

The gentle chiding was so *normal*, so automatic, that Harry was breathless with emotion for a second. He imagined a life in which he'd grown up like this; with Remus and Sirius and Snape, in a house full of love. He'd thought he was over that childish wish. Apparently not.

He took a steadying breath, hoping Remus hadn't noticed. Snape was eyeing him with an unreadable look, and Harry didn't meet the man's gaze.

At least he had it now. Better late than never.

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A few days later, Harry was surprised by Sirius' arrival shortly after lunch, the man bursting into the library and interrupting Harry's lesson with Remus. "The Order think I'm sulking in my room about not being able to bring you to headquarters," he said by way of greeting, ruffling Harry's hair. "I reckon that gives me at least two hours. Mind if I take over, Moony?" He pulled a book from the pocket of his robe, and Remus' eyebrows rose, a smirk flitting across his lips.

"It's time, is it? By all means, go ahead; we can pick this up tomorrow."

"Time? Time for what?" Harry asked, trying to see the title of the book. Sirius hid it behind his back.

"You remember last summer, when you promised you'd keep up your grades? You didn't have exams this year, but Severus assures me you're doing well in all your classes, and Moony showed me your Arithmancy and Runes tests from the other day. I think it's time I held up my end of the bargain."

It took Harry to remember the exact promise he'd made, but when it clicked, his jaw dropped. "You'll teach me to be an animagus?" he asked excitedly. Sirius tossed him the book, and Harry caught it reflexively.

*A Complete Guide to the Animagus Transformation*. It looked old, the edges a little worn. "This is the book your dad and I used when we learnt. There's a few more books in the library here on the subject, but this should teach you everything you need to know."

Harry's heart stuttered; his dad had used this book. His dad had studied these pages, read it over and over, maybe even made notes inside. His touch became even more reverent. "Can we start now?"

"That's what I'm here for!" Sirius agreed, dropping into the chair beside Harry. "I'll warn you, it's a bit boring at first. Finding your form can take a bit of time, though it's easier if you've already got a good base in Occlumency." He reached to open the book to the first chapter; *Finding Your Form*.

Harry read quickly. Finding an animagus form involved a lot of meditation to prepare, and then entering some sort of trance with some potion fumes in the air to actually find the form itself. "Moony brewed the potion for us last time, but Severus said he'll do it," Sirius informed him. "So it should be ready by Saturday. Think you can meditate enough by then?"