



May 14, 2018

Dear Oona:

My humans are going on vacation. They're flying and I can't go. They're leaving me at kennel for a few days and I've never been apart from them before. I'm worried. What's it like?

Anna

Dear Anna:

As luck would have it, I'm at the "spa" this week, too! I understand your worries, but Anna, it's going to be alright. You're a wolfhound. We make the most of any situation. I did. In spades.

First, I assume you tried to eat your humans' airline tickets. That'd put a stop to this vacation nonsense. Second, I assume your humans love you and have thoroughly checked out this "spa." Because, let's face it, they're just trying to pull one over on us. They're boarding kennels. Not a single hot tub in the place. No hot rocks, champagne or finger food. I hope your humans have checked with others who've used the place, gotten references from trusted friends and checked it for cleanliness and staff who genuinely like dogs.

If you're lucky, in talking to the staff, your humans won't have dwelled too long on the fact that you're a Irish Wolfhound. You could be the first they've ever seen. They'll think you're just another big dog. They're in for a treat. Well, *you're* in for a treat. *They're* in for Hurricane Anna....

Watching your humans walk out that door is going to be heartbreaking, I won't mince words. Then going into that cold sterile stall with all those other dogs' eyes on you, it's going to feel like you've been sent to Sing Sing. Sleep as much as you can. Do eat to keep up your strength. Let your nerves settle. Adjust. You're an Irish Wolfhound. Royalty. Act like it.

Smile indulgently. Act sweet and bat your eyes. They *will* fall in love with you, even the big guy they keep around as "the enforcer" for trouble cases. Soon, you'll notice the staff is sneaking back to pet you and take you out into the compound for extra walks. They'll lure you with treats because your humans said that's the easiest way convince you to budge. Blow them off until they wheel out the quality stuff. They've already learned you're like the Rock of Gibraltar trying to move. They're on a schedule. Out comes the bacon. See, you're now training your staff.

Soon, they'll be taking selfies of you to show all their friends and sneaking you extra goodies just to sit and hug you. Be cuddly, even if you don't feel it. Putty in your paws... After a few days of this, let's play a new game. When they open the door to your stall, show them just how strong you *really* are. Jerk away and take a victory lap all through the place. High five all the other dogs, even the snarky little terrier, because you're running free and they all stuck in their kennels. When four or

five of the staff corner you, lay down. Wait for bacon. Only when they produce it do you calmly walk back to your stall. Keep the smirking to a minimum.

With any luck, your humans agreed to let them bathe you. They don't *have* enough staff to hold you when you're wet. Another victory lap. Wink at the terrier. Stop and shake dry. Bathtime is over. Walk proudly back to your kennel on your own like the queen you are.

There are endless ways to amuse yourself to pass the time. They'll use "the enforcer" next time to take you for a walk. After you shake him off, go explore the office. If there are customers there, smile big while you riffle through the cabinets for treats. Watch "the enforcer's" face when he shows up and you're charming the paying customers. He can't just grab you. See how many ways he tries to sweet talk you. Then smile and calmly saunter off back to your stall.

Keep it light, keep it fun and in no time your humans will show up. They will feel verrrrry guilty. Act sad and you can write your own ticket for days to come.

Happy vacation, Anna.

Love, Oona

Got a question? Send it to bob@thewildstare.com and Oona will get back to you as soon as she gets her nails done or she can prod the old guy to take dictation.