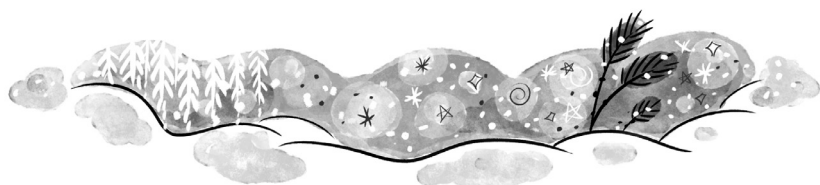


Chapter 1

Let It Snow



Pat, pat, pat. Patter, patter, patter.

Isabelle yawned and snuggled down further in her sleeping bag. The rain pattering on the tent had woken her up, but she wasn't ready to start the day yet. She was cosy and warm, lying in between her two cousins, Lei and Cora. They were still fast asleep – Lei snoring

gently and Cora curled up in a ball so all Isabelle could see was her silky blonde hair. Isabelle wondered whether to wake them, but they looked so peaceful that she decided not to. Instead she pulled out her notebook and pen from under her pillow.



“Blossom Wood is the most beautiful place I’ve ever seen,” she started to write. “It’s so amazing it feels like a dream...”

She stopped suddenly. Maybe it *was* just a dream. Yesterday, Isabelle had thought that she and her cousins had been transported to a magical wood where they were no longer girls, but unicorns! But Isabelle always had very vivid dreams. Maybe this was just one of them? Her heart felt heavy – she’d be so disappointed if it wasn’t real and they couldn’t go back again. Now she couldn’t wait any longer for Lei and Cora to wake up.

Isabelle gently shook their shoulders. Lei yelled, “Argh, what’s happening?” while Cora uncurled and flashed open her blue eyes.

“Sorry!” said Isabelle, her heart pounding with worry now. “But I need to know something. Did I dream Blossom Wood, or was it real?”

Lei beamed, and her dark brown eyes twinkled. “It was real,” she replied, nodding furiously.

Cora grinned too. “We turned into unicorns, we really did!”

Isabelle hugged both her cousins at once as relief flooded through her.

“Now, since you woke me up, I have a question for you,” Lei said, leaping up from her sleeping bag. “When are we going back?”

Isabelle looked down at her purple checked pyjamas. “Um, we probably need to get dressed first!” she said. They’d got to Blossom Wood by stepping into some hoof prints in a nearby cove, but they

couldn't really leave the campsite in their sleeping gear... What would they tell their parents?

Lei pulled her long, dark hair into a ponytail, revealing the pink braids in her hair underneath. She grabbed her towel. "Come on then! Last one to the shower block has to clean up the tent!"

"But we're meant to be going on a hike today, remember," said Cora, the smile disappearing from her face. The three families were on holiday together – even though Cora lived in Australia, Isabelle in England and Lei in the USA, they always met up for a week or two during the summer holidays.

Lei unzipped the tent and looked out. "Yeah, but it's raining! Hopefully the hike will get cancelled."

Isabelle nodded, making her red

curls bounce about. She'd been looking forward to walking around the valleys here, but there was no way it'd be as good as another visit to Blossom Wood!

After they'd showered and dressed, they found their parents sitting on camping chairs under the awning of Lei's parents' tent. Isabelle's mum was handing out mugs, while Lei's dad set up their portable stove. Lei's older sister, Ying, lay on her back across the tarpaulin – headphones in, eyes shut, nodding her head to her music.

Cora's mum stared out at the rain, shaking her head. "Looks like the hike is off, girls. According to the forecast, it's going to rain all day."

Lei tried to look disappointed, but her insides bubbled with hope. Now they just had to figure out a reason to go down to





Five minutes later, Lei, Cora and Isabelle were running down the hill from their campsite towards a small blue lake.

They weren't going far, just like they'd promised – down to a little cove at the side of the lake. And they knew no time would pass back here while they were away in Blossom Wood.

Their trainers squelched in the muddy ground and raindrops splattered on their faces, but they didn't mind. Soon they reached the sandy shore, and they sprinted into the cove – which was like a shallow cave in the hillside surrounded by pretty flowers.

“They're still there!” gasped Cora. She'd been worrying that the three sets of hoof prints in the rocky ground might have disappeared somehow. She jumped



into the ones that matched her feet – the biggest set – while Lei stepped into the smallest prints and Isabelle into the medium-sized ones.

Dazzling white light filled the cove, making the girls close their eyes. “We’re going to Blossom Wood!” yelled Lei, as

warmth shot through her feet and into her legs, body and arms.

“And we’ll soon be unicorns!” added Isabelle, smiling as she felt hot tingles dance across her skin.

Cora trembled as the warm magic flooded through her. Before yesterday, she didn't even believe in magic, but now she was about to become a unicorn!

Sure enough, when the bright light faded and Cora opened her eyes, she saw shiny hooves where her feet used to be, and white unicorn legs instead of her normal two. When she looked up, she shrieked. Blossom Wood lay before her like last time they'd visited, but now there was one big difference: it was covered in sparkling snow.

The three cousins stared at the landscape from their position on the

mountainside. “Wow,” murmured Isabelle. “I thought it looked beautiful before. But the snow makes it seem even more magical!”

Lei neighed in agreement. “Let’s go and find our woodland friends!” she said,



galloping off excitedly before her cousins could reply. Not that Isabelle and Cora minded – they wanted to meet up with the other animals too!