

He cocked his head, looking down at his paws. His tail twitched.

*“Oho! You’ve done it, lad!”* He looked up — he could understand the hissing language, but had no hope of speaking it back.

He stood on four wobbly legs, jumping down from the sofa and landing in a sprawled heap. Above him, he heard Salazar chuckle.

There was no mirror in the room, and Harry wished he’d known how successful he would be so he could have conjured one. All he could do was turn a tight circle trying to get a good look at himself; his tail waved in the corner of his vision, and he chased it for a few moments, before tripping over his own feet and rolling into the side of the desk.

He sat back on his haunches, pushing away all the curious smells and sounds around him. He had to change back. He couldn’t be a fox forever.

It was almost as hard as the initial transformation. This time in his mind he was chasing down his own memories, trying to remember the feel of hands and feet and human skin, of a bipedal body, of wearing clothes. It seemed foolish that he should forget such a thing when he’d inhabited a human body for fifteen and a half years, but right now all he could think were fox thoughts, and all he could feel were fox feelings.

It took time. But eventually, Harry was himself again, sat on the floor of the office with his glasses askew.

*“Well done, lad!”* Salazar enthused, applauding politely from his portrait. Harry beamed at him.

It would take practice before he could switch between forms as effortlessly as Sirius did, but he’d done it.

He was an animagus, now.

He couldn’t *wait* to show his godfathers.

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Arriving to set up the Room for the last HA meeting before Christmas, Harry did not expect the place to be decorated. At first, he wondered if it was the castle getting cheeky with him — then he took a closer look at the baubles hanging from the ceiling, realised they all had his face on them, and knew it must have been a gesture from Dobby instead. A quick wave of his wand transfigured them into regular golden baubles, just in time for the first group of people to arrive.

“Putting up mistletoe, hmm?” Susan remarked, looking up at the white berries hung in the centre of the room. “Something you’re trying to tell us?”

Harry blushed, and Susan cackled at him.