**Journey of the Three Friends**

“Yes, Elder!” A voice came from the middle of the deep woods. The voice’s owner was a young cat girl, her dark brown hair tied up in a ponytail. Her cat ears and tail were white, she wore a blue shirt, white pants, a green backpack and purple sneakers completed the outfit.

“Very well, Cat” the Elder said.   
He was an old tree standing firmly, guarding the Magical Forest. “I trust you. And to help you on the journey, these glasses have the magic to help you teleport.”   
A pair of glasses were held out in front of Cat, between the branches, so she held her hand out and took them.   
“I’ll do my best” she promised.  
  
Walking back to her wooden cabin which wasn’t far from the Elder, Cat thought about the mission she received.   
“A journey for treasure that would help the Magical Forest become better?” she thought out loud.   
“Am I capable of such an important job?” Cat wondered as her hand turned the doorknob of an old oak door, which led to the inside of her cosy home. Cat got to work on her dinner for the night, and decided that she would set off for the mission in the morning when she got up.  
  
A great day to start a journey, thought Cat. It was a sunny day and the sky was clear. She was ready, standing in the woods right outside her cabin. She started with reading the clue on the piece of clean white paper she got from the Elder. “Hidden in the place of red, surrounded by rocks” Cat read.   
Place of red? She thought. Could it be Uluru from Australia in the human world? Or the sun? Wait, it was Mars she figured! It was a planet in a deep shade of red and rocks everywhere on its ground. The home of her treasured friend. In her hands she grabbed the clue tight, and immediately teleported to Mars using the glasses she had.  
  
In front of Cat’s eyes, a white building decorated with blue neon lights stood on the red ground. She knew the person living inside may be able to help her. “Ribbit!” Rang the doorbell once Cat pressed it. The door opened as the system recognised her face. She ran through the living room and straight into the bedroom, where again the system opened the door for her.   
“Heyo!” yelled Cat to her friend, Froggy, playing games on a professional looking desktop with lights. The girl was the same height and age as Cat.   
“Ay Cat! Hi!” the girl answered, a smile on her face. She had Bluetooth headphones on, with a dark blue hoodie, purple trousers, and light green runners on her feet. In her hoodie pocket sat a cute green frog, her pet Froggo. Her black hair was tied up in a side ponytail. Just then, an email came in on her computer.   
“Check it first, Froggy?” Cat asked her best friend, and turned around to avoid seeing Froggy’s email. With a few clicks, a message appeared on the screen. Since Cat had told Froggy about the treasure she was finding, Froggy knew all about the clues.  
 “Cat, you might want to check this out.” Froggy called her friend to turn around. Cat checked the email and found the second clue.   
It read “To the city apartments rise, and to work the people drive. Go to the most popular and busy district.”  
“Maybe it’s talking about Hong Kong? I learnt that Hong Kong’s really busy when I had my zoom lessons for school” answered Froggy.  
“Yep, let’s go then! Hang on tight!” Cat started the teleportation once she grasped Froggy’s hand tight, and in a second, Froggy’s high tech styled home was suddenly quiet.  
  
They appeared in a dark alley of Mong Kok. “Wow” stumbled out of Froggy’s mouth. “This place is busy alright.”   
But Cat wasn’t surprised. Where she lived in the Magical World, there were portals in the main part of the island. They lead to different places, including the human world. It was also the reason Cat had visited a lot of different places, and a place she visited the most was Hong Kong. Now that she and Froggy were in Mong Kok, there were shops everywhere, with neon lights and giant screens showing advertisements. It was as bright as the sun, sometimes even hurting their eyes.   
“Do you have an idea where to go, Froggy?” asked Cat, finding some money in her backpack from the last time she went to Hong Kong.   
“No. You’re more familiar with this place. Are you?”  
“Nope. Come on though! Follow me!” Cat called, dragging Froggy through streets and alleys, spending her money on some snacks and souvenirs for the two of them.   
  
After around 15 minutes, she was holding a paper cup full of Shiu Mai with soy sauce, and Froggy had one with Fish balls. “Um Cat, why are we having snacks?” asked Froggy, concentrating on the task of finding treasure.   
“It’s your first time here. Got to show you around and try some special food from this place right?” Cat answered, enjoying her snack.   
“I don’t have anything to say. Just this once, okay? After this we get back to work” Froggy answered her best friend, finishing her Fish balls.   
“Yeah right! Got it” yelled Cat, laughing.  
  
“Finally! You are an extremely slow eater” Froggy called at her friend. “Back to work!”

“What?” Cat stared at her friend. “You ate too quickly! I know I’m slow, but you're eating too fast!”

By now they were dashing around streets and alleys, cars on the roads zoomed past them, and walls with graffiti lay before them.

“Wait, that graffiti!” exclaimed Cat. “It’s actually a portal!”   
In front of the two was a giant portal disguised as graffiti; it was about two metres tall, and also two metres wide. Cat dashed in without a word, disappearing before Froggy’s eyes. “Wait, Cat! Think before doing things!”   
But it was too late.   
“She never uses her brain when she’s excited” Froggy shook her head, jumping in after Cat.  
  
“Cat!” Froggy’s voice echoed through the grey silent space. The shadow world, home to the people of the shadow. They like to stay in the shadows, hating the sun and brightness.   
“Oh we’ve been here before, a few times” Cat’s voice came from Froggy’s front. Froggy ran towards her best friend, and stopped.   
“Here” Froggy pointed. It was a glass dome, stretching out before their eyes. They weren’t that familiar with the dome, but they were more than familiar with its owner.   
“Shad! Shadow!” They both called out.

After several minutes a girl with black hair, which often hung down around her shoulders, walked out of the dome, opening the door for the friends.   
“You guys woke me up. What’s up though?” The girl had a long warm hoodie worn and black trousers with pink shoes with a bow on each side.   
“I’m Froggy, I live on Mars and I have the best internet ever!” yelled Froggy, fully waking the girl up.  
“Wait, Froggy. You’re scaring Shad. She just woke up.”   
Shad is what the girls mostly called her, though her full name is Shadow. But unlike all the other shadow people, Shad likes brightness, happiness and positive things, rather than the negatives the other shadows have.  
“Just come in,” said Shad. “I’ll go wash a chocolate bar with hot water for a snack.”   
“Nah bro that’s not how it’s supposed to work!”   
“It’ll melt Shad!” cried both Cat and Froggy.   
“Wow. I feel so offended” Shad said in her usual sentence calmly. “I’ll leave the snack then.”  
  
Just as Shad finished her sentence, a letter drifted from the air onto the roof of the dome.   
“Whose letter is that?” asked Froggy.   
“Not mine.”  
“Not mine either” answered the other two at the very same moment.   
“Well! Climbing time?” asked Cat, who spends most of her free time climbing trees in her home forest.   
“Nah. Teleport” replied Froggy. And so, in a minute, Cat was back in the dome with the letter. She and Froggy explained everything to Shad, and soon Shad was clear of what was happening. They all read the letter together.   
“In the forest you will find the so-called treasure that you hide. It may not be visible, but it sure is good to keep.”   
“So does that mean we have to go back to the forest?” asked Cat.   
“Seems like it, let’s go!” said Froggy. The three held hands, and the next thing they knew they were teleported to the Magical Forest.  
  
“Elder” said Cat, bowing to show respect to the wise old tree.   
“I see these are your friends. Nice to meet you. Cat has been talking about you both, welcome to the forest.” The Elder moved his branches, waving a hello. Unlike other trees, the Elder had eyes, nose and a mouth. His voice was a calm one.   
“How are you going with your task, Cat?”  
“I’m so sorry, we’ve gone through clues and worlds, but still, we haven’t found the treasure yet” Cat apologised to the Elder, showing the letter.   
“I see.” The Elder answered patiently, not getting angry for them not having found the treasure. He looked at them for a little while.   
“You’ve found the treasure without knowing.”   
“How is that possible, Elder?” asked Froggy, with a confused look.   
“The bonds. Bonds between living creatures. Not visible, but can be strong. To you three, it’s friendship” The Elder explained.   
“So, relationships are the treasure?” asked Shad.   
“I did it after all?” Cat felt bad for not having done the task right, but she had hope now. A feeling of pride rose inside her.   
“Yes, good job you guys did. Cat, keep the glasses as a reward. As for your friends, they can have these. You’re welcome to the forest at all times.” The Elder answered the adventurers. The branches of his body reached out to Froggy to give her a leaf pin, and to Shadow he gave a squirrel hair clip. They both could use their gifts to teleport to the Magical Forest for a visit at all times.  
  
And so the three friends spent the rest of the day having fun in the forest together. And this is one story of their adventures. It’s just the start of all the magical fun times they have to come in the future!