

Friendship in a Time of Pandemic

By Laura Reilly

I saw a meme online that said, “Maybe this whole virus is because someone with a monkey’s paw made a wish that they’d have lots of time to play Animal Crossing.”

I don’t know if that’s true, but I do know playing this game has made quarantine a whole lot more bearable.

I turned 35 last month, but I’ve hardly felt it because quarantine has thrown me right back to being in college, 15 years ago. Since I’ve switched my schedule to working afternoons and evenings, I stay up until 2, and get out of bed at 10:30. I can’t go anywhere, so indeterminate lengths of time stretch out, waiting to be filled.

Just like when I was in college, I fill a lot of that time with Animal Crossing, though the game’s latest installment far surpasses anything those original games could do.

I may be an introvert on steroids—some would say a recluse—but a government mandate to not go anywhere, and not gather, makes me want to do both, and virtually, I can.

Friends who live in different parts of the country—and even on different continents—play the game, too. I have plans to visit my friend Lolita’s town, and she lives in the Philippines.

It isn’t just my friends around the world I look forward to seeing, though. Seeing the animals who live on the island has replaced my daily interactions with my coworkers, the interactions I didn’t realize I’d come so much to depend on.

Sure, talking with the kangaroo who lives down the hill about the glasses case that fell out of a tree, and hit her on the head, isn’t exactly the same as discussing MLA guidelines with my officemates.

With everything so topsy-turvy, though, somehow, it makes perfect sense.