

Why you don't (do) open mysterious gifts

Husky dog TF by Wolfennar

For some unknown reason, at about 4 am, I woke up, despite being asleep only for a mere three hours. I thought I heard some noises coming from downstairs, but honestly it was quite hard to tell. Nonetheless, I decided to go down have a look to make sure if it was, or not, only my imagination. Besides, I also was a bit hungry and that was an excellent excuse to stop by the kitchen and have a little something to eat. Now, a bit of context is necessary. You see, today was Christmas. And as per the usual family tradition we had opened our gifts as soon as the clock struck midnight, which is why I had went to sleep a tad later than usual. It's also why I found it very strange when I arrived at the tree in the living room and saw that there was still a gift under it, despite me remembering us opening them all. Now fully awake by this strange occurrence and my curiosity definitely intrigued, I simply had to examine this mysterious gift. It looked simple enough, wrapped up in Christmas themed paper. However, when looking at the tag I was shocked to find it was a gift for me. I even made sure to read the tag once more to make sure it wasn't my mind playing tricks on me. Even odder was the fact there was no indication from whom it was.

Despite my great fatigue, or maybe because of it, I decided to open this mysterious package. I tried to weight it and shake it a little in an attempt to find clues as to what could be inside: it was fairly light and I didn't felt or heard anything moving around in the enclosed space. Having no idea what to expect, I started to tear apart the paper to get to the box. Once that taken care of, as well as the tape holding the box shut, the gift was now wide open. Peering inside there was a lot paper used to fill up the empty space. Not wanting to bother with that my hand went fishing for whatever was inside directly in the box, with the most disregard for the paper inside. Once an object could be felt, my hand grabbed it and pulled it out. At first I starred at the thing with incredulous eyes, as the thing seemed to be a leather strap or an extremely short leather belt. Upon seeing that it had a metal tag however it all made sense: it was a collar, similar to the one a dog would wear, though it also raised many other questions. Why was I given that? I had an interest in dogs and wished I'd get one someday, but we didn't even have one currently. Lost in my thoughts, I kept starring at the animalistic apparel. With my mind preoccupied, an invisible force compelled my hands to wrap the leather piece around my neck and lock its clasp tightly. Only when my hands finished their job that I realised what I had just done. No big deal one would normally think, removing it should be as easy right? However every attempts to remove this collar felt short as each time I tried to do it, it was as if I had no idea how to open the clasp.

If things weren't very strange before, now the situation literally became supernatural, as an itching feeling made itself known around my neck and on my hands, which were still trying to remove the collar. This feeling was soon replaced with one much

more fuzzy and warm. Despite the minimal amount of light, when my hands were in front of my eyes, so I could figure out what was happening, my heart skipped a beat. There was fur on my hands. White, dense fur slowly covering my fingers and hands. Touching my neck around the collar confirmed that the fur was also growing there. In a panic I hurried to the bathroom, where I would be able to follow the changes in the mirror and even isolate myself if needed. Upon reaching the bathroom I realized my fingers were getting shorter and my nails were significantly more like claws now as the fur kept creeping up my arm and neck. Surprised at how much my body was shifting, I let out a bark before quickly covering my mouth with my newfound paws. Dismissing what I was feeling the hairs started to cover up my torso, sides and back. Strangely, it was a lot faster on the rest of my body than on my neck and face, as it was barely up to my chin now, which I wasn't sure should be a relief or not. As the fur went down my body, I felt an odd feeling right above my butt, like something trying to get out of me and stretching my skin along the way. Wanting to see what was up I did my best to remove my pants and turned around to have a good look at what was happening. No sooner than I saw what could only be described as the beginning of a tail, my mouth felt awfully off. The fur having surrounded it, my teeth felt like they were shifting around, getting bigger, sharper and more numerous, at the same time as my tongue was acquiring a flatter and longer shape. With that my whole skull started shifting, a muzzle starting to take shape. However, my attention was soon directed to my legs as they too were growing white fuzz, though I should note I then realized a portion of black fur seemingly coming from my back was extending onto the sides of my legs. This pattern looked familiar but my nose becoming black and wet prevented me from really focusing on such a trivial detail as my fur pattern. As the fur reached my feet, I felt my legs changing radically, most notably my feet themselves becoming longer while the other part of my legs were getting shorter which each passing moment, and my feet more paw-like. It's at this point that my point of balance shifted in such a way as to make it increasingly difficult to stand only on two legs. Falling forward onto my now forelegs, my stance locked itself. At the same time the fur started replacing my hairs as well as puff out on my cheeks. As it crawled up, my ears felt as if they were pulled and shaped by invisible hands, going up on my head and now triangular and furry. The transformation was nearing its end, my whole body now looked like that of an oversized dog, beside my head which strangely wasn't yet done. My whole body then contorted and started shifting to give itself the size and proportions of a proper dog. Lastly, my head finished changing and I felt an odd dizziness coming over my mind. While I could still perfectly remember who I was, new animalistic instinct surged through my mind, so that acting like a normal dog felt like the most natural thing to do.

Putting my front paws on the counter and pulling myself up, I was able to see in the mirror of the bathroom that I now was a dog, a husky to be specific. Despite what one would imagine, though it surely had something to do about my new form, I felt somewhat OK about having transformed into an animal. The next morning, when my parents found

me sleeping on the couch, they simply grinned to themselves, seeing as the seller hadn't lied. (Un)fortunately, I later learned that all this was temporary, that it would only last for about two weeks, and that my parents had bought this to make me realize the full extent of what it mean to have a dog. However, these two weeks were amazingly fun, playing in the snow as a dog and everything was one if not the most relaxing experience of my life. Now back to my human form, I often wonder about being a dog again, which makes waiting for next Christmas all year a true patience exercise.