M'sieur, they were *magnificent!* They were *sublime!!* They were—" but no one ever heard what else they were for the tall man had vanished as silently as he had come and the Toyman was staring at his dolls. A thought seemed to strike the musician. He turned back to the Toyman:

"Tell me, friend, why was there no encore?"

The Toyman put down his empty glass and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. "There was no encore because Pepita and Corindo were dead," he said simply.

From the moment that the two dolls had wandered on to the stage the Toyman had known that he had no real control over them. He knew that no ordinary marionette, however well made, could have danced as Pepita and Corindo had danced their minuet. There was no question of acting. For perhaps five minutes a prince and princess had danced in the moonlight on a deserted terrace while a thousand eyes watched and marvelled. Had two lost spirits found bodies for that brief space of time and lived again their own story? The Toyman did not know, but when he heard the voices singing so ineffably sweet and pure, his heart had gone cold within him and a darkness had fallen over his eyes. He had been roused

by the sound of applause and the sudden weight on his hands. Pepita and Corindo had become two little pieces of jointed wood.

The musician said: "You mean you could not make them perform again?"

"That is right," said the Toyman.

"But, my friend, it was simply because you were tired. They will dance again tomorrow."

"No," said the Toyman, "not tomorrow, or the next day, or the next. Pepita and Corindo are dead."

The musician looked at the two dolls and then at the Toyman. "Come, my friend," he said, "you must prepare to meet the Empress."

It is said that happiness and sorrow lie very close to one another. That night the Toyman received many honours and until the day he died he wore the enamel and emerald ring the Empress gave him to mark the occasion. Lords and ladies vied with each other to converse with him and when he left the palace the following day he was a rich man.

But the Toyman's one desire was to see Doctor Chizello, for he had an idea that the old man would be able to explain what had happened to Pepita and Corindo.

Travelling by the shortest route it still took him a month to reach the town where Chizello lived. As before the children and the dogs followed him down the street to the toyshop, but this time there were no bills for posting and the children hung back as he approached the shop.

Blinds had been pulled down over the window and the shop front had a derelict air about it. The Toyman

knocked on the door while the children stood a little way off, watching him silently. There was no answer. He knocked again. Then one of the children, bolder than the others, called: "The Doctor's dead, Mister Toyman," and all the children chanted: "Yes, Toyman, the Doctor's dead."

"When did he die?" asked the Toyman, but he felt he already knew what they were going to say.

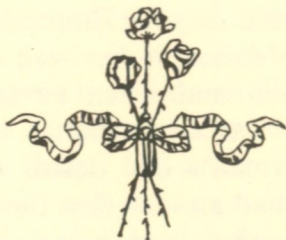
"About a month ago!"

The Toyman climbed slowly back into his seat and picked up the reins. He seemed suddenly to have become very old.

"Will you do a show for us tonight, Toyman?" cried the children.

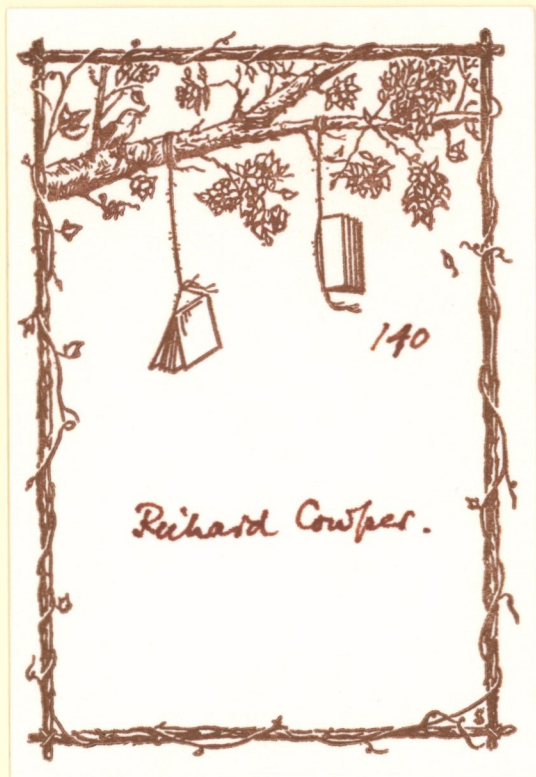
For a moment the Toyman appeared not to have heard the question, then he said heavily:

"A show? Tonight? Why, of course, of course," and drove slowly away down the winding cobbled street.



The Story of Pepita and Corindo was printed on Andorra text. There were twenty-six lettered presentation copies reserved for private distribution. Ninety-nine ordinary edition copies were handsewn into wrappers of Gainsborough with parchment endpapers.

The signature plate is *rives de lin*, a 75% rag/ 25% linen paper mould made in France by Arjomari.



Seventy-five copies were handsewn into covers of *Canson Mi-Teintes* made by Canson & Montgolfier in France, with endpapers of *kinwashi*; the slipcases were handmade by J. Anthony Haverstick. These slipcased books were signed by both the writer Richard Cowper and the artist Richard Salvucci.

