

4,000 Member The Hitman's Guide Short Story

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Sometimes I wonder if Jackson will ever get bored. Not bored of me, hell no, I'm like the air he breathes. He needs me, and if he tries to get rid of me death might ensue. But just like... bored. For example, on the days I have classwork to do, is he depressed all day? Does he just slump down in his work chair going, "Oh, Leland, the light of my life, the sun of my sky, I miss you so much my heart hurts."

But as I remain balled up under his desk and listen to him walk into the office, none of this seems to happen. Even though I can't see him, he seems to have a pep to his step. Which is weird, but it must be something like "I'm so excited that I can't wait until I see Leland again! I must look at pictures of him every few minutes to sustain myself."

"Hey, Mason!" Jackson says, sounding far too cheery when he left his better half at home.

How suspicious.

Jackson sits in his chair, prepared to wheel his legs under the desk where he'll squish me. Instead, that's the moment I aim a confetti popper right at his face and pull the trigger.

"Happy anniversary!" I shout as the confetti explodes in his face.

"Holy fuck!" he yells as he flings back so hard his chair tips over and he starts to teeter as his arms wave this way and that. Before he can crash onto his back, I manage to catch him.

"How sexy is it that your one true love just caught you before you fell?" I ask as I continue to keep my death grip on his legs.

His eyes are extremely narrowed as he stares at me. "Not overly, seeing as I nearly had a heart attack because my 'one true love' just tried

killing me.”

“Why’d you say ‘one true love’ that way? It was creepy. It was like you were an ancient grandpa who’d smoked half your life. ‘One true love,’” I croak out, trying to mock him.

He stares at me, little speckles of confetti falling from his hair.

“I told Leland your fragile heart wouldn’t handle it well,” Mason says from where he’s busy doing nothing, like usual.

“I forget you’re old sometimes and can’t handle surprises,” I say as I help right him before sitting on the edge of his desk. “It’s our one-year anniversary, and I thought we could do something exciting. Mason agreed to take your workload for the day so we could just have a great time together.”

He gives me an amused look. “You planned all this?”

I beam at him. Clearly, he notes my dedication. “I did.”

“Well, I’m absolutely terrified how the rest of the day will go if this is how the morning starts off.”

“Don’t be afraid,” I urge him as I hold my hand out to him.

He warily stares at it, which is strange—extremely strange—but he eventually reaches out and takes it. “You sure you’re good, Mason?”

“Yep. Have fun!” Mason says.

Jackson and I head toward the door and just as we pass through it, Jackson turns to me. “He’s not going to be good.”

“Noooo, he probably doesn’t even know how to use his email.”

“The other day he had to get a file for them to fill out and he couldn’t find it anywhere.”

I stare at him in disbelief. “Didn’t we move those a month ago?”

“Exactly.”

We head out to Jackson’s mistress, AKA his car, and get inside.

“I’m almost scared to ask but what is the plan for the day?” he asks.

“Well... I thought I’d give in and let you decide. I figured we could do something you’d enjoy... like...” I try to think hard about this part. I’ve been thinking about it for a while and I’m still not positive what that possibly is. “Food.”

“It’s nine in the morning.”

“What else do boring people do for a date? I mean... not boring people. ‘Normal’ people.”

“How about we flip a coin?” Jackson says. “We can each say what we want to do first, we’ll flip the coin, do that, and then after, we’ll do what the other wants to do.”

“I like that. Lady Luck is always on my side. How else would I have stumbled upon you hanging from the fence, ass right in line? Ass at first sight, as they say.”

“No one says that.”

“I do.”

He shakes his head. “My pick would be a walk along the river. Your choice.”

“A hitman test.”

“Ah yes, a ‘hitman test’ is famously an anniversary activity.”

“I thought so,” I say, though it was just a joke. But even as a joke, it sounds strangely fun.

He flips the coin. “Call it.”

“Heads.”

He grabs the coin and flips it over. “Tails. Oh, hell yeah, baby. I mean... are you sure you don’t mind me going first? I love you so much I’d ___”

“Let me go first?” I interrupt.

He looks momentarily thoughtful. “Nah! Let me enjoy my last few minutes of normalcy before we do whatever insane thing you have planned.”

“Fine, fine,” I groan as he starts driving to the park. While he drives, my mind is turning, prepared to make this the best anniversary we’ve ever had... probably since this is our first.

When we arrive at the park, there are already some people out and about with small kids, but it’s not too busy seeing as it’s a weekday.

“Alright, because I love you so much, I’m going to let you go first,” he says. “I’m going to be honest, it’s just that I want to get it over with. I’m actually kind of nervous about this... ‘hitman test.’”

Okay... the hitman test was a joke, but I can’t let him know that.

Jackson takes a deep breath and gives me a confident look. “I’m prepared! I have spent a year with you preparing for this exact moment.”

I stare at Jackson wondering what’s wrong with him but also positive I can’t pass up an opportunity to make him do something ridiculously fun.

“Okay, I’ve got it,” I say. “Follow me.”

I head over to the playground where there are a few children running about and lock my eyes onto the monkey bars.

“The first test is upper arm strength. You must take your hoodie off for this test.”

He doesn’t look convinced. “I thought hitmen like to blend in with dark colors and keep their faces hidden,” Jackson says as he pulls his hood up and then tugs the strings so tight that there’s only a little peephole for him to stare out of. “I’m prepared.”

I glare at him. “That’s not how it works.”

“You just want the arms, right?” he asks as he then pushes the hoodie sleeves up so he looks absolutely ridiculous and still stupid hot.

“My god, you’re beautiful,” I breathe.

He snorts as he turns to the monkey bars. “Are you ready?”

“Yes! First test is reaching the other end.”

He eyes them before grabbing on. “I’m... I haven’t done this since my army days... I’m afraid I’ll look like a fool in front of you.”

“Sweetheart, you’ll never look more foolish than that time I caught you making out with your car.”

He looks exasperated. “I wasn’t making out with the car!”

“There was lust in your eyes as you fingered that ignition.”

“There are *children* around.”

“I’m just showing them how not to grow up. Okay. Now you’re ready?”

“I’m ready,” he says as he reaches up and grabs on.

“Go!”

He drops all of his weight onto the bar as he starts to pull himself forward. The issue is that the bars are made for small children, so his legs are dragging along the ground as he pulls himself through the mulch, leaving two trenches where his feet are being pulled through. All I can see are his eyes through the tiny hole of the hoodie hood as he annihilates the challenge.

“Oh, the *heat*! I can’t take this much sexy!” I cry as he continues dragging his legs behind him. When he reaches the other end, he swings into my arms and grabs my face.

“Quickly, Leland, did I pass?” he asks, sounding out of breath.

“This was only the first step of many,” I warn him. “You are merely a seed at this point that I must pollinate with my rod.”

“No. That’s not how seeds work.”

“Shh. Who is the motherfucking master?”

“You are, master.”

“That’s right, I’m the motherfucking master. Next test,” I say as I pull him over to the merry-go-round. “Get on, pupil.”

He eyes it warily. “Oh no.”

“Oh yes.”

But as always, he does what I say and clambers onto it before sitting down. “Here will be the greatest test yet. This will test your strength.”

“Ooh.”

“Your mobility.”

“I’m not very bendy,” he adds.

“Your stamina.”

“No one will ever have as much stamina as you.”

“And your butt muscles.”

“I do have a nice butt.”

“You do. Bend over and show me a little peek... wait, no! I must focus. Now you will face the world’s greatest adversary. The *wall*,” I cry as I wave over at the little wall. It’s made for children and has little foot and hand holds.

“Oh, for fuck’s sake.”

“Shush, there are little gremlins wandering about,” I say as I look around to find parents staring at us in envy.

“I think the parents are horrified. They’re very concerned about two grown men doing what we’re doing,” he says.

“It’s alright. We’re like almost police officers at this point.”

“We’re not anything like police officers.”

“Jerebear says otherwise. Now stop distracting me, young seed. You must learn.”

“Fine, master.”

“Ready?”

He looks extremely uncertain from what little I can see of him through the hoodie. “Sure?”

“Perfect,” I say as I grab one of the handles and start running as I spin it. I may be embarrassed by the extreme pleasure I get over whipping Jackson around on the merry-go-round.

“I’m... going... to... vomit,” he groans.

“Hold it in!” I urge as I start spinning it faster. “Now you must take everything you’ve learned up until now and use it. Now go, my fledgling, fly!”

He waddles off the merry-go-round, moves three feet and quickly staggers to the left. It looks like he’s about to go down, so I feel like he needs some encouragement. That’s when I notice a pinecone on the ground and sweep it up.

“There are bullets coming for you, avoid them!” I shout as I throw a pinecone at him. It thwacks him right in the back of the leg.

“Jackson, you’ve been shot in the leg! You must prevail with a single leg!” I yell, but he’s having a hard enough time walking straight as it is that when he starts dragging his right leg I truly can’t help but wonder why this man even listens to me. Maybe it’s the way I’m laughing so hard I can barely breathe as he finally reaches the wall. It’s probably only four feet tall but when he slams against it, I realize that it’s not at all unlikely that he will be completely incapable of making it up the wall.

I pelt him with another pinecone for added encouragement.

“I’m dying,” he cries.

“No, you’re so close,” I say as he slowly scrambles up the side of the wall before collapsing onto the top platform as he uncinches the hoodie and takes deep breaths.

I jog over to him and hop up onto the platform before looking down at him. “You made it! You passed the hitman test!”

“I’m dying. I’m going to vomit,” he groans.

“From joy? I would too because very few can pass my test. I actually think you’re the first. How’s it feel?”

“Nauseating,” he says. “The world is spinning and my heart is racing.”

“That’s just because I’m so close to you,” I say.

He grins at me even though the green look to his face makes it slightly less romantic. “Maybe.”

“I have a confession,” I say as I peer down at him.

“Oh good lord. The last time you had a confession you told me you were a hitman.”

“This confession is even worse... I was lying about the hitman test. I actually just said it because it sounded exciting.”

He grins at me. “I never would have guessed with the realistic hitman test.”

“How about we go for that walk along the river now?”

“That sounds nice,” he says as he gets up and slides off. That’s when he holds his hand over his face, like he’s trying to shield himself.

“What are you doing?” I ask.

“I feel like if I even glance at that merry-go-round, I’ll be sick,” he says.

“I could shoot it for you. Would that make you feel better?”

“No, you can’t just shoot things in a children’s playground! Why’d you bring your guns?”

I beam at him.

“What?” he asks warily.

“I love that you know me so well that you used the plural ‘guns.’ That’s sexy.”

“If you think that’s sexy, wait until you see what I have planned for tonight.”

“Ooh.”

He sighs loudly. “But I’m sorry, it’ll never be as sexy as this hitman course.”

“Are we not like the best couple ever? It’s like we know each other so stupidly well.”

He smiles at me as he reaches out and takes my hand. “Thank you for terrifying me this morning.”

I bump into him as I follow him to the river’s edge. “Of course. Thanks for putting up with me.”

“Trust me,” he says as he pulls me in close and kisses my cheek, “it’s not a hardship.”

I squeeze his hand and lean into him. I never imagined where I’d be at this point in my life, and I couldn’t ask for a better moment.

“Dammit!” I cry as realization hits me.

“What’s wrong?” Jackson asks in concern.

“I forgot to take pictures!”