## Chapter I A Last Adventure



"I can't believe it's the last day of our holiday," said Lei, her brown eyes filling up with tears as she dived into the tent. "And then I won't get to see you both until next summer!"

Squeezing in after her, Cora nodded, and put an arm around her American cousin. "It sucks!"





"But we can still call and video chat," Isabelle reminded them. She was already in the tent, scribbling away in her diary. "We'll have to, because I won't be able to talk about Blossom Wood with anyone else, and there's no way I'll be able to keep it in!"



The three cousins always had a fantastic time on holiday together, but this year it'd been even more magical. On their first day at the Hilltop Hideaway campsite they'd found hoof prints in a nearby cove. When they'd stepped in them they'd been transported to an amazing forest called Blossom Wood. What's more, when they were there, the girls were no longer girls — they were unicorns!

"That's true," said Lei with a smile. "I know it's not easy to talk to each other when we're all back home, but we'll have to find a way!" Lei lived in San Francisco, Cora in Australia and Isabelle in England, so finding a time of day when they were all awake was tricky. It was much easier when they were on holiday, and all in the same place at once!



"Girls, where are you?" Cora's mum's voice floated through the tent. "It's our last night. Come and join us!"

Cora's face fell. "Oh no," she whispered. "We won't get a chance to go to the cove now!"

"Maybe we could sneak away before anyone sees us?" suggested Isabelle. "Time doesn't pass while we're in Blossom Wood, remember, so we'd only be gone for the time it takes to get down to the cove and back..."

Lei stuck her face out of the tent, then turned back to her cousins. She shook her head, revealing the pink braids beneath her long dark brown hair. "Everyone's outside. Even my sister!"

"Come on, girls, what are you doing in that tent?" asked Lei's mum.

"Um ... just, um ... talking – I'll be



out in a sec," Lei told her, then whispered back to Isabelle and Cora, "We'll just have to try to sneak away later!" She wriggled out of the tent, pulled on her pink pumps and wandered over to their parents.

Isabelle and Cora quickly followed.

Everyone sat in camp chairs in a circle, chatting, apart from Lei's older sister, Ying. She was in a camp chair, but she had her headphones on and her eyes shut as usual, nodding her pink hair to her music.

"What's happening?" asked Isabelle as she adjusted the owl hair clip in her red curly hair.

Her mum turned around and grinned. "We're having a campfire!" She held up a packet of marshmallows. "I know we've already had dessert, but it wouldn't be a proper campfire without toasting some of these!"





"We might have to eat them untoasted if I can't get the fire to start," Cora's dad groaned. He got up and bent down to the firepit, poking it with a pair barbecue tongs.

"What's wrong, Dad?" Cora asked, wrapping her thick cardigan around her. The sun was going down, turning the sky



a beautiful pinky-purple colour, and it was getting chilly on the hilltop campsite.

He sighed and stared at the pile of logs. "It just won't light properly. I think we need more kindling."

"We can help with that!" Lei shouted, a bit too loudly.

All their parents turned to look at her. "Wow, you're keen," said Lei's dad. "Do you know where to find some?"

Lei nodded like a woodpecker and grabbed Isabelle's and Cora's hands. "Yes, we do, don't we? Down near the trees by the lake, right?"

"Oh, yes," said Cora, quickly understanding Lei's plan. "There are loads of twigs and things down there."

Isabelle looked around and spotted an empty picnic hamper. "We'll be able to collect loads in this!" she said, sweeping



up the hamper and waving it around.

"All right, girls." Isabelle's mum smiled, her green eyes crinkling in the corners.

"Just don't be long – it'll be dark soon," Cora's mum said.

Cora nodded and tucked her bobbed blonde hair behind her ears. "No worries. We'll be back in a few minutes!"

The three cousins spun around, linked arms and began running down the hill towards the lake, the picnic hamper swinging like a giant bracelet on Isabelle's wrist.

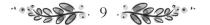
"Thank chestnuts for that!" said Lei. It was something she'd heard their animal friends saying, and she liked it a lot. "We'll be able to go to Blossom Wood one last time after all!"

Cora's whole body tingled at the





thought of seeing their woodland friends, and the beautiful forest. She wondered what would be happening there today, and what time of year it would be. Even though it was summer in their world, the seasons were often different in Blossom Wood. Last time they were there it was



super-hot, but the time before that it had been midwinter!

Isabelle bit her lip. "I can't believe it's going to be our last time there. I feel like we're only just getting to know everyone!"

Suddenly, Cora's tingles were gone at the thought of this being their last visit to Blossom Wood. At the start of their holiday, she hadn't even believed in magic. But now she never wanted it to end! She felt hot tears swimming to her eyes, and blinked them away furiously.

The girls reached the shore of the lake, and began skipping across the sand. The small lake was still and calm, the indigo-blue water reflecting the trees and hills around it.

It reminded Lei of their first time in Blossom Wood, when they'd looked at



themselves in a puddle of water and saw that they were unicorns. She wished she could go back in time and live all of their adventures again.

Isabelle noticed her cousins' downturned mouths and squeezed both of their hands. "Hey, don't be sad. We've got to enjoy this! And who knows, maybe we will be able to come back again one day."

Cora smiled at her optimistic cousin, hoping she was right, and decided to take her advice. She had to enjoy this – especially if it was their last visit.

They reached the cove, which was like a shallow cave set into the hillside. At the back, the hoof prints were waiting for them. Still holding hands, Cora, Isabelle and Lei each stepped into a set, and Isabelle set down the hamper. Immediately, their feet fizzed with warm magic, which began spreading up their legs and through their bodies. Bright white light flashed all around them, forcing them to shut their eyes.

"Blossom Wood, here we come!" yelled Lei.

