

experienced anywhere else before. Things were so much simpler, in the mind of a fox; his worries melted away, in favour of keen-eyed exploration of the undergrowth.

He didn't let it overwhelm him, though. He had to keep a firm hold of the human side of his mind; he had too much at stake for that. When things started to get a little much, he turned back towards the familiar scents of Sirius and Draco, ignoring any other scents that might distract him. That was much easier — even as a fox, Draco's scent made Harry feel safe, made his heart flutter.

He didn't want to disturb his boyfriend's concentration, so Harry looked around for a comfortable place to watch from. His gaze landed on a nearby tree, the bark rough and the low branches wide and sturdy.

There was something he hadn't tried, yet...

Skittering up the tree, Harry grinned to himself in triumph when he made it to the lower branches, and settled in to watch Draco meditate. Already, the blond seemed to be making progress; his wings came far quicker this time, arms sprouting feathers all the way up to the shoulders. Sirius crowed in delight, and Harry's little fox heart warmed at the smile on his boyfriend's face.

"That's a really great start, Draco!" Sirius enthused. "Bird forms are supposed to be really hard to get, anyway; with the bone density and everything, it's a bit more complicated than mammal to mammal." He watched Draco shake his arms, feathers shedding onto the grass as they became human once more. "Keep practicing, I bet you'll have it down by the end of summer." Sirius checked his watch, and frowned. "We should probably get back inside before Remus sends out a search party. Wonder where Harry's wandered off to?"

Harry chuffed quietly, then launched himself out of the tree towards his godfather; Sirius yelped, but thankfully managed to catch Harry, steadying the fox somewhat awkwardly in his arms. "Bloody hell! Scared ten years off my life, you little menace."

Harry let out a little fox laugh, licking Sirius' chin. Sirius' already half-hearted glare melted. "You're lucky you're cute," he declared, then held the fox out. "Draco, here you go."

Draco cradled the fox like a baby, ruffling the soft white fur of his belly. Harry wriggled in delight, snuffling at Draco's neck. "Do I have to carry you all the way home?" Draco asked laughingly, and Harry nodded. "And you say *I'm* high maintenance," the blond muttered, rolling his eyes.

Harry chuffed again, making himself comfortable in his boyfriend's arms. Draco smelled even more amazing to his fox senses, this close.

It was nice; being carried, listening to Draco's soothing heartbeat. It was even nicer when they got back to the house and Draco carried him to the small living room, sprawling on the soft rug with him and petting him gently.

Harry could definitely understand why Sirius liked being Padfoot so much.