

PIP'S PODCAST

"Pilot"

Written by

Elliott Maya

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elliolor@gmail.com

INT. PIP'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Warm light illuminates a pretty standard child's bedroom, if children's bedrooms were furnished by Ikea's outdoor section: we see a terra-cotta pot desk, moss carpeting, a small planter box filled with fertilizer for a bed.

In real life this set-up would warrant a CPS speed dial, but since this is an animated kid's show, it's adorable.

PIP (O.S.)
Hallo, I'm Pip! Oops, vänta, hang
on.

The screen FUMBLES, JOSTLES and FLIPS -- it's a video camera!

On PIP (6), a sweet, brown SEEDLING with a sprout curlicue for hair and a gut-wrenchingly charming Swedish accent. They wave cheerily at the camera, then swing it around to ÄRTA (8), a shy-looking pea flower-boy in a standard boom operator outfit, operating a pinecone boom mic.

PIP (CONT'D)
That's Ärtä, our sound operator. He
makes sure you can hear me! Say
hallo Ärtä!

Ärtä stares at the ground, waves shyly, then inches o.s.

PIP (CONT'D)
He's a bit shy. Welcome to the
first episode on our video podcast
channel. Our podcast is all about
solving mysteries around
Moonvalley Nursery. I'm Pippa, but
my friends call me Pip. You're my
friends now too! Hooray!

Pip jumps excitedly. The camera falls to the floor. THUMP.

MUM (O.S.)
Pippa, are you bangin' up that new
recorder of yours again?

Pip hurriedly sticks the camera and sound equipment in a leaf satchel. We watch from a tiny hole at the top of the bag.

PIP
No mum, me and Ärtä are going
outside for the podcast now, bye!

MUM (O.S.)
Tell Miss Astrid I say hullo. And
don't let your roots get wet!
(MORE)

MUM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You'll get athleaf's root and need
your special root cream again!

PIP

(embarrassed)

MUUUUUUM! Lalalala, can't hear you!

Pip hurries out the door, addressing camera in a whisper.

PIP (CONT'D)

On today's episode, we investigate
the mysterious case of Miss
Astrid's Missing Aphids!

Ärta hustles after Pip with the sound equipment.

TITLE CARD: "CASE #1: MISS ASTRID'S MISSING APHIDS"

EXT. MOONVALLEY NURSERY - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

The feed clicks back on. Pip skips through a vibrant nursery neighborhood filled with all sorts of plants. Plant and bug people wave to Pip and Ärta as they pass. Pip narrates.

PIP

I've lived in Moonvalley Nursery
all my life, so I'm an expert on
strange things happening here. Like
the case of the Lunchbox Looter--

INSERT: A photo of Pip nuzzling their favorite lunchbox,
followed by another of Pip distraught and empty-handed. Red
marker lines circle where the missing lunchbox should be.

PIP (CONT'D)

The lunchbox is still at large.
Then there was the Gonezo Grapes
Caper from this summer--

INSERT: A newspaper clipping showing bug farmers puzzling
over their grapeless vines. Pip and Ärta film in the bg.

PIP (CONT'D)

We had to cancel the Grape-juice
Festival. My mums were so sad, they
couldn't even think about grapes or
their flowers would wilt.

Pip climbs an ANTHILL. At the top is a trapdoor with a berry
pull-bell. Pip and Ärta stand on it.

PIP (CONT'D)

But today's mystery is the case of
Miss Astrid's Absent Aphids.

Ärta <RINGS> the bell with the mic. Pip yells to the door:

PIP (CONT'D)

Hallo from my mum, Miss Astrid!

MISS ASTRID (O.S.)

Pippa! Is that you?

PIP

Yes, Fröken Astrid!
(to camera)
Hold on tight.

MISS ASTRID (O.S.)

Great timing. Come on then.

The door opens. Ärta catches Pip and they fall in.

PRE-LAP:

PIP (O.S.)

Okay Miss Astrid, please tell the
camera what you told my mum.

INT. ASTRID'S ANTHILL - LIVING ROOM

Pip awkwardly pulls themself into an armchair made of living
drone ants (like in a cheerleader tower).

ANNOYED ANT

Watch it, mate.

Pip stands right back up. No thanks.

PIP

Miss Astrid, do you have any non-
breathing chairs?

Pip turns the camera toward the chair where ASTRID MYRA, a
Scandinavian QUEEN ANT, sits. Her drone-chair strains under
her. She waves Pip to a tiny mushroom stool in the corner.

MISS ASTRID

I do. My boys here are just on
chair duty after what happened with
the aphids.

Pip sits on the mushroom stool. The boom mic hovers in frame.

PIP
Can you tell us what happened?

She nods, hands Pip leaf-polaroids illustrating her words.

MISS ASTRID
Aphid farming is the Myra family's livelihood. Our aphids make the best sap in Moonvalley, so losing them is a big problem. Right, lads?

DRONE ANTS (AS ONE)
(flatly)
Yes, Mum. We love being furniture.

EXT. APHID RANCH - MOMENTS LATER

Miss Astrid (carried by the drone ant chair) shows Pip around the aphid ranch, which is on the broad leaf of a large plant. She grabs a cup of aphid sap and offers it to Pip.

MISS ASTRID
We give the aphids a warm place to live and good food to eat. In return they create delicious sap for us to eat. Try a sip.

Pip sips sap and <HUMS HAPPILY>. They hold it up for Ärta, who sips, then nods gravely.

PIP
Tasty! This sap would go great with my mum's famous sunbutter cookies.

MISS ASTRID
Absolut, of course.

Ärta uses SIGN LANGUAGE to communicate to Pip.

PIP
Ärta says, when did the aphids go missing?

Miss Astrid sets Pip's cup down and looks pointedly at the DRONE ANT she's using as a seat cushion. It gulps.

DRONE ANT #1
Two nights ago. We were watching over them, not goofing off *at all*--

EXT. ANTHILL - APHID RANCH (FLASHBACK)

The drones goof off, taking turns Olympic-lifting pebbles, paying ZERO attention to the aphids (bug cows) eating leaves.

DRONE #1 and its friends race aphids down the plant stalk.

DRONE #1

Catch me if you can, you slow-saps!

REVEAL the aphids are going at a glacial pace.

DRONE #1 (O.S.) (CONT'D)

But then, the aphids just vanished.

<SFX: WET WHIP CRACK> The aphid under the drone is yanked out from under it. Then the second aphid. The third. So on. The drones fall in a heap and look around. All their aphids are GONE. They run back to the ranch. The aphid stalls are EMPTY.

DRONE #1 (CONT'D)

We're in trouble.

DRONE #2

You're in trouble. I'm out of here!

Drone #2 throws a bundle over its shoulders and walks away.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. APHID RANCH - PRESENT

Ärta SIGNS at Pip again. Pip nods eagerly.

PIP

I agree. Disappearing aphids?
Mysterious.

MISS ASTRID

Nej, don't you see? They weren't
disappeared; they were *stolen*! By--

CAMERA POV: Pip does an INTENSE CLOSE UP on Miss Astrid. The boom mic bumps her head.

MISS ASTRID (CONT'D)

Steg tillbaka, back up!

Ärta steps back. The boom mic is still visible in frame.

MISS ASTRID (CONT'D)

By our rivals, the *Nyckelpiga*
family!

INT. ASTRID'S ANTHILL - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Ärta mics up RINGA NYCKELPIGA, a hoity-toity ladybug woman with a posh Finnish accent and posher cravat. She <HUFFS> at Astrid, sat across. Pip angles the camera between them.

PIP

So, Missus...

RINGA

Ringa Nyckelpiga the fifteenth, heiress of the Nyckelpiga estate and owner of the *best* aphid farm in Moonvalley, unlike Astrid here.

ASTRID

Only because you stole the Myra family aphids! What are you waiting for, Pippa?! Make her admit it!

As the ladies heat up, Ärta swings his boom mic back and forth faster and faster, struggling to keep up.

PIP

Missus Ringa, is that true? Did you take Miss Astrid's aphids?

RINGA

Of course it isn't! I would NEVER let Nyckelpiga aphids mingle with lowly Myran aphids. Besides, why would we steal *yours* when *ours* are the ones that are missing?

PIP

Your aphids went missing too?

RINGA

Yes, it's the strangest thing. They've never run off before.
(narrows eyes at Astrid)
I think they were carried off.

MISS ASTRID

What a load of crumbs. She took my aphids. I'll not hear otherwise!

Ringa tugs Pip to her side.

RINGA

If you're looking for the aphid thief, you're staring right at her!

PIP

Well I have an idea that --

Astrid grabs Pip's other hand and tugs them close.

MISS ASTRID

Your fancy schmancy act's not fooling anyone. You stole my aphids, or I'm a beetle.

PIP

Perhaps, but if you'd both listen--

Ringa and Astrid BLUSTER AND ARGUE while tug-of-warring Pip. Ärta breaks a sweat, struggling to keep up.

PIP (CONT'D)

(enough is enough)
PLEASE LISTEN TO ME!!!

Startled, Ringa and Astrid let go.

PIP (CONT'D)

I know how to fix this!

Astrid cracks her knuckles.

MISS ASTRID

So do I.

Pip shoos Astrid off while Ärta helps Ringa up.

PIP

No! I'll find out what happened to *both* your aphid herds. Our podcast is all about solving mysteries, and this is our biggest one yet!

Pip grabs the map of Ringa's farm and heads to the door.

RINGA

Ahm... what are we supposed to do?

PIP

Wait here and get along.

Pip straightens their sprout-bang with as much primness as a Swede can muster and waltzes out. Ärta gives them a "for shame" look and shuts the door behind him.

Astrid and Ringa look at each other. And keep tussling.

EXT. NYCKELPIGA FARM - LATER

Pip wears their camera like a Go-Pro and shows it around a clean, high-tech farm: leaf conveyor belts, fancy cattle stalls, and more populate it. It makes Astrid's ranch look like a petting zoo.

PIP
 Welcome to the Nyckelpiga farm!
 Although *I'm* not feeling too
 welcome at the moment...

Camera zooms in on a medieval-looking milker dripping sap.

PIP (CONT'D)
 <SHUDDERS> I do not want to know
 what that's for. But I DO want to
 know where these aphids have run
 off to, so let's go look - ooWOAH!

Pip slips in a puddle of aphid sap and falls spread-eagle. Ärta leans over them and blinks. He holds his hand out.

PIP (CONT'D)
 ... in a minute. I think I bruised
 my sprout.

EXT. NYCKELPIGA FARM - STALLS - MOMENTS LATER

Pip and Ärta search the farm. They peek in several stalls.

PIP
 Hullo, aphids?

The stall door creaks open. Empty. While they're distracted, a WHITE THREAD drops from above and snags Pip's lens cap.

EXT. NYCKELPIGA FARM - FEED TROUGH - MOMENTS LATER

Pip back-strokes through a feed trough full of leaves/grains.

PIP
 Aphids? Buddies?

Ärta pops out of the feed and accidentally spooks Pip. Some feed gets in their mouth.

PIP (CONT'D)
 <COUGH> Yuck! Aphid food!
 (thoughtful chew)
 Actually, it's not bad.

A THREAD grabs Ärta's sound bag and pulls it to the ceiling.

EXT. NYCKELPIGA FARM - CATTLE FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Ärta pushes Pip, who is inside a leaf hay-bale, through the empty "cattle" field. It's very *Katamari Damacy*.

PIP
Ayyyyfiddyfiddyfiddies!

A white thread yanks everything but Pip's camera and the mic.

EXT. NYCKELPIGA FARM - MAIN - MOMENTS LATER

Pip addresses camera at the front of the farm.

PIP
There are no sign of aphids
anywhere! Something spooky is going
on. But what could it be... ?

Two slack threads latch onto their camera and Ärta's boom mic. They both look up. Pip waves at something above.

PIP (CONT'D)
Well, hallo there!

The threads tighten and lift them off the ground and o.s!

INT. SPIDER DEN - AFTERNOON - MOMENTS LATER

BLACK SCREEN. The screen parts like eyes as Pip wakes up in a SPIDER WEB. Pip wipes sap off their camera lens and turns to Ärta, who helps them up. Together they look around.

A LUNCHBOX is webbed to the floor. Pip GASPS.

PIP
That's my lunchbox from the Case of
the Lost Lunchbox!

Pip struggles to pull it free. It doesn't budge.

PIP (CONT'D)
<GRUNT> Stand back Ärta! I don't
want to-- <GRUNT> Hurt you with my
incredible strength! <STRAINING>

Ärta gives the camera a long-suffering look and nudges the lunchbox with his root. The lunchbox pops into Pip's arms.

PIP (CONT'D)

See, I told you! <STOMACH RUMBLES>
Maybe my lunch is still in here...

Pip opens the lunchbox. Out fall a withered bunch of grapes.

PIP (CONT'D)

The Gonezo Grapes!

CHOMP! Ärta looks up and camera follows. An aphid hanging from the webbed ceiling chews on Ärta's hair-petals.

WIDEN TO REVEAL: Aphids everywhere! Cow-like Aphids trot around a spider web, chewing webbing instead of cud and getting sap everywhere. One aphid chews on Ärta's missing gear. Ärta tug-of-wars with it and yanks the gear free.

PIP (CONT'D)

Everything that's gone missing has
been here the whole time, But where
is here? Where are we?

SPINDEL (O.S.)

That's easy. You're in my home!

SPINDEL, a Zebra Jumping Spider in a turtleneck with LA gay energy, drops from the ceiling and lands in front of them.

Ärta signs WHO ARE YOU? at Spindel. Pip steps forward.

PIP

What he said! Who are you?

SPINDEL

Good green, you two are full of
questions! I LOVE IT! I just KNOW
you'll be great company. Oh, where
are my manners? I am Spindel the
spider, at your service. Can I get
you anything? Snack? Cuppa? Cookie?

PIP

Ehm... we'd like you to give back
the aphids you took, please.

Spindel looks a little indignant. He adjusts his turtleneck.

SPIDER

Took? I haven't taken anything!
These big fellas were wandering
around an open field, poor things!
I heard them arguing so I decided
to help them out!

Spindel fondly pats an aphid. Pip and Ärta share a look.

PIP

Arguing?

SPINDEL

Yes! You would not BELIEVE how much drama they have. I'm helping them work through it.

Spindel moves to TWO APHIDS looking at each other. One laying on a spun therapist's couch <MOOS>. Spindel translates.

SPINDEL (CONT'D)

Lars. Mikael says you two are having communication issues and he wishes you would communicate more.

The other aphid, "Lars," blinks. Spindel looks to "Mikael."

SPINDEL (CONT'D)

Remember, use "I feel" statements.

"Lars" snorts. Spindel pats the aphids and returns to Pip.

SPINDEL (CONT'D)

See what I mean? *Sheesh*.

Spindel uses webbing to pull the aphids, objects, and Pip into his arms for a big hug. Ärta ducks and stands back.

SPINDEL (CONT'D)

But now you're here, too! Welcome to your new home!

Ärta pulls Pip free and sets them down.

PIP

We can't stay here! The aphids belong back on their ranches, I belong to my mum, and Ärta belongs to the Sound Operators Guild!

Ärta flips his cap around, revealing the S.O.G. logo.

SPINDEL

No, stay! I can solve your problems too! Or we can play with... this?

He grabs the camera and stuns himself with the flash.

SPINDEL (CONT'D)

Nevermind. What about web ball?

Spindel spins a net and a racket, and smacks a web-ball at Äрта. It sticks to Äрта's hat. He kneels. Pip pulls it off.

SPINDEL (CONT'D)

You're as good at it as the aphids.

REVEAL an aphid covered in web-balls. Spindel <TSKS>.

PIP

We're indoor kids.

SPINDEL

Okay, okay, how about I make you one of my famous aphid sap kaffes?

Spindel holds a mugfull of sap and makes an "Eh? You like?" gesture at Pip and Äрта. Pip goes green. Äрта looks curious.

PIP

That's very... creative, but we should be getting home now. I think the aphids want to go home too.

CUT TO an aphid trying to eat webbing. It <MOOS SADLY>.

SPINDEL

<SIGH> Alright, alright.

Spindel snips the web, lowering them all to the floor. Äрта lays face-first on the ground, relieved. Pip's root-feet land in a puddle of sap. They shake most of it off.

PIP

Much better. Thank you, Spindel.

SPINDEL

But if you guys leave, I'll have nothing to do and no *drama* to fix. I CRAVE it so I can RESOLVE IT.

PIP

I wish we could help you, Spindel, but if we don't get these aphids back to Miss Ringa and Miss Astrid, they'll keep arguing forever.

Äрта gives Pip a "We know some drama you can resolve" look.

Pip's sprout perks straight up -- they've got an idea!

PIP (CONT'D)

On second thought... Spindel, how would you like two new clients?

INT. ASTRID'S ANTHILL - DAY - LATER

Astrid and Ringa are <ARGUING> when the APHID HERD floods in.

ASTRID

My herd!

RINGA

Your herd? That's my herd!

PIP (O.S.)

Not quite!

Pip and Ärta enter riding on the back of Moomoo.

PIP (CONT'D)

It's *both* of your herds! And
neither of you is an aphid thief.

RINGA/MISS ASTRID

But if *she* didn't take it, who did?

PIP

Ahem. Spindel?

From the shadows above comes... SPINDEL!

He starts touching EVERYTHING and talking a mile a minute.

SPINDEL

Living furniture? Trendy.
I mean, hi, I'm Spindel.

Ringa scuttles back. Miss Astrid uses her drones as a shield.

RINGA/MISS ASTRID

Who are you?!

PIP

Spindel is our *neighbor*. He lives
on the edge of Moonvalley Nursery.
He took the aphids but it was just
a big misunderstanding.

SPINDEL

I didn't know those aphids were
yours. When I saw your aphids
sitting around and arguing--

CUT TO:

"Lars" and "Mikael" being the least dramatic beings alive.

BACK TO:

SPINDEL (CONT'D)

I took them home to help them talk
through their personal problems.
(conspiratorial whisper)
Of which there are many.

Pip gives Spindel an encouraging look. He continues:

SPINDEL (CONT'D)

But *you two* look like you have more
drama in your little antennae than
all of your aphids combined.

Ringa and Miss Astrid eye each other, a little embarrassed.

RINGA

"Drama"? We don't have drama.

MISS ASTRID

Ringa *wishes* she had drama with me.

RINGA

What?! I do not!

Spindel spins a therapist's chair between them and sits.

SPINDEL

Let's start with "I" statements.
Miss Astrid, why do you feel like
you argue with Miss Ringa so much?

MISS ASTRID

I feel like Ringa doesn't like me.

RINGA

That's not true! I like you. I just
don't like when you roughhouse.

MISS ASTRID

I guess I could roughhouse less.

Ringa and Astrid look at each other, brightening up and not
wanting to tackle each other for once.

SPINDEL

See how nice it is when you clearly
communicate your feelings?

Pip turns the camera back on themselves, makes a "shh!"
gesture. Ärtä grabs their stuff. The two tip-toe past Moomoo,
out the door. Moomoo <MOOS> and kicks it shut behind them.

PIP (O.S.)

Thanks, Moomoo.

Pip and Ärta scurry off.

MOOMOO
 (deep adult man voice)
 No problem kid.

INT. PIP'S BEDROOM - LATER

Pip flicks some webbing off their sprout and into a trashcan. We see a bit of a sap-puddle forming around their root-feet. Ärta adjusts their mic and steps back. Pip speaks to camera.

CAMERA POV:

PIP
 Well, we solved our aphid mystery!
 We didn't find a thief, but we *did*
 find Spindel two new friends he can
 help. We also solved our channel's
 very first mystery! How do you
 think we did, Ärta?

From o.s. Ärta sticks out a thumbs-up.

PIP (CONT'D)
 To everybud watching, we hope you
 like and subscribe. And as always,
 stay evergreen, my friends! *Hejdå!*

Pip beams and waves goodbye to the camera. Before it cuts:

PIP'S MUM, a jolly, puffy onion flower in a muddy worker's apron, bursts in with a HUGE TUB of athleaf's root cream.

MUM
 I *knew* I saw Pip-shaped sap
 droplets on the stairs, so I
 brought your special athleaf's
 cream! Roots up, kiddo! Let's get
 those roots fungus free!

PIP
MUUUUUUUM!

Pip drops the camera and runs from their mum. She chases them lightheartedly, <TEASING THEM> as they try in vain to escape.

With the patience of a saint, Ärta wanders over to the camera, waves goodbye, and turns the camera off. IRIS OUT.

END OF EPISODE!