



SERIES 1 · BOOK 1

Faster! Higher!

By JC

Ages 4+

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Pip is a mouse, brave yet small.

Sometimes Pip wishes to be tall.

Pip lives in a field overlooked by a wood.

Pip sometimes feels sad, but mostly good.

At the edge of the wood, in the shade of the trees,

Fox called out to Pip on the warm summer breeze.

"Oh, Pip! How I've missed you! Come, run with me,
do...

there's nobody else in the wood quite like you!"

And Pip ran to Fox, and the afternoon shone.

They raced through the long grass and laughed and ran on.

"You're fast!" laughed Fox, bright as a flame. "You're the best!

Today you ran faster than all of the rest!"

Pip glowed like a berry. Pip felt very fine.

If I run fast each morning, the warmth will be mine.

But the very next morning, Pip ran to the wood.

"Was I fast enough, Fox? Was I brave? Was I good?"

Fox smiled a slow smile. "You gave it your best, I agree...

though Rabbit, I noticed, ran past you quite breezily.

I'm sure you'll get there - you still have room to grow,

and there's so much you could be, when you're ready, you know."

So Pip ran a little bit faster.

And Pip jumped a little bit higher.

Faster! A little bit faster!

Higher! A little bit higher!

Fox praised the days Pip was the quickest.

Fox turned very quiet when Pip came up short.

"You're trying," said Fox, "and I know that you care...

but caring without the gift won't carry you there."

Faster! A little bit faster!

Higher! A little bit higher!

But one golden morning, Fox called through the trees...

"Oh, Pip! Let's just run - just you and just me!"

They raced without watching, they laughed without score,

and Pip thought: *Is this what we were running for?*

But by the third morning, the old measuring came.

"Still something to work on," said Fox. "Just the same."

Pip ran and Pip practised and worked every day.

And every day, something else got in the way.

Too slow. Too uncertain. Too quick to feel doubt.

Pip didn't quite know what the race was about.

One evening, Pip stopped in the field, all alone.

The legs had gone heavy. The warm light had flown.

The *faster* had faded. The *higher* had too.

Pip sat in the long grass and said: *What do I do?*

And there, at the wood's edge, where the dusk met
the dark,

was the pale face of Owl, a small, steady spark.

Pip walked toward the oak.

It wasn't very far.

But it felt like the right thing,

just going was enough.

Owl appeared at the hollow, watching Pip walk.

"I saw you out there," said Owl. "Come in. Let's talk."

Pip sat and began, and the telling came slow..

the running, the trying, the nearly-but-no,

the way that the goalposts kept moving ahead.

Owl listened to every last word that Pip said.

Owl didn't rush in to fix it or mend.

Owl let all the words find their way to their end.

Then, quiet as morning, Owl said:

"That race wasn't yours to run, Pip.

You were enough.

You were enough,

before you'd even begun."

Pip sat with that sentence until it felt true.

Something went quiet in the middle of Pip.

Something said: oh.

Something said: oh. I knew.

"Will you still be here?" Pip asked.

"Tomorrow? What if..."

"Just here," said Owl.

"Just here. When you need me."

Pip walked home through the long grass, unhurried
and small.

The field was enormous. The sky was a hall.

The stars were beginning. The air tasted right.

Pip walked home through the new autumn night.

END

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*THIS STORY WAS DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATION
WITH AN AI WRITING TOOL.*