



Oct. 7, 2017

People who've lived with (and survived) several Irish wolfhounds are, like their dogs, a very different breed. Veterans tend to stand out in a crowd. And not just because they're leashed to a dog the size of Manhattan.

These colossal, quirky dogs have changed their humans' appearance, worldview, life expectancy and even the way they walk. It's said that the longer they live together, the more humans look like their dogs. Not so with wolfhound veterans. Our hounds are majestic and imposing. We skitter along like Igor behind Dr. Frankenstein. But we're *spunky*.

Some tips for spotting a veteran wolfhound owner:

### **You Can Tell By The Way I Walk.**

Like rodeo riders, sailors, and professional movers, wolfhound veterans have their very own way of walking. Seen from the side, they're leaning back like they're standing in a Category 5 Hurricane. They're perpetually braced. It comes from leash-walking the largest sighthound known to man. And squirrels. There's always one right around the corner to make life interesting. And speedy. Verrrry speedy...

### **Just like Popeye The Sailorman**

Long-time wolfhound owners have impressive upper-body strength. Again, persuading a 160-pound shaggy missile *not* to ignite and aim for the horizon builds muscles.

You can also tell which is their leash hand. The arm is visibly longer. When not with their dog, they lean the opposite direction because dragging their knuckles on the ground is embarrassing. Hurtful, too. They hope you won't notice. Please don't stare.

Whichever arm you're looking at, you don't want to challenge one to an arm wrestling match. You're no wolfhound. It won't be pretty. They have the grip of a professional wrestler. The men are pretty strong, too.

### **Was that The Flash?**

If you're in a restaurant and a server drops a plate, it'll be the wolfhound veteran who materializes and catches it in mid-air. Because they have superhuman reflexes. Wolfhounds are quick and relentless. Stubborn, too.

Try keeping a sandwich away from a dog who looks *down* at you

when you're seated. Try again. Maybe standing this time. Nope? Have you tried turning your back? That's no snake winding around your chest. Mygod it's their *tongue*! And they're *right* behind it!

Living with wolfhounds, you get used to their tails and the destruction they can leave in their wake. Circus jugglers have nothing on wolfhound people. They can catch a vase, a stack of books, a mug of hot coffee and a table lamp all at once with various parts of their body. And *then* slam the door to the laundry room shut, too. No big deal, you say? They can accomplish all this at 3 a.m. while high-stepping over a floor full of sleeping dogs. That's right, they're Batman.

### **Stop Ripping That Paper**

Want to get a wolfhound veteran's attention *fast*? You'll have their full and sudden attention if you slowly rip a piece of paper. That's because wolfhounds have a bad habit of rending sheets, towels, the couch, your paycheck and many other items and eating them. Why? No one knows. But if they scarf down enough stuff, their bowels become obstructed. The operation to fix this runs about \$1,000. Wolfhound veterans are obsessed with the sound of tearing. Now you can see why.

### **Otherwise...**

Wolfhound people thrive on chaos. They can blissfully stroll down the avenue during an air raid with buildings exploding on all sides and the air full of flying debris. Zombies, a Martian invasion, clowns on holiday, no big deal. It's silence that makes the hairs on the back of their neck stand straight up. Because a silent wolfhound is a dog in trouble. Chaos and craziness? Just another enchanted day with an Irish wolfhound...

### **Shining Faces**

One other sign of a long-time wolfhound person: Their face is usually wet. Wolfhound kisses. Irish wolfhounds are not only the biggest, they're some of the most affectionate dogs around. They have foot-long tongues. Wolfhound kisses are *big*, sloppy kisses. And, it's why, despite it all, wolfhound people are usually smiling. Life with a wolfhound may be insane, but....it's life with a wolfhound. It's worth it.