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A friend of mine made a curious but telling observation about Irish wolfhound owners the other day. She was talking about [Grover Krantz](#), the anthropologist who gave his body to science on the condition that his bones — and the bones of his beloved wolfhound, Clyde — be put on public display. He wanted to teach the public about bones. He also demonstrated

how to be devoted, even in death.

My friend said, “I think wolfhound owners must have a certain ‘something’ that the rest of us may lack that allows them to believe in leprechauns, Pookas, faeries and yes, Bigfoot.”

Krantz, a respected scientist, opened himself up the ridicule of his peers by writing popular books about Sasquatch, which he believed was a cousin to modern man and survived in small, isolated pockets in the American Northwest. Krantz didn’t let the boundaries of established science get in the way of his lifelong sense of curiosity. He followed questions wherever they led him.

I don’t think of most wolfhound owners as being particularly whimsical. They’re too pragmatic to be considered wide-eye dreamers. Wolfhounds are not easy dogs to raise. Fragile puppies become brawny housemates in just weeks. You can’t snatch up a wolfhound and give him a bath in your sink. We build muscles just lugging in our hound’s food. A wolfhound’s stubbornness and steely determination force you to develop the patience of Job. It’s a gritty lifestyle.

From what I’ve seen, wolfhound people come from all walks of life. Rock stars and politicians, the well-to-do and the just-scraping-by. We’re urbanites, farm families, residents of most continents and nations of the world.

So, is there a common thread? What makes us wolfhound people besides odd limps, mud-stained shoes and leash-calluses on the palms of our hands? I think that die-hard wolfhound people — those who’ve had hounds, know what they’re in for and keep coming back for more — are people who’ve looked deeply into

the eyes of an Irish wolfhound... and saw something unexpected looking back.

We saw something old. Something wild. Something deep and unblinking. We saw a fierce and devoted friend.

From the earliest of times people who lived with wolfhounds didn't just write that they were whopping big dogs. They said they were practically human.

Wolfhounds are carnivores, grounded in nature and instinct. They know exactly who they are and do not budge if they don't care to. These are not needy individuals. And yet they insist on engaging us. They're dead set on us looking at them, seeing them, knowing them. So they graciously draw us in.

It's not whimsical for a wolfhound person to say there are magical creatures out there. One's looking us square in the eye. They're slouching on our couch. It's like living in a fairy tale with a wise, talking animal. Of course they don't speak English. But they *do* speak. With their eyes, with their snouts, poking you, with their giant paws, insisting that you listen.

We are utterly devoted to our wolfhounds because they're so utterly devoted to us. Because they're larger than life, they teach us to live bigger. Because they're all heart, they make ours bigger and brighter, too.

What makes a wolfhound person tick? We have shaggy muses on our couches. And the inspiration they give us in the short time they're here burns in us for a lifetime.