

The Hitman's Guide to Going to the Beach

By Alice Winters

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Leland

Jackson: Hey, hon, where are you?

Me: Closet.

Jackson: Which... closet?

Me: The one in Cassel's house, why?

Jackson: Why are you in Cassel's closet?

Me: I'm picking him up for our super-secret awesome special spectacular day out. Are you not *ready*? I already packed everything for you. You just have to get your sweet little tush ready and stand by The Fence. I'll swing by lickety-split and pick you up.

Jackson: The last person you "lickety-split," you ran over.

Me: Whoops.

Jackson: Where is Waylon?

Me: In the abductor wagon. I even rolled the window down for him and told him if he gets too hot to stick his head out.

Jackson: Leland...

Me: Here's a titty picture to hold you over.

I pull my phone back and tug up my shirt before snapping a picture. It looks super sexy with the ski mask. And quite honestly, I don't know how this man will not have a raging hard-on the moment he sees it.

Me: You're welcome.

Jackson: Tavish said you should stay in there.

Me: What the fuck is Tavish doing in our home?

Jackson: You invited him.

Me: By accident! I didn't mean for his name to be in the group chat. Then it got awkward when he was like "Sure, I'll come along."

Jackson: Don't act like you didn't want him to come along. You were already planning out where to put him in the murder van.

Me: Hold your sweet cheeks, my love. I hear Cassel and Jeremy coming.

Jackson: For the love of god, please be careful and don't get shot or something stupid.

Me: Careful is my middle name. Leland Careful Lickety-Split Stein

“If you don’t get out of my closet right this damn minute, I’m going to pepper spray you so hard,” Cassel shouts from outside the closet.

It takes everything in my being to keep from announcing that I like hard things.

“Leland!”

That little shit... I must have missed one of his security cameras. But no problem. He’s a weak man, and I will prove it by staying put and waiting for him to come get me.

“Leland, I know you’re in the closet,” Cassel says.

Jeremy sighs. “Cassel, I see you inching over there. Just leave him in there. Leave him all day. If you leave him all day, think of how peaceful it’ll be.”

“True. Jeremy, you want to see this picture I have of Jackson hanging off The Fence?”

HOW DARE HE?

No... no... he’s trying to get me to come out. I am a brave, brave man. I can do this. I can—

“Look at the butt crack.”

No! I wanna see his butt crack! Dammit, how dare Cassel do this to me?

Staying put is the hardest thing I’ve ever done, but I will do it. I will not cave.

“I don’t think he’s in there. Jeremy, there’s no way he wouldn’t have come out if he was in there.”

“He’s wanting you to open the door,” Jeremy assures him.

“Yeah, but he could never resist a naked Jackson.”

Now Jackson is *naked*? He’s making me miss a naked Jackson? Better question... why does he have a picture of a naked Jackson?

“We could watch the video of me flipping Tavish.”

That’s also one of my favorite videos!

No... no, I must remain calm. I must not move. I must—

The door whips open and I leap onto Cassel like a fly on shit.

“I fucking told you,” Jeremy says. “I told you.”

“I couldn’t stop myself!” Cassel cries as I wrestle him down onto his bed. Then I grab him around the neck and around one leg and head out the door with him.

“Noooo. Jeremy, help me, please,” Cassel cries.

“I’m not helping you. You did this to yourself. I told you not to open that damn door. He’d have stayed in there for hours to prove a point. We could have been Leland-less for *hours*.”

Cassel cries some more as I haul him out to the abductor van.

“Waylon! My child, open the back door,” I announce as I come up.

I look Waylon right in the eyes as he rolls up the window instead.

“Waylon, no! You are my *child*. I knew I should have renamed you,” I say as I juggle a squirming Cassel and pop open the back door myself.

“Jeremy, I can’t go alone,” Cassel whines.

“I’m pretty sure you can. Have fun! I love you,” he shouts from the porch.

I decide to help Cassel out and mimic his voice with a “‘Jerebear, it’s a nudist beach and you’re going to leave me to go alllll alone with all of these strapping young men, especially Jackson who is a hunkahunk. He’s so hunkalicious.’”

“Hold on. Are you taking me to a nude beach?” Waylon asks in horror. At least he’s wearing his ski mask like I told him to. He could be trained yet.

“No, I’m joking. I’m not taking you to a nude beach. Your papa Leland is simply teasing. Why are you taking your mask off? If you don’t put your mask back on, I will not feed you.”

“You can’t threaten to starve the kid,” Jeremy says as he willingly gets in the back. They’re such good boys.

“Now we’re off to pick up Henry,” I say as I merrily get into the front seat and look over at my little kidnapper in the making. “You’re going to make a phenomenal kidnapper.”

Waylon looks disturbed by this for some reason. “I don’t want to kidnap people.”

“Don’t knock it until you try it. My friends love it.”

“Your friends are all as weird as you are. Normal people wouldn’t enjoy this. Normal people would like call their friends up on the phone and be like ‘Hey, want to go to the beach?’ and they’d be like ‘Yeah, sure.’”

“Ooh, we really are going to the beach? Why didn’t you tell me that?” Cassel asks. “I didn’t bring my bathing suit. I got so distracted by the nudist beach thing that I thought you were joking.”

“I told Jeremy to pack it.”

“I grudgingly did,” he grumbles as I swing the van up over the curb and into Henry’s driveway.

“Your turn, Waylon. Go abduct Henry.”

Waylon doesn’t look pleased by his new task. “Why me?”

“You have learned all you need to know from a wise sage such as myself. Go out... spread your wings,” I say as I wave him out.

He sighs and gets out of the car.

“My poor, poor boy. He’s going to fail so badly. Henry said, and I quote, ‘Hell no.’”

“You seem quite happy he’s going fail,” Cassel says.

“Just want him to learn the hard way that he’s not going to get everything he wants and...”

I watch as Henry laughs and smacks Waylon on the back while he walks toward the abductor van.

“Ohhhh nooooo,” Cassel says, barely able to keep away his giggles. Fucking... *giggles*. “Look how happy he is. Has Henry ever looked that happy when Leland invited him to do anything?”

“Absolutely not,” Jeremy responds as I gape at my protégé. I know I should be proud of him... but what the fuck!

“Here, you can have the front,” Waylon says.

“Nah, I’ll sit in the back away from... him,” Henry says.

I gasp. “D-Daddy?”

Waylon gets into the front with me as I stare at him.

“How dare you take my teachings and use them against me?” I whisper.

Waylon gives me an innocent look. “I thought you’d be proud.”

“Dammit, I am proud,” I say. “Now that you’ve succeeded here, I’ll teach you how to brawl.”

“No, I’m okay. Thank you.”

“Next, we have to pick up Jackson and revolting Tavish,” I say.

Quickly, I drive over to my house, disappointed no one decides to chase or shoot at us along the way... although, I guess I don’t want to subject Waylon to that. I pull up out front and Jackson comes out while laughing.

“Oh no...” Cassel says, lips right next to my ear. “Do you... do you think Tavish is funnier than you?”

“No. Jackson’s merely laughing out of politeness.”

“Hmm,” Henry grumbles. “I don’t know, that looks like a man who is genuinely enjoying himself. Look at that.”

I gasp as Jackson smacks his leg, he’s laughing so hard! “NO!”

“Oh yes,” Cassel says.

“Listen to the delightful sound of his laughs,” Henry comments as the side door opens.

“After you,” Jackson says.

“Boy, oh boy. What a gentleman,” Tavish says, but before he can get in, I drive forward a little. “Leland... is there an issue?” He reaches for the door again and I drive a little more. It’s like something has taken over my body and is forcing me to keep Tavish out of the vehicle. The issue is... the more I make the monster walk, the more I make my sweet husband walk.

“Tavish, your seat is on top,” I say.

“Is there an issue, Leland? Is there an issue that Jackson finds me *hilarious*?”

“Don’t run him over, Leland,” Henry says. “He’s saying it to rile you up. He knows it’s the only thing that gets you going.”

An inhuman growl escapes me while I put the car in park so he can get in as I decide that I will simply drown him while the others are looking the other way. I’ll tell them that he went back to Scotland and call it a day.

“Hon, I was telling Tavish about that delivery man you were dealing with yesterday. I still can’t stop laughing about it,” Jackson says as it dawns on me that my beautiful man wasn’t laughing at that monster... but at something I did.

“Aww, does everyone hear that? And does anyone want to apologize? Cassel? Cassel?”

Cassel just grumbles as he goes back to his seat in defeat. What a sad sight.

“Jackson, did you put on the bathing suit I got you?” I inquire.

“If you mean that brand-new Speedo you got that was all ass on display and barely any coverage, I let Tavish have it since he forgot his,” Jackson says as he gives me a big smile and a kiss on the cheek.

“Ellis is going to love it,” Tavish declares. “We’re picking him up, right?”

“Next stop,” I assure him. “You better not have warned him.”

Jackson pats my shoulder. “How about I drive so you can play with your friends?”

“Play five finger fillet,” I grumble, displeased that Tavish’s ass is in my sexy man’s Speedo.

“It’s a real nice bathing suit,” Tavish says as he snaps the waistband which I can’t see from under his pants. “Real damn nice. Ellis isn’t going to be able to tear his eyes away.”

I glower at the man while wondering if Jackson put me in the back with Tavish so I could push him out as he drives. No one would actually notice, right? We can simply replace him with Ellis.

Since I’d had the seats placed back in the vehicle, I find a spot right next to Henry that opens up after I sit on Jeremy’s lap.

“Are you proud that you ran Jerebear off?” Cassel asks.

“Kind of impressed at the power my ass has, but also a bit sad he didn’t want me to sit on him,” I admit.

“When we arrive, *I* will get Ellis,” Tavish says.

“Anyone hear that squeaky noise? No one? Only me? Weird. Sounds like it needs to be put out of its misery,” I say as Jackson makes his way to Ellis’s house.

Tavish is poised to leap out the door the moment we roll up in front of Ellis’s house. The van isn’t even stopped when he whips open the door and jumps out.

“Ellis! Ellis! Come, join us!” Tavish yells, like running manically toward the door will make Ellis excited to join us. I leap out of the vehicle and land on Tavish’s back. He staggers, stumbles, and then as I get a good hold around his neck, I knock into the back of his legs so I can ride him down to the ground.

When I look up, Ellis is out on the front porch, locking his front door. “Uhh... I, uh... we’re going to the beach... right? This... this will be so much fun... I think. Or at least that’s what I thought before I saw this... and the masks. Oh no... I think... I think I have a cough. I think I just suddenly got sick and it has nothing to do with Leland running at me with a mask on. I should probably stay home.”

He’s scrambling now, trying to get the keys out as I stalk up to him.

“Ellis, don’t you dare run,” I threaten.

“I really did! I left something inside!” he says as he gets the key in and yanks the door open. He rushes inside as his bird squawks, “Uh-oh. Badass motherfucker. Uh-oh.”

Ellis proceeds to trip over nothing at all and does a very graceful roll onto the rug. It's really... kind of sad.

Like... I kind of feel bad for him and that I should pretend like he did a good job. We really should practice this. What if it was an actual serial killer next time and he just practically lay down for them to have easy access to his vitals? "It's okay, you'll definitely do better next time. There was... definitely something there. Definitely didn't trip over air itself," I say as I gently put a pillowcase over his head. I almost feel bad while doing it!

Then I grab the rug he's sprawled out on and start dragging it out the door, taking my prize with me.

"I tried so hard," he whines. "Tavish! Help."

Tavish simply locks up for him and grabs the other end of the rug as we carry our prize out to the car. Ellis is clearly loving every minute of it.

"Wait until you see my new Speedo," Tavish says.

"I can't see anything from inside the pillowcase. We've had someone bring their cat into the office in a pillowcase. They said it was the only way she liked to travel. Ha... haha..."

"I think you broke him," Henry says as he tosses the rolled-up rug with Ellis inside in the back.

"He loves it," I assure Henry as I quickly shut the door before he can escape.

"Tavish and you make a good team," Jackson says as we get in.

"Jackson, honey, why would you say that? No... just don't..." I cry.

Once Ellis escapes his rug, he looks around for a seat, so I pull him onto my lap while looking Tavish right in the eyes. I even wrap the seat belt around both of us as Ellis eyes the empty seat in the back.

"I can sit back there, if you want," Ellis says.

"Nooooooo. I love the way your ass bones dig into my thighs. The way they just get right in there," I assure him.

Ellis seems uncertain. "That doesn't sound pleasant."

I look over at the narrowed eyes of Tavish which makes every second of this worth it.

"Give him," Tavish says.

"Ellis, I love it when you sit on my lap. Will you please sit on my lap after I risked my life to save yours?" I ask.

Ellis nods while fighting against the seat belt that's moved up to his neck. "Yeah... if that's what you want. You really did so much. So anything you want. I can pay you back better than that, though."

"Ohhhh? Better, you say? What will you do that's even better?" I ask.

"Stop using his kindness against him!" Tavish growls.

"I would never," I say before turning to Henry. "Father."

"What?" he asks, clearly skeptical.

"I'm so pleased you decided to come to the beach with me."

"You threatened to expose my secrets to my children if I didn't," he reminds me.

I flash him the picture I have of Henry with a baseball bat held high as he runs after a man. "It really is a good angle."

"You're welcome," Cassel says since he's the one who took it.

"Why would you give that to Leland?" Henry asks like he's disappointed in Cassel.

"Because we're BFFs," Cassel says. "He gave me a BFF gun. They're like those BFF bracelets, but it's a gun."

"We sure are BFFs," I say as I give him a huge smile.

"Where the feck's my BFF gun?" Tavish asks.

"Tavish, you're wearing my husband's Speedo, what more could you take from me?" I ask. "Anyway, we could sing to pass the time."

"NO!" everyone shouts besides Waylon and Ellis.

"What happens when Leland sings?" the innocent teenager asks.

"Their hearts grow three sizes," I assure him.

"And their brains shrink?" he questions.

Cassel points at Waylon, like he gets it, but he definitely doesn't get it.

"What about the radio?" Jackson asks as he turns on a song and "I Will Survive" comes on.

"Ooh yes... *At first I was afraid... I was petrified... until I looked that sexy man right in the eyes. But then I spent so many nights... thinking about him hung up on that fence and I knew I was wronged. And I knew where he belonged. Right in my bed with his booty in my face— Oh shit... I forgot Waylon was here. Fuck, I'm really bad at having kids. Dammit, now I'm cussing.*"

"Nice day to go swimming," Waylon says.

"Right?" Jackson asks.

“Thankfully he didn’t notice,” I say as I grimace a little.

“Oh, he definitely noticed.” Cassel shows me his phone where he has a text from Waylon that says, “Will you adopt me?”

“Waylon, no! You love your papa Leland and your papa Jackson! I promise I won’t sing in front of you ever again.”

Cassel gasps. “That’s all it took? Waylon... thank you. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you.”

“Yeah...” Waylon says, apparently not sure it was worth it.

When we arrive at the beach, I hurry out with the bag I’d packed for us with towels and blow-up floats and hurry them off to the best spot.

Waylon looks excited as he rushes after me. “I’ve never been here before.”

“Really? The water is a bit cold but it’s really nice. Come on,” I urge. “I got these blow-up logs that we can ride and they come with these like... blow-up sticks that we use to beat the other person off their float with.” I present them to him and he eagerly takes one.

“I want to go first!” he says as he starts blowing them up with vigor.

“Tavish, you waste a lot of air just by existing annoyingly, blow my log,” I say as I throw it at him.

“Only if you stop harassing Ellis,” he snaps as I grab the blow-up stick that we’ll use to smack at each other and wrap it around his throat just a little.

“Ellis likes it, don’t you, Ellis?”

Ellis seems uncertain but just smiles. It’s such a cute smile that it makes me narrow my eyes at his suspicious ass.

“We’re going to be like eighty and Ellis is going to be like ‘Gotchu fuckers! I really was an undercover agent this whole time!’” I declare and Ellis just laughs... but I notice he doesn’t deny it.

“Leland, Jackson! Come on!” Waylon says.

“See? My spawn is excited to be with us,” I announce.

“He said he’s never been to the beach,” Jackson says.

“I’m going to whomp him so hard with this thing as soon as it’s blown up. Make him have the best day ever,” I say.

“Don’t whomp him too hard,” Jackson cautions as I urge Tavish to hurry it along. Once he finally has both pieces ready and looks like he’s going to pass out, I leave him since he’s served his main purpose for coming.

I smack Jackson with one then race after Waylon. My parents never took me to the beach growing up, either. I never expected to have a family... to have friends... to have a life like this... And while Waylon isn't *technically* my son, I never imagined having a kid in my life either.

"Wait, before we all run off, can I get a picture?" I ask.

Almost all heads snap over to me like I've said something weird.

"That's suspicious," Cassel says.

"Very," Henry agrees.

"Just shush your sweet mouths and get in the damn picture. And then it's a competition on who gets whomped off the floating logs. Got it? And I will win. Or allow my husband to win. Only two choices."

"Hon, do you think you could at least take the ski mask off for the picture?" he asks.

"I guess..." I grumble as I pull it free and toss it in the bag.

Jackson waves down a woman walking by who happily takes a picture of our growing family.

"I feel disgusting," I say the moment we break off.

"Because you had feelings?" Jackson asks.

"Yeah! I think smacking my family around will make me feel better," I say right before someone smacks me on the back with one of the blow-up sticks. I turn and catch Waylon's eyes as he takes off running.

"I will get you."

"NO! It was Tavish! Tavish did it!"

I chase him off into the water as he laughs, and Jackson jogs after us as I decide that it can't get much better than this.