



SERIES 1 · BOOK 4

# Was That Really Allowed?

By JC

*Ages 4+*

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Leaves all swept up.

Pip proud and tall...

a pile like a mountain,

a copper-gold haul.

All morning to build it,

all Pip's work, all found:

the finest leaf pile

for miles around.

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Then Fox came running  
with a grin and a bound -  
the best sort of morning,  
the best friend around.

"Oh, Pip! What a pile!

The finest! The peak!

The tallest leaf mountain  
that I've seen all week!"

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They chased round the pile  
and ran round the trees.

Fox showed Pip a trick  
of hiding in leaves.

Then Fox took a run up...

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Leaves all swept up.

Pip felt so proud.

Fox jumped in the pile -

*Was that really allowed?*

---

"Oh, sorry," laughed Fox - the pile no more.

"If they weren't to be jumped in,

what did you pile them for?"

Pip tightened just slightly.

"Come on," said Fox, "let's go -

let's race to the burrow?

Three, two, one -"

And the afternoon glowed.

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They swept the leaves back  
to a glittering hill.

Fox sang as they worked.

The whole forest went still.

Fox told the best stories  
of the field and the wood.

Fox said sorry, thought Pip.

But Pip didn't feel good.

---

Leaves all swept up.

Pip felt so proud.

Fox jumped in the pile -

*Was that really allowed?*

---

"Sorry!" said Fox.

"Though - I thought you were done.

You'd stepped back, hadn't you?

I thought we'd moved on.

Was this still your pile?

Just leaves, can't you tell -"

Fox helped sweep it back up.

Fox fussed and was kind.

Two sorrys, two piles both down.

Something in Pip wore a small creasing frown.

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Leaves all swept up.

Pip felt so proud.

Fox jumped in the pile.

"Fox -" Pip said aloud.

"You - every time - the leaves - you keep -"

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Fox stopped.

Fox was still.

"Pip," Fox said, quiet as the cold coming in.

"I've said sorry. Twice over. What else should I do?

Did I jump in your pile just to hurt you?

After everything, Pip - after all we've been through?"

Fox looked at the leaves.

"I thought that you knew

how much I cared for you.

I really thought you knew."

And there in the leaves -

it was Pip who said sorry.

It was Pip, all the while.

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Pip walked through the trees  
as the afternoon faded.

Grey clouds filled the sky,  
this morning's work wasted.

Pip came to Owl's hollow  
as Pip sometimes would.

Owl was reading.

Owl hadn't seen Pip.

Pip stood at the edge of the hollow.

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Owl glanced down.

"Oh. Pip.

I didn't hear you, come in.

I'm sorry - I wasn't quite with you. Begin  
again - I'm here now."

Owl set the book down.

Owl listened.

---

Something in Pip

went quiet and small.

Fox had said sorry...

all day leaves had dropped.

Owl said it just once,

and then Owl had stopped.

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*Pip said: oh.*

*Sorry when nothing changes*

*isn't sorry at all.*

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Pip walked back alone

in the gold afternoon.

Pip swept and Pip gathered,

without any sound -

the finest leaf pile

for miles around.

END

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