



May 5, 2018

Dear Oona,

Every day when my human takes me for a walk in the park, we meet this mean little fluff ball who gets in my face and gives me the stink eye. Naturally, I growl a warning at the little thing to back off. That's when my human reads me the riot act and yanks me away. Do humans know *anything*?

Mary

Dear Mary,

No, they know nothing. Especially about dog etiquette. *We* all know that when dogs who aren't in the same family meet, we never just walk right up to each other in a straight line. That's rude. Instead, we do an arc. I angle off one way and you angle off the other. It's the polite thing to do — giving each other space — and it's the *smart* thing to do. You meet a strange dog and you just never know if they're going to be friendly or growl and swing from your beard muttering murderously. So we ease away from each other and eye each other sideways since out-and-out staring is rude, too. We size each other up

discretely.

Humans are so oblivious. They'll drag you right down that sidewalk on a leash and good manners just go straight out the window. We have no choice but pass another dog practically snout to snout.

And a lot of those little dogs lose it completely when they see an Irish Wolfhound. I have no idea what they're thinking because my *head* is bigger than they are. They think nipping my nose is going to make me *like* them better? It takes them five minutes to get out of my *shadow*. I'd be embarrassed for them but I just have no patience for tiny displays of suicidal behavior. I growl. Their fur blasts back. They blink. And then they skitter off and jitter quietly at their owner's feet.

Of course, **now** I'm an aggressive dog. You bark at another dog in public and peoples stop and watch you. They whisper. They stare. Especially if you're a *big* dog. The little teacup terrorists can shriek, do flips and wail and nobody bats an eye. We show a tooth and everrrrrybody scatters.

Luckily, a lot of wolfhounds' humans are aware of appearances. Even my old guy is. They know we have to be on our best behavior in public so they help us. Mine knows I lose my patience so he pulls off and walks in the grass when we pass another dog on the sidewalk. He's casual about it. We just stroll to the side, he reminds me to "leave it" and we walk on past the other dog and everybody's happy.

Hopefully your human will wise up, too, Mary.

Love, Oona