

Part I. Meet the feisty Mom who “birthed” Pippi Longstocking

“Lindgren was born in November 1907; she died in 2002, aged 94. She lived the 20th century - and what a life it was, what a journey she made! From a farmer’s daughter in rural southern Sweden to a Swedish single mother, internationally bestselling author, political activist, environmentalist, feminist, astute businesswoman, humanist, global brand, member of the establishment and fighter against it, whose funeral (on International Women’s Day 2002) was even attended by the Swedish royal family, the country’s prime minister and thousands of Swedes who lined the streets to say goodbye.” She did it all HERSELF!

(Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/apr/03/astrid-lindgren-woman-behind-pippi-longstocking-jens-andersen-review>).



Astrid Lindgren’s Alter-Ego—in Freudian terms, “that part of someone’s personality not usually seen by other people”—was the “Pippi Longstocking” character she created in her mid-thirties as bedtime stories for her daughter, Karin. Only later could she afford to let her own ‘Pippi’ emerge as an outspoken activist.

As a young girl, Astrid Ericsson was a “rebel under wraps”, always tending towards the unconventional. Although she essentially remained in Sweden all her life, she interacted energetically with the wider world. Some would even argue that she all but single-handedly turned the country’s conservatism upside-down, with the children loving every minute of it! But even if Pippi was to become a very lively figment of Astrid’s even livelier imagination, first there was the hard reality to contend with.

Secrets, Shame and Stigma. Astrid suffered some very tough and lonesome young years, mainly because 1) she was smart, 2) she was stubborn, and 3) she was curious. “Curiosity killed the cat”? Almost. Having gotten herself into a secret affair with her boss, a MUCH older married man, Astrid got pregnant at only 18 and soon became the negative “talk of the town”. Gossip abounded! At first no one knew who the father was, but, of course, *she* did. And as she later said, “I knew what I wanted and what I didn’t; so I decided on my own that I wanted the child but not the father!”

But unmarried mothers were so stigmatized in 1920s Sweden that Astrid ended up moving alone, first to Stockholm and then to Copenhagen, where it was ever-so-slightly easier to give birth to illegitimate children than in Sweden. There, barely 19 in December 1926, she gave birth to son, Lars, in secret but had to leave him with a foster mother in Denmark for three long years. Why? Because she was poor and her own village had ostracized her. But she was also ripe to leave.

Catalytic “crash landing.” Astrid returned to Sweden after Lars’ birth but now to Stockholm where she learned stenography and secretarial skills. She later described these years alone in the big city as her “promenade though hell” and suffered from severe depression and guilt. And yet, these years proved catalytic for her. Free at last and able to earn her own living, within a few years, she married her new boss, Sture



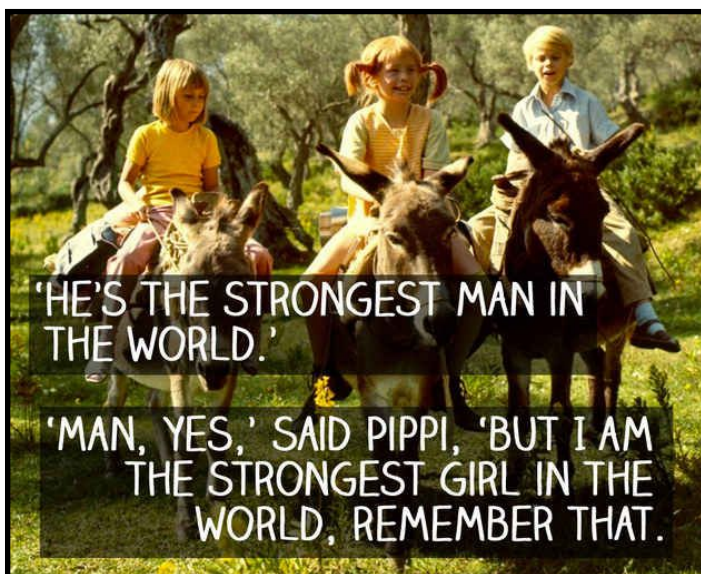
Lindgren, retrieved Lars (Lasse) and had a second child, Karin, pictured with her at right.

Resilience in the face of fear. Pippi, one might say, was Astrid's third child—her “brain child”! Others followed, but Pippi—“born” in the 1940s—was her first and, for many, her most enduring, most endearing creation. How did it happen and what was going on in the world just then?

- The Second World War was raging! It began in September 1939 when Germany's Adolf Hitler invaded Poland, then the Benelux countries, igniting six years of brutal hostilities and murdering some six million European Jews, plus other non-Aryan “outcasts”. It also set the few remaining neutral countries in Europe incredibly on edge: would they be invaded, too? Finland was invaded by Russia, after which Denmark and Norway were invaded by Germany. Only Sweden then hung onto its neutrality by a thread. Fear was in the air, but life had to go on “as if ...”! Astrid's children were growing up and needed her care—and her fantasy to keep those fears at bay. The moment ripened.
- By spring 1941 Astrid's tales about this “Wonder Girl” Pippi—somewhat similar to America's creation of a “Superman” who had recently come onto the scene—began to emerge. A good guy in disguise, but one who was powerful, could fly and came to the aid of “damsels in distress” and others who were being abused. He was later followed by “Wonder-woman”, conceived in the same year.
- **Putting Pippi to Paper.** Then, as Destiny would have it, in March 1944, Karin came down with measles and, shortly after, Astrid badly sprained her ankle and was ordered to stay in bed for a whole month. What better way to use the time than to finally put “Pippi” to paper?!



It would be a surprise present for Karin's tenth birthday in on May 21st. Astrid did it, too, the book's first draft in her steno pad ... so no one but her could even decipher it!

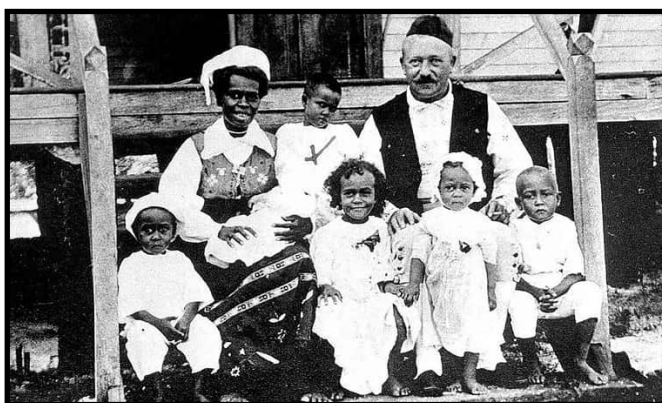


•In the midst of all this, what was Pippi meant to be, to *symbolize*? Biographers point to her as a young female counter-symbol to the real-life tyrants, Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini. They contend that Pippi was created to “stand up” in spirit to such real-life villains and prove that good would win out in the end!

But back now to Astrid herself. When portraying Pippi Longstocking, Lindgren explained that “Pippi represents my own childish longing for a person who has power but does not abuse it.”

And Astrid didn't either. Although every bit as quick and generous, shrewd and savvy as her Pippi creation, according to her biographer, Jens Andersen, *"part of Astrid was always Pippi: the rule-flouter, the freedom lover, steadfastly opposed to all demagoguery and hypocrisy, who at 70 was still climbing trees and who refused, in the face of her fear, to be afraid, and insisted, in the face of her depression, on joy. And Pippi was a loner, someone who had learned to rely only on herself, and to stand her own ground."*

There is a little-known Astrid family story that seems to have inspired the last two Pippi Longstocking books. According to <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/the-little-known-family-story-that-helped-inspire-the-pippi-longstocking-books/cqvpwcrnn>, there was in historical fact a Finnish/Swedish seafarer, Carl Emil Pettersson, who was shipwrecked off of Borneo in 1904.



Rather than return to Scandinavia after he was rescued by the local chieftain, he stayed in Borneo where he fell in love with and married the chieftain's daughter, Princess Singdu. Together, they produced a bevy of multi-racial children, the eldest of whom was Elsa.

Photo of Carl Emil Pettersson and Singdu with their family, including Elsa in the middle front row. Source: Supplied

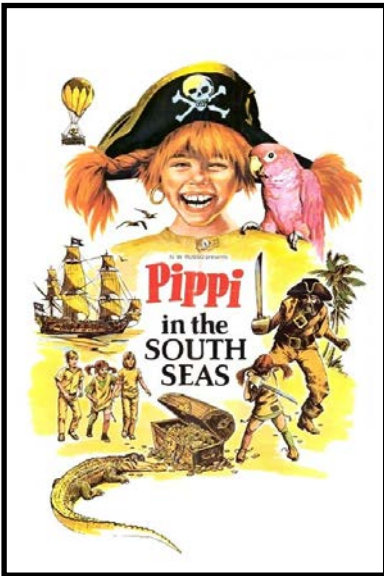
Elsa's story was remarkably similar to Pippi's. Just as Lindgren's Pippi lived solo in Vilekulla cottage in Sweden without a mother, while her father Ephraim sailed the high seas and ruled as king of a faraway island, Elsa was the actual daughter of Finnish-Swedish seafarer Carl Emil Pettersson and Princess Singdu, born around 1907. Alas, Singdu died when Elsa was only ten and Carl cut out for America's West Coast of Oregon where he died in 1927.

As Elsa's own daughter, Ms Chan Hoerler who later moved to Brisbane, Australia, told it, *"Mum (Elsa) was very adventurous, a very lively girl, she had a monkey that would do somersaults, and she would climb trees, a real little tomboy."* After her mom died, Elsa was packed off to a German convent school in Tabar, German New Guinea.

Later, Hoerler related, her father Carl Pettersson regularly sailed back to Sweden to trade and tell tales of survival on a faraway island inhabited by "cannibals". *"He'd write in the Swedish papers and always wanted to tell people of his adventures in the South Pacific. He'd write about the whole family and what they did."* The earliest stories are thought to have been published in 1914 and featured pirates, sharks and much adventure. He was dubbed 'King Carl the First' and 'Prince Pettersson', a celebrity much like Pippi's fictitious father Ephraim would later become.

In 2002, Swedish researchers working in Borneo, made the connection detailed in their book *"Pippi and the King, on the Trail of Ephraim Longstocking"*, which has yet to appear in English. In it, they interviewed Hoerler about her grandfather, who is now recognized as the inspiration for Pippi's buccaneer father Ephraim.

That inspiration lives on. Pippi's parting line in Astrid Lindgren's final book is, "I'm going to be a pirate when I grow up! Are you?" suggests that Pippi, much like Peter Pan, will always remain young, high-spirited and unconquerable.



Astrid died in 2002, aged 94. But it is likely that she will live on for many long years in the dreams and fantasies of countless children around the world.

Long live Lindgren!

Readers' Interactive Workbook

1. Astrid Lindgren was a “spark” out of nowhere! She fairly “fizzed” with energy, starting in her own adolescence! **Do you have—or would you imagine—this kind of “fizz” in your own life at whatever age? How might that manifest? In your family, your school or society? Or, for the moment, is it still hiding there *within* you? Time to let it out?!**

2. Astrid got pregnant as a teenager and the father was a much older, married man. She showed her **resilience** though by saying, “I wanted the child, but not the father” and followed through on that. **Can you imagine—or have you actually lived through—anything similar? What would you have done in “Astrid’s shoes”?**

3. Astrid grew up in a rural, arch-conservative Swedish society ... but, through her writing and activism, turned it on its head! **So, is it true to say that “The pen is mightier than the sword”?** (Source: British novelist/playwright Edward Bulwer-Lytton in 1839 in his historical play about the French Revolution’s Cardinal Richelieu).

4. Is there any children's writer today equal to Astrid Lindgren? Or any fictitious creation on a par with Pippi? **Tell me, who do you see? And if you see only Artificial Intelligence (A.I.), you don't have to succumb to that! You've got a brain of your own. “Use it or lose it” as the saying goes. Create your own heroes and describe them here! I'm serious!**

Part II. Travels with Pippi (from 10 to 80)

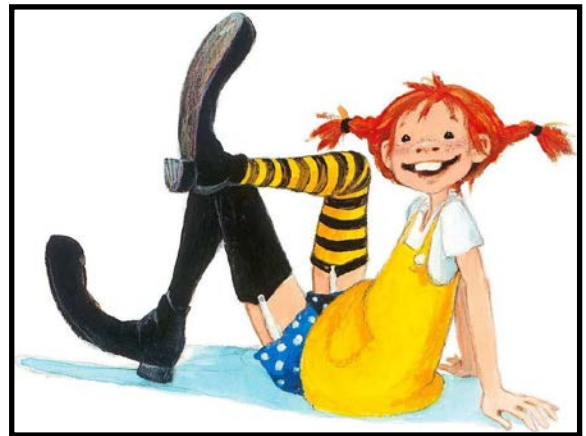
Post-scripting Pippi: Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking had a short life in fictive terms; in her three books, she is nine, then ten years old. But what might her life have looked like had she lived a full, long, adventurous one? Who might have become her friends? Where might she have travelled? And what might she have learned about resilience in the face of challenges of all kinds? This vignette explores that very scenario: Pippi from ten-to-eighty. ENJOY!

“Meet the Mischievous Pippi”

*“It's not something you plan, mischief, it just happens.
And knowing it's mischief, well you don't until it's happened,” said Emil.
- Astrid Lindgren*

So here she is, the ever mischievous Pippi, whose full name, by the way, is “Pippilotta Delicatessa Windowshade Mackrel-mint Ephraim's Daughter Longstocking”.

Meanwhile, Pippi's pushing-eighty, but she's back now in the South Seas and beyond with me! Why? You'll find out soon, but just to bring you up to date. Of her original entourage when she was just nine in the sleepy little village of Vimmerby, in the even sleepier little county of Småland, in staid southern Sweden, few remain.



Sure, Mr. Nilsson-the-monkey's great-great-great grandson is here in the South Seas with us. He's in his essence here, palm-tree-swinging and living in trees. Alas, “Horse” bit the dust some decades ago, but now Pippi dives with the dolphins in the sparkling South Pacific, off the coast of Borneo, where her swaggering sea captain-dad once hung out. But he, too, has left this world for other, wild-exotic-extra-terrestrial realms. Annika and Tommy, too, have long since dutifully morphed into “respectable” Swedish adults—old ones now—who no longer share Pippi's fantasy world.

Of course, Pippi herself is meanwhile an octogenarian. But she's still—or better said, again—as spritely, agile and fresh as when she was a kid! Here's one of her quirky quotes that reveals the secrets of her resilience:

*“Don't let anything or anyone get you down; don't lose your spunk or courage.
Stay fresh and naughty and wild and wonderful!”
- Astrid Lindgren's “Pippi”*

Pippi's quick to remind us that "Hey! Way back then in the 1940s, my mom imagined me right off the top of her head to entertain my big sister, Karin (aged nine in 1943), who was sick in bed for quite a while. My mom spun out all these tall tales, but it was Karin who named me 'Pippi Longstocking'."

"I, Pippi had my mom's rebellion in my bones! Nothing tickled me more than thumbing my pert Swedish nose at the "establishment", those staid Swedish conformists. So I refused to go to school. Why?"



"You understand, Teacher, don't you? When you have a mother who's an angel and a father who's a cannibal king, and when you have sailed on the ocean all your whole life, then you just don't know how to behave in a school with all those apples and ibexes."

- Astrid Lindgren's "Pippi"

"In fact, some people even got their own ski-jump Swedish noses bent-out-of-shape over my total irreverence towards brainless, boring adult authority. Instead, I asked, 'Why should I bow down? Mr. Nilsson, my pet monkey, doesn't and he for sure knows something about 'monkeying around'."



And as Pippi grew into her teens, her "acting out" got even worse—no, BETTER—and her strength and social conscience STRONGER. More than once, she defended Tommy and Annika from mobbing in their school. She would ride "Horse" to the school playground and "stand guard" there over her two best friends and neighbors so that no one dared pick on them. Then she'd say, "Come on, you two! Climb aboard and we'll give you a ride home!" The other kids looked on in awe and envy.

Pippi also befriended the elderly, especially old ladies. Once, when a power-wielding policeman was giving an old lady with a cane a hard time, scolding her for "jay-walking", Pippi marched right up to him and said, "*Policemen—cops!—should be there to help, not just scold! You can see that she doesn't walk very well! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?!*" And then ... she went into action.

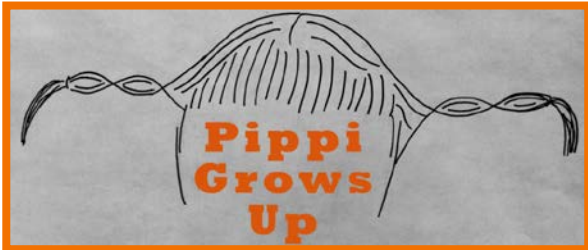
"I don't think you have particularly good manners with ladies, 'said Pippi to the policeman. Then she lifted him high into the air with her strong arms, carried him to a nearby birch tree, and hung him across a branch."

- Astrid Lindgren



This is the juncture where Astrid's Pippi ends (at ten years old) ... and Adrea's Pippi takes up her as-yet-unlived life. Here's a bit of creative "poetic license".

Pippi grows up ... or does she?



Here's a quick sketch of Pippi at fifteen. She was expected to grow up one day. But did she? Find out for yourself.

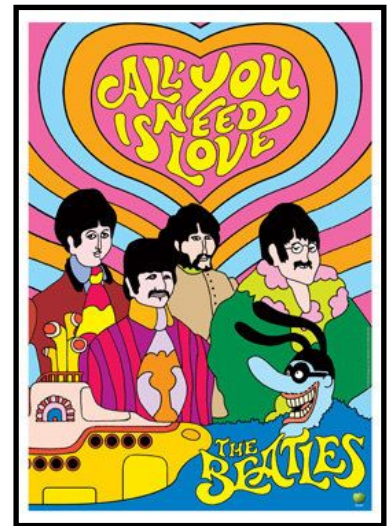
"Well, not really!" No more than Peter Pan did!

The 1960's "Flower children". Instead, in the 1960s—with Pippi in her early 20s at the time—came that radical social tsunami out of America: the hippie generation with its "turn on, tune in, drop out" psychedelic counterculture that fascinated her!

She went there too, incognito, to San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury to live it for herself. Sure, she had to camouflage her signature red pigtails into tangled dreadlocks ... so she did. And, yeah, she, too, wore flowers in her hair, such as it was back then.

Well, and then there came the "Beatles" and their 1967 hit song, "All you need is love", followed by New York's 1969 Woodstock Rock Festival.

But after that super "happening," why did the "flower child" revolution wane ... as it slowly did? Well, the kids got older, even got jobs and many ended up being pillars of the very society they had once disdained. Common sense? C'mon!



Give the children love, more love and still more love - and the common sense will come by itself.

Astrid Lindgren



The 1970's ABBA Wave. Then, a second tsunami wave rolled in... this one out of Pippi's very own home country! In the 1970s, Sweden birthed the super-duper pop band "ABBA" that is still around. Were THEY ever cool! Catchy tunes! Outrageous costumes! Off-the-map funky! And so in touch with the times.

Their songs—from "Waterloo" that won the 1974 Eurovision Song Contest and shot them overnight to stardom—to the many others that fans adore even to this day like "Money, Money, Money" (1976), "Super

Trouper" (1980), "S.O.S." (1975) and "Fernando" (1976) made them world famous. And Pippi in her thirties by then was right there rockin' with 'em all the way!!!

It was then—in the swirling midst of all this, that Pippi met this super guy and—like Donna in ABBA's later "Mamma Mia" musical—got herself pregnant. But she *knew* who the father was and she *wanted* to. Alas, although a handsome hunk, he was also a "skirt-chaser" to the extent that their union didn't survive. Still, the fruit of their love was a daughter called "Crispy Fish", who turned out to be as zany as Pippi herself! A real radical with all the bells and whistles!

But still, if it's true, how can it be a lie?

- Astrid Lindgren's "Pippi"



The outlandish 1980's. Pippi wanted her own "flower child" life to go on forever ... but it didn't. While the 80's were well-known for their extremes—from "big hair" to "rap" to breakdance—for Pippi in her forties, this was no longer really quite her THING.

1990s Mid-life crisis. And so it CAME. The "crash". In her fifties, Pippi got hit with her own major mid-life crisis; her fall off the precipice and crash landing into a dark abyss. Here's the low-down, the notorious "convergence of negatives" that could bring even a super-strong Pippi temporarily down:

- They, the Swedish authorities, had already taken away her seafaring dad's 'apanage', claiming that those gold ducats weren't really gold at all but brass and worth not a single Krone. So, with no money ...
- Pippi was evicted from her colorful Vilekulla villa and ousted onto the street. No fun in those frigid winter snowdrifts. A bag lady. And that wasn't all.
- "Horse"—nicknamed "Lilla Gubben" (Swedish for "Little Old Man")—who was already ancient even to begin with, got hobbled with arthritis and couldn't carry her anymore.
- Not only that. Pippi's ten-year-old daughter, Crispy Fish, the spitting image of her mom, was "acting out" big time. She even tried psychedelic drugs and mushrooms and hung out with some pretty "fringe" characters.
- Then, the biggest blow: Her mom—that very Astrid Lindgren who had figuratively "birthed" her—died at 94 when Pippi was only 55—and, with her, a lot of Pippi's own dreams went down the drain. No more stories. Faltering self-confidence. All at once, she had to make it on her own in a world not to her tastes.

"Pippi", as her creator had conceived her—'strong and spunky, irreverent but generous, quick and wise, true to herself and the world'—would never have been a candidate for killing herself... but with her "creator" gone? Could she even still go on? For a while there, it seemed NOT. But then ...

"Never let a good crisis go to waste!"

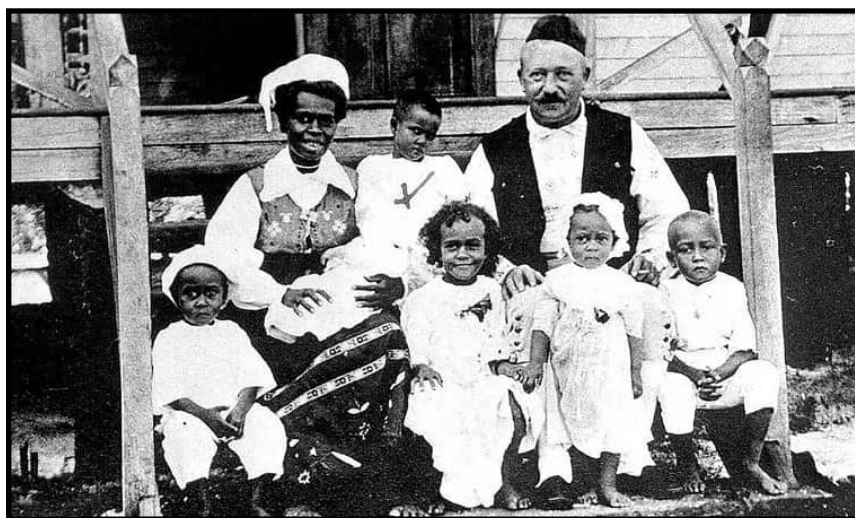
- Viktor Frankl

Spiritual pivot. Taking Crispy Fish with her, Pippi up and left Sweden and headed for ... anywhere but the cold North!! Instead, the Tropics where her sailor father had been shipwrecked years before. Later, after I became her traveling companion, Pippi confided to me late one night beside a campfire in the jungles of Borneo—

“Stuck in the quicksand of my depression and despair, I decided that there was only one thing that could keep me going: that was to look for my dad. He was Swedish, of course, like me and, as a naval officer, he’d been shipwrecked off of Borneo many years before. But—defying Fate—he had survived to become a buccaneer sea captain in the South Seas. Yes, HE’s the one who sent me those trunks of gold ducats—and they were real, I swear!—so I could live my own free life. I know it, I know he loves me, even if from afar. And I mean to FIND him.”

*“Life is something you have to take care of.
Don't you realize that?” asked Ronja, the Robber's Daughter
- Astrid Lindgren*

Finding Family in the South Seas. Pippi searched for untold years—and did, at last, find her long-disappeared dad.



Or at least, what remained of him as a memory. The FACT is that Carl Emil Pettersson, alias 'Prince Pettersson', did indeed LIVE in Borneo and had built a family that was related to her; one that she found only after many long years of searching. She discovered native half-siblings that even SHE could never have imagined!

Photo of Carl Emil Pettersson and Singdu with their family including Elsa in the middle front row. Source: Supplied

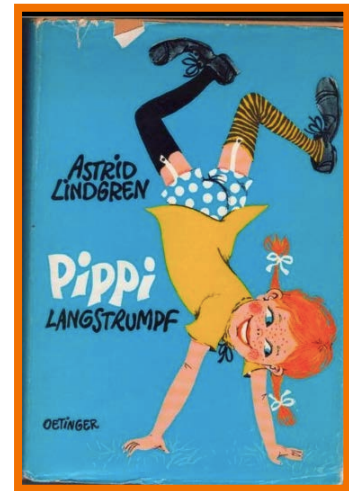
Bouncing back now ... and beyond. So Pippi DID survive her mid-life crisis. And showed her “resilience” ability. Then it even transpired that, as she aged and Crispy Fish was busy doing her own thing, she thought it might be fun to find a like-spirited traveling companion to share her mischievous adventures. And who popped up but ME!

Flights of Fancy. Never mind going on eighty myself, I jumped at the chance to join Pippi in the South Seas! There, the two of us would adventure together (in spirit when not in body). But while now close in age and inwardly quite in sync, we both were also transforming in our own right!

- Take Pippi’s freckles, red hair, techno-rags and antics for starters. Those freckles—she’d always adored them!—were now deep-creased laugh wrinkles while her flaming, fire-engine red pigtailed—her zany trademark—had been traded for a mane of silver-white hair, wafting unbound in the breeze. Cool. Made it easier to travel incognito.
- Good so since the “officials” wherever she turned up with her latest canine companion, an adorable Malteser named Nanno, didn’t jump to call the police right away or leap to arrest her for “disturbing the peace”... although she usually did. Disturb the mindlessly lethargic peace, that is, with her irrepressible bravura feats.
- To this day, her clothes remain multi-colored and tattered as always. That’s her avidly non-conformist “look”.

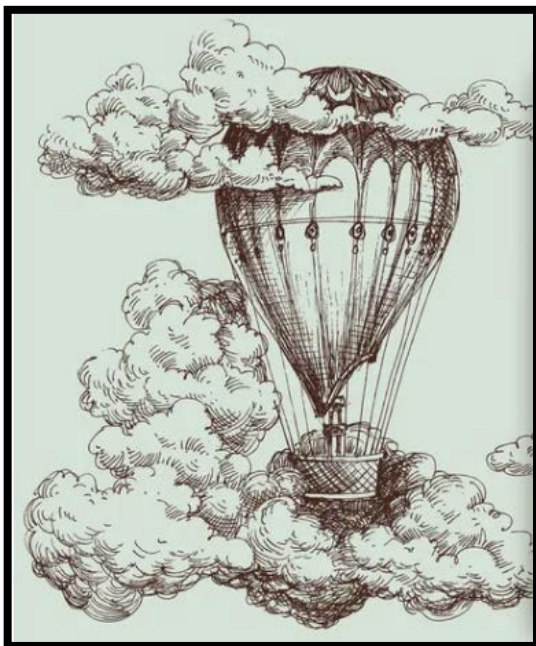
As for her antics, they continue unabated in the tropical climate of the South Seas. It should be told that Koratuttutt Island was one of their secret hang-outs. When Pippi's pirate father returned from sea, he always whisked them away to that mythical tropical island where he was king!

There, Pippi discovered a new stomping ground where she could “return to nature” and be her REAL self!! So lately she's been known to lodge in trees; Mr. Nilsson approves since he also prefers that leafy habitat. Around water, the three of us, also Crispy Fish when she's around, mostly go FKK (nude and natural) since fish aren't required to swim in evening gowns; they're beautiful enough as they naturally are.



If you ask her today—sometimes even if you **don't!**—eighty-year-old Pippi will venture that she visited three exotic countries back when Astrid was alive: the first one was exotic Egypt, the second was a secret place in farthest Asia and the third one was the Congo. What an avid adventurer! What a lineage we have! Do we want to just dispense with this rich heritage ... or expand it? Encircle the globe even?!

Around the World in Eighty Years? ... and Eighty Days again as well!



French author Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* sent the Victorian world into a fantasy adventure upon its publication in 1872. At the outset, the novel's reader is told that “on a seemingly normal day at his exclusive Reform Club, Phileas Fogg, a gentleman of great wealth and exacting tastes, makes an extraordinary £20,000 wager; he will perform an impossible feat and circumnavigate the globe in just eighty days. Accompanied only by his new French valet, the emotional Passepartout, he sets off on a thrilling journey. Adventure, chaos and romance ensue” as the daring pair harness the new power of steam to escape their ever-increasing enemies and beat the clock.”

Described as “a brazen adventure that was a roaring success on publication”—and although it was minus planes or automobiles—it captures our imagination even today!

We're sitting around a jungle campfire in **Borneo** where Pippi had come to search for her father, the pirate sea captain who had made a new life—with another (local) wife—for himself and no longer fancied returning to cold Scandinavia. He **did** occasionally visit and invariably made a cleverly staged “spectacle” of himself, the “Pirate Prince”. But he never neglected leaving Pippi a new stash-of-cash in the form of gold ducats plundered off the South Seas ships he pirated. Pippi had vowed to be just like him—“*when I grow up*”.

So now we're talking about him and Pippi's feeling feisty! *"Hey, I'm as grown up at eighty as I'm ever going to get, but without Papa, I don't need to hang around here for the rest of my life; we shouldn't forget that **Borneo**'s full of "nasties" beyond the headhunters who were (hopefully) ousted a century ago. We still have the animal variety, those five most iconic wildlife animals we have to contend with here—pygmy elephants, proboscis monkeys, orangutans, rhinoceroses and crocodiles. Beyond cannibalism, there is a price to pay for biodiversity — that's getting trampled to death or eaten alive!"*

"I mean, at only eighty, there's still so much else to do and see in this crazy world of ours. What say we make a wager ... and a bargain?" "What then?" I ask, wondering what I might be getting myself into.

*"You know, silly. Like they did in that super film, 'Around the World in Eighty Days': that fastidious Englishman with his emotional French valet and then the Indian princess they rescued from her dead husband's funeral pyre. Why couldn't **we** do that, too; only updated and much livelier. Here, I just filched this spinnable world globe out of a village schoolroom this afternoon—I'm not the daughter of a thieving pirate for nothing!"* She whips it out of her bag and sets it down on the sand next to the campfire. *"Now let's just find the route they took back then. They went—almost all by train and steamship, except for some unexpected elephant rides and husky sleds—this way, Look!"* Pippi's spinning the globe, then pointing her finger and stopping it dramatically:

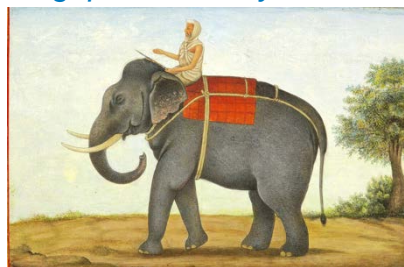
*"They set out from **London** and crossed central Europe—hot air balloon ride included—from **France** through **the Alps** and then all the way down the **Italian** "boot" to Brindisi. Then they headed for **India** by way of the **Egypt's** Suez Canal that had only recently been opened. **India**'s full of cacophonous magic, you know, so they couldn't miss that—Bombay (today's Mumbai) to Allahabad to Calcutta—really long, overcrowded and dusty train travel. But back then, India belonged to the British Raj—that lasted until 1947, Mahatma Gandhi to be thanked for non-violent independence—before splitting into two separate countries, India and Pakistan."*

I'm impressed with Pippi's command of history though she never went to school. But she's getting "on a roll" and says, *"**India**, yes! By all means, but we could do the Himalayan foothills in the north where the Dalai Lama hangs out or Kerala in the south where the beaches are sublime (and without crocodiles); we don't have to decide right today!"* I take a deep sigh and imagine myself aboard an elephant or praying in a Buddhist temple.

"So, and then," she says, spinning the globe again and stopping it with her finger in East Asia, she continues, *"we could also take an ocean steamer to Singapore and beyond to Hong Kong. That could be relaxing."* She is clearly in her element! Then, ...

*"But, of course, we can't do Asia without a taste of **China**. They did Shanghai, but we could do Hainan Island, down in the south; Beijing I'd want to bypass. What do you think?"*

"Yes, I agree," I say, "having been there once, that sufficed." I'm getting in the mood now myself!



*“Now for **Japan!**” she exclaims! “An intriguingly complicated place! Home to everything from warlike **Samurais**, founded as mercenary troops in the 10th century, to today’s most delicate art forms, such as **haiku**, **ikebana** and **calligraphy**, including **Zen Buddhism!** Well, our **Englishman** went by steamer to **Yokohama**, but I definitely wouldn’t want to miss cultural **Kyoto** and **Mount Fuji** from afar; otherwise too overrun with tourists.”*

“Absolutely,” I say, “Japan has always fascinated me.” I’m getting into higher gear.

*“So then, transversing the Pacific?” Pippi says. “They took a **Yokohama** steamer to **San Francisco** ... but what say we take a plane?!”* “Yes, although we’d have to miss Hawaii,” I say, “but to **Alaska** then rather than San Francisco; Alaska’s still got some frontier to it plus a staunchly independent spirit. After all, its purchase from Russia for a mere \$7 million in 1867—although called ‘Seward’s Folly’ at the time—proved to be an absolute treasure trove, starting with the late 19th century **Klondike Gold Rush**. And after that, the discovery of abundant natural resources. The Russians are probably still kicking themselves in the ‘you-know-where’ right until this very day!” *“Yes! Let’s go for it!” she says.*

*“Well, and then, what about the **American continental traverse?**”* asks Pippi. “Well, that’s MY domain,” I answer. “I’m the born ‘Ami’ here. So NOT that purely rail route but a more scenic one. Although we could do without the dogsled ride in Nebraska, I’d say we should include, absolutely for sure, a hiking/rapids-running visit to the **Grand Canyon**—actually a world wonder—as well as a swing through **New Orleans’ Jazz Land**. These are unique and **only** to be had in the original in America. What else? Washington, D.C, let’s do without that viper pit! New York, however, we will have to do before it sinks beneath the global warming waves. Then we could fly from ...”

“Wait!” Pippi interrupts me. *“You’re forgetting **Canada!** We’re got relatives, not to mention ancestors, there. You yourself told me about that adventure: that they immigrated, initially from **Scandinavia** to **Scotland** and then in 1842 aboard the “**Troubadour**” sailing ship to **Canada!** WOW! We Vikings are born seafarers! “*

“Yes, and most of the Europeans who immi-grated to North America had many **reasons** to: ‘they weren’t marauders, like many Vikings were. Instead, they were often poor families with small children seeking a better life. They were often fleeing things, such as ‘crop failures, land and job shortages, rising taxes, and famine, so many came to North America, including Canada because it was perceived as the land of economic opportunity.’ In fact, I just re-traced part of my forefathers’ route myself—that last bit when they arrived into Eastern Canada via today’s Nova Scotia and the St. Lawrence Seaway on their way to Toronto...” (See Chapter 12).

“Hey, will you take me with you? In spirit at least,” Pippi cries. *“I’m NOT afraid of ships or the open sea. On the contrary!”* “Maybe, let’s

see. I’d welcome a traveling companion. But one voyage at a time! OK. Let’s add Canada, sailing into Halifax from Boston.”



"But then we go transatlantic," Pippi says, picturing maybe the Titanic. In reverse gear. "Oh, here's a really plucky idea for you," I say. "My once-upon-a-time life partner, Yves the Frenchman, was also an indefatigable sailor. After solo-crossing the Atlantic six times with his 11-meter sailboat, Shere Khan, in France's 'Route du Rhum', he later also sailed in reverse direction—that is, *against* the prevailing trade winds—with a single co-captain, going from New England up over Newfoundland—replete with thickest fog and summer icebergs—across the North Atlantic. Although sailing "blind" with only their old-fashioned hand navigation to guide them, they arrived after some three weeks precisely on point in Ireland, then on to Brittany! What a feat!" *"Oh, you gotta be kiddin' me,"* says Pippi. "Nope," I say, "that's exactly the way it **was**." I'm excused if my eyes fill up with tears for someone so long-ago-and-far-away. Pippi sees this and puts her arm around me, there in front of the campfire. No need to say a word. Just put another log on the fire.

Next day begins with more "armchair adventure"—after all, such exploits must first be imagined, yes, but then meticulously planned, with all the fastidiousness of a Phileas Fogg ... though neither one of us are **that**. We need support, a back-up team with an eye to organization, not to mention "resource mobilization" (i.e. where's money coming from?). Pippi says, *"Oh, don't worry, I've still got lots of gold ducats. Just need to trade them in for cash while the world's still on the gold—or isn't it now the dollar—standard rather than the potential future Chinese Yuan standard."*

"OK, we'll do that 'recruitment' as next step—I've already got somebody in mind, another Scandinavian. But let's finish this brainstorming session first," I say, now 80% on board of this fantasy-fueled adventure. "OK, we're sailing like Yves did in a small sailboat eastwards that is, against the trade winds, across the North Atlantic ... but let's shoot for Scandinavia since we're already way up there close to the Arctic Circle. What about **Norway**? I've always had a hankering to see the Northern Lights, the *aurora borealis*." *"Oh, yeah! I used to see them as a kid in Sweden. Cool as can be!"* Pippi chimes in, *"and Norway's right next door!"* OK, Norway it is, we agree and exchange a high-five.

"Now to Europe. You know, I'm not a train-freak, but they do have good ones," I say. "To get quickly down to central Europe—Austria, that is, where a special surprise is waiting for us—today's sleek high-speed trains are unbeatable! First, from Norway to Germany, there's a daily ferry from Oslo to Kiel, and from there, we'll catch the train straight down from Kiel to Cologne. There we'll board the "Rhine Gorge & Medieval Germany River Cruise" *"Oh!!! We'll get to see the Lorelei, right? I've always wanted to!"*

"Yes, but that's just the beginning," I say. Now my former European Tour Director self is re-emerging onto the scene. "I do know this part of Europe quite well," I say, "having lived and worked in German-speaking Europe for many years."

*"Oh! But I know something that I bet **you** don't know!"* Pippi chimes in, *"because they didn't **have** it back then in the 1960s when you were leading tour groups all around Europe. Tell me, then, Miss Savvy, how do you get from the Rhine to the Danube without putting a foot on the ground?"* I must admit I don't know but doubt that there is any way unless you hire a helicopter. I say as much and Pippi is beside herself with glee. *"Ha!!!"*

Gotcha! There IS a way—an all-water-way—that is the **Rhine-Main-Danube Canal!!!** It's "new" although the dreams of it are very old. Here's the lowdown that one of my secret sources just sent me from <https://www.rivervoyages.com/advice/river-spotlight-rhine-main-danube-canal/>.

Inaugurated in 1992, the Rhine-Main-Danube canal at last fulfilled many a longing after enduring many failures. Today it is a 106-mile-long waterway connecting three major European rivers of Europe, thus permitting free flow of river traffic between the North Sea and the Black Sea. Beginning in the picturesque German town of Bamberg on the Main, the canal travels to Kelheim in Bavaria, where it meets up with the "beautiful blue Danube".



Backstory. This daring waterway was initially conceived by Charlemagne, Charles I, in 793, who sought to open a new route for his battle fleet. But, following heavy rainfall, the original channel collapsed, and the project was abandoned. Later, Ludwig I of Bavaria re-imagined the waterway in 1837 when he initiated work on a canal that followed much the same route as the canal we see today. This was actually utilized until World War II but then suffered extensive damage and was abandoned once again.

In 1921, the German government and State of Bavaria formed a company to build a much larger Rhine-Main-Danube canal, enlarging the locks and installing several hydro-electric power stations. These constructions took place between 1960 and 1992, with a total of 16 locks dotted along the riverbanks to deal with the extreme altitude differences between the rivers.

Now, when sailing along the waterway, you will experience an elevation transition of nearly 1,400 feet across 100 miles. Taking this route, visitors access the banks of some of Germany's, Austria's and Hungary's best-loved towns and cities, from Nuremberg and Bamberg to Vienna in Austria and Budapest in Hungary.

"See! I told you so!" chortles Pippi. "Don't you agree? This is a 'must-do' for us!" "Right you are," I agree, "but for now, we're still sitting here fantasizing in the middle of the night in a tropical jungle in Borneo. Let's keep moving. We've got a long way to go!"

"Yes, and our time's getting shorter," says Pippi. "After all, the original 'round the world trip took eighty days ... and that was ages ago without planes. Today, of course, we could always just fly ... but then we'd miss all the adventure and important stuff. Maybe that wager's not worth it."

"Yeah, you might have a point there," I say. "After all, I've flown around the world already—with stops in between—and it certainly did NOT take 80 **days!!!** In fact, theoretically, it would take only about 45 **hours** non-stop "for a standard passenger aircraft to fly around the earth's circumference". If traveling at Mach 10—like Tom Cruise did in "Top Gun"—it

would take approximately 3 hours and 20 minutes to circle the world ... but medical science says we wouldn't survive it so what's the point?

"Right, so what's next? We're on the final lap of the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal route, right?" "Yes, and let's get off before Vienna," I say. "I've got something very special in mind!"

"What? WHAT? Tell me, I love surprises!" cries Pippi, getting up and doing an impromptu little dance around the campfire. "Oh! This will be the crowning of a dream I've held for years now! We'll leave the Danube River cruise, including Nibelungen tales, in Passau and after Salzburg go by bus to the Salzkammergut; to be precise, Strobl am Wolfgangsee. This is the place where I fell head-over-heels in love with Austria many, many years ago. Even when work took me away for years, I always came back to that very place—like the homing pigeon I was! *"Well then, I've got to see it, too! What enchanted you so much?"* "Sheer beauty," I say. "The Salzkammergut's lakes and mountains are without peer. And I also took my first hot air balloon ride there ... and promised myself to do another. Now we will! And this is my present to you, Pippi, the perennially young-at-heart! We are going to balloon our way over the Alps!"

"NO! Really??!!! I've heard that such a bold adventure exists but never thought that I myself might do it! That was even a number too big for me! Where do you start from? Where do you alight? What if you crash in the middle of the Alps?! What a daring thing to do?!!!" "I've got all the information. We'll ascend from Austria and balloon over the Alps, landing then near Venice. The details are a secret for the time being." *"Oh well, count me in on THIS one"*, says Pippi, her eyes all aglow.

"To come back down to earth-and-sea, why not a leisurely Mediterranean de-compression cruise (I've done this one before and it was lovely) down the Adriatic from Venice to Bari, then across to Corfu and through the Corinth Canal—that way we can skip Egypt's Suez where things are not so calm just now." *"Yes! Despite all its pyramids and ancient culture, including a seductive Cleopatra and all—you know I was there with Astrid, and got to see some stuff for myself—today's Egypt, especially the Palestinians' next door Gaza Strip. is anything but inviting these days."*



"Right you are! According to https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-15670-0_1,

when this Suez Canal opened in 1869, at the crossroads of three continents—Africa, Asia, and Europe—it was rightly seen as a strategic juncture between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. On its way to the Indian Ocean, it serves a crucial function for trade. Just by the way, it's the longest canal in the world without locks. But it's also a strategic "chokepoint" ... "Boy, you said it" Pippi interjects. *"Today it's full of political intrigue and security threats, including terrorist plots and pirates at the exit end in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. I mean, my dad was a pirate, too, but not this kind; he was more the Robin Hood kind of pirate."* "So. Bottom line: let's bypass the Suez Canal and go straight for Athens via the shorter, safer Corinth Canal." *"You got it,"* says Pippi.

“SO. Now we’re in Athens and need to get to Asia,” I summarize. “Here we’d have a really ‘cutting edge’ option. What say we try Tom Cruise’s “Top Gun” super-stunner and take a Mach-10 jet to Thailand? That’s just a short hop that should be doable in under two hours at that supersonic speed and—if we survive it—could gain us a lot of time... or maybe we’d be better off on Virgin Galactic’s sub-orbital spaceship! *“Oh, you ARE the daring one! Not sure even I’d be up for that—without YOU. But hey, what a way to GO. OK, I’m in!”*”



“Given we land at all, we’ll touch down in Bangkok and from there join my Semester-at-Sea cruise that goes in 30 (not 80) days from Thailand to Vietnam to Malaysia to India. This promises to be a super programme and we oldies can do it as “lifelong learners”. *“Wow! Me, too. Learning like this—total immersion direct experience—I don’t mind at all; it’s the mindless schoolrooms and rules that always irked me.”*”



“So now for a taste of India, a place neither one of us knows. I’ve been forewarned but still, I’m curious. Disembarking from the “Spotlight” semester-at-sea cruise in southern Kerala, we can stretch out on a pristine beach or two before continuing. Then let’s head for the Western Pacific—the Philippines where I worked for WHO—before heading to the South Pacific where you hung out with Astrid as a kid. *“Oh, yeah! I’ve got such great memories! Swimming with the dolphins and sleeping, hammock-fashion, between the palm trees. Mr. Nilsson’ll be around the bend to get back there, too! All his monkey-business buddies swinging with him through palm trees and cracking open coconuts! I adore the Tropics!”*”

“So now comes the next stage. How about something new, for me at least? A real old-fashioned windjammer from the Philippines to Tahiti in French Polynesia; it hardly gets more romantic than THAT!” *“Oh! Like ‘Mutiny on the Bounty’? I mean, the very IDEA of a mutiny, I find inspiring! Could we take over the ship? Never mind the breadfruit and so.”*”

“Not so sure about that ... but we could transfer to Polynesian canoes for part of the stretch to New Zealand. This would be really tough ... but classic. This is what the Internet reveals ... and is it ever enticing!

“Polynesian navigation or Polynesian wayfinding was used for thousands of years to enable long voyages across thousands of kilometers of the open Pacific Ocean. Polynesians made contact with nearly every island within the vast Polynesian Triangle, using outrigger canoes or double-hulled canoes that were equal in length and lashed side by side. The space between the paralleled canoes allowed for storage of food, live animals, hunting materials, and nets when embarking on long voyages. Polynesian navigators used wayfinding techniques, such as navigation by the stars and observation of birds, ocean swells and wind patterns, and relied on a large body of knowledge from oral tradition.”

“Ha! My dad told me long ago about that place! New Zealand—‘Aeoteroa’ or ‘The Land of the Long White Cloud’! That was the name given to the North Island of New Zealand when the Maori navigators first discovered it. A land created by volcanoes and then calmed by glaciers, that’s ancient Maori territory. All those crazy warriors with their face-and-body paint and stuck-out tongues! They really appeal to me; I mean, I could do that, too!”

“Well, what say, Pippi? We’ve managed to come this far. Should we go for this?!!!”

“THIS?! Well, It’s almost TOO much,” says Pippi. *“Do you think we could ever really DO all this? I mean, at our AGE?”* “Well, I’m already doing it right NOW—in my imagination. Aren’t you? In our physical reality, it seems far-fetched, I know, but then, we don’t ‘live by bread alone’, do we? We live by imagination and determination, by adventure and RESILIENCE! And, just now, I live in a place where dreams are vital for mere **survival.**”

“I’m not sure I get it ... but I’m trying to. You know, Astrid ‘birthed’ me way back when, just about the time you, too, were born. But now you’ve held out your hand to me and moved to carry me through the yet-to-be-lived decades of my life. That’s pretty darn cool of you!” “Well, aren’t we on the same wavelength, you and I? I was a tomboy tree-climber, too! And maybe now we could both use a traveling companion. Let’s see what the stars hold for us.”



Readers' Interactive Workbook

Whatever your age or current stage of life, interacting with these fictitious and historic characters can spice up your own life, calling up comparisons with the figures featured here. Take a vivid “walk down Memory Lane” and recall some challenges that you faced—whether you overcame them or just barely survived with bruisingly useful “lessons learned”. This can help you rev up your right-now resilience. Have a go at it with Astrid Lindgren and the mischievous Pippi Longstocking she created.

1. Pippi was widely seen as Astrid Lindgren’s “alter ego”—“that part of someone’s personality not usually seen by other people”. **If you have—or want to have—such an “alter ego”, here’s your chance! Give him/her a name, an age, and tell us the back story.**

2. Pippi was unique and especially beloved for being “strong and spunky, irreverent but generous, quick and wise, and true to herself and the world.” **What is your “alter ego” known for? Create this character who is hiding inside yourself right now! Describe and maybe even draw a picture!**

3. Pippi went against adult rules when she found them wrong and hurtful. But she was never aggressively hurtful herself. **How would you—or your alter ego—behave if you suddenly had LOTS of power? Try to picture and describe that here. More like Donald Trump ... or Mother Teresa? Astrid herself ... or someone totally new?!!!**

(See earlier questions in Part I Astrid Lindgren.)
