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Wolfhound people are a needy, battered bunch. We put our hearts — and backs — into caring for our furry loved ones. Sometimes we fail to see the signs of how much they really do love us in return.

It's not that Irish wolfhounds scrimp on affection or attention. We

just get used to their lavish devotion. We get tunnel vision. Then we get paranoid. Do they really *really* love us? Relax, here are some easy ways to shake off the doubt and tell that your wolfhound is thoroughly bonded to you:

Getting To Know You, Getting to Know ALL About You

All dogs study their humans. Sometimes we think they read our minds when in fact, they're simply shrewd and meticulous observers. But Irish wolfhounds could write a doctoral thesis about you.

It's not that wolfhounds are needy. They just like to know what makes their belongings tick. And there's no doubt about it. You're *their* human. Wolfhounds are insatiably curious. Whatcha got in your pocket? Where ya going? Sneaking another Oreo, aren't ya. Make a move and you can *feel* their very eyes tracking you. Why are you going into the bathroom? Silly human, mere doors don't keep me out...

When you're in the shower and feel a cold nose snerfling up your backside, you can safely say they *really* love you. Look, they're even studying what kind of soap and shampoo you prefer. Maybe they're planning on Christmas gifts. Just as soon as they watch you swipe that credit card one more time...

Closer To You

Speaking of inseparable... Most dogs want to be close to you. Wolfhounds take it a touch further. You're their happy place. They don't realize how much they weigh. Or maybe they're teaching you that sometimes, love hurts. But, could you keep the squeaking sounds down? You're disturbing the ambiance doing all that flopping around and cracking while they stretch out comfortably on top of you. There. You've gone all quiet. All is right in their world.

At least until the ambulance your spouse called arrives.

Public Displays of Affection

Wolfhounds are big kissers. Sloppy, wet, enthusiastic kissers. Our Finn used to nibble on our chins to show his affection. Oona playfully crunches down on the tip of my nose with her molars. The tears in my eyes? Surely they're just pure affection. Mostly she just kisses, though. Or licks my face. Until she goes into a blissful trance. And my face begins to bleed from raw, primal love. And a surprisingly pebbly tongue that just won't stop.

Eyes Only For You

A dog who's tightly bonded to you seeks eye contact. A wolfhound speaks volumes with his eyes. Particularly when you're holding food. Like, "Whatcha eeaaaating? Is it any good? I notice you got *lots* there. A little thing like you won't eat it *all*, right?" You couldn't hear it any clearer if he enunciated it like a diction coach.

Then comes the laser eyes. Fixed, like a hypnotist. You can avert your eyes. You can lower the brim of your cap. It's no good. Those eyes are still there. They're not even blinking.

So you give him a pinch of whatever you're eating. And there it is. You see the love in his eyes. And the way he licks his lips. He has eyes only for you. And your pork chops.....