

# It Is Tempting



Written and Illustrated by Pip

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Have you heard the story of Pip and the mystery berries? It all began on a spring day. When spring shows its new greenery, but a tiny hint of winter still lingers in the air. Pip was deep into the old forest and about to make a mistake.

Sunlight filtered through the old trees onto the low leafy bushes blanketing the forest floor. Pip sat down and lifted a green leaf. Small white bell shaped blossoms caught his eye. He carefully picked one and closely examined it.

It does look and smell like a blueberry blossom. It is tempting. I will taste it, thought Pip.



"Stop!" the voice whispered. It was a familiar voice, though a most unusual voice. One that always reminded him of the winds rushing through leaves on a blustery day. "You know better than to put something unknown into your mouth," the voice continued.

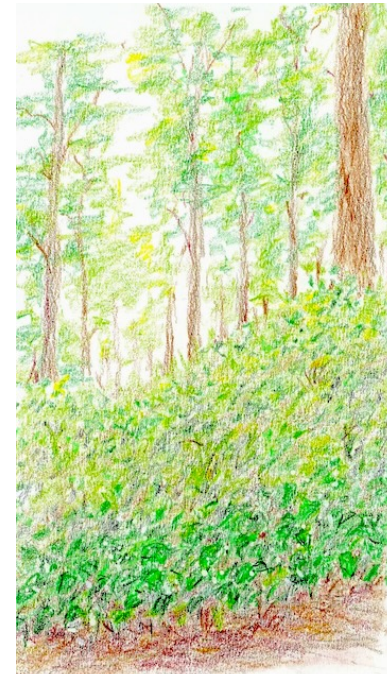
"Yes, Woody," he replied. "I thought these were blueberry blossoms."

"You were about to give into temptation, but you were not sure about them," said Woody, who was now looming beside him.

"You could tell me. You know the forest better than anyone," said Pip.

"And, you could use your superpower," whispered Woody.

"Yes, of course, my superpower," Pip replied.



Pip had long understood he could never be as swift as a deer. Nor, climb and leap as a Lynx, fly silently through the night as the owl, nor touch the sky like the tallest trees. He had however, come to realize he did have his own superpower. He could read.

Woody had many times encouraged him to read to find answers. Funny, now that he thought about it, he had never asked if Woody could read. Whether or not, Woody had still taught him something quite amazing, how to listen to the land.

Right then and there, Pip did just that. He sat quietly, smelling the earthy forest air, perhaps even a hint of the blossoms around him. He listened to the sounds of the forest. Slowly he blended into the forest. So well did he fit into the woods that anyone who happened to walk by might have never noticed him. But, he was there. He felt the rays of sun filter through the leaves high above and dance across the forest floor as the trees moved to the winds. The mystery plants gleamed in the sunlight. All of this prepared him for the task to come that evening.

In the loft of the old red cabin, Pip sat at his desk. The stout wooden desk perched by the loft window overlooking the meadow. Though, it was not the meadow that captured his attention. Rather, it was books. He was

reading about, as you have probably guessed, berries. Pip had reached out and talked to his neighbor, a farmer who grew berries. He, in turn, had given Pip the books to read. And, now Pip was reading, scribbling some notes and drawings to help him remember.



When Pip returned to the forest, he felt strong. He walked with purpose. Pip was prepared with knowledge. As he went deeper and deeper into the forest, he sensed Woody was near. Sensed, rather than saw, as Woody blended so perfectly into the forest that Pip had to really look to see Woody. Often, Pip was quite content to know Woody was simply nearby and listening, but not today.

“Well, Woody, I have done my homework. I would like to return to the, um, blueberries. Yes, blueberries.”

And, so they did. This time, Pip explained what he had learned about blueberries. He talked of the importance of the soil, stages of growth, and the many creatures that depended upon blueberries for food. Yes, he tried the blueberry blossom.

The taste reminded him that blueberries were just weeks away. Summer is near.

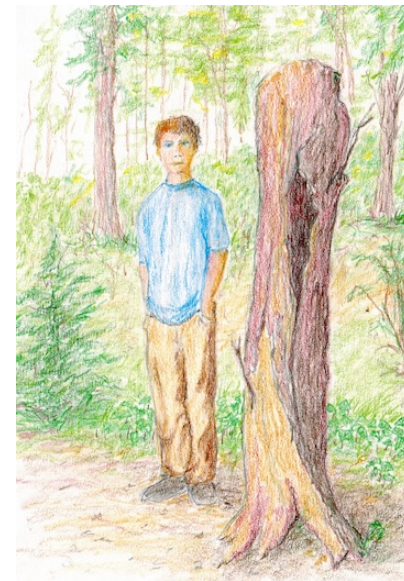


Because he had done his homework so well, he also found strawberry and lingonberry. Then, not too far away, he heard his sister calling him.

“I am over here, Emma,” he replied.

“Hej, hej, your supper is waiting for you,” she said as she came into view. “And, who were you talking to?”

“I was talking to Woody.”



"Ah, you and your imaginary friend," she replied. "All I see is a big old hollow stump standing beside you.

Pip laughed as he saw Woody smile, too. Woody was impossible to see when Woody didn't want to be seen.

As Pip and his sister walked away, he talked to her about how he was tempted, and almost made a mistake by tasting an unknown plant.

"I found that I could learn from my mistake. I listened to an expert. Reading more, I also learned how closely we are connected to the forest," he said.

"It gives us its bounty. We, in turn, must protect the forest. We are fragile and so is the forest, but together we become stronger," continued Pip.

"It seems you had quite an adventure, Pip," she said. I need to spend more time reading and exploring the forest, too," Emma sighed. Though, she was already wondering what she would discover on her own adventure into this forest.

Sometimes a mistake, near mistake, or other challenge gives us an opportunity to learn and be resilient. Resilient you ask. That means we are able to bounce back when we meet with the unknown. Pip almost made the mistake of tasting a plant he believed was a blueberry. He bounced back from the unknown when he read about the mystery plant and talked to his neighbor, an expert on growing berries. Learning makes us stronger by testing us. It tests our old ways of thinking, our old beliefs. As we learn, we change, we grow.

Like Pip, most of us have the ability to read and learn and change the way we think about something. This we do better than any other creature on this planet. That's an amazing superpower.



I suppose mentioning creatures means we need to mention Woody. Is Woody real? Well, I guess that depends upon how much you believe in myths and legends. We could say that Woody was just Pip's vivid imagination. Or, we might give some thought to the mythical forest creature, Rå or Skogsrå. Maybe, just maybe, you might want to do some reading about the Rå. That and a long walk into the deep forest.

Inspired by a cabin in Österhaninge and walks in Tyresta National Park.

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