



May 31, 2018

Dear Oona,

My human scolds me and insists that I share bones and toys with our bratty wolfhound puppy, Clive. Do I really *have* to?

Ralph

Dear Ralph,

Don't be ridiculous. Of course you don't have to share the good stuff with the puppy. But you *do* have to sleep. And occasionally you'll want to eat

or do something else that'll be much easier if you set the bone or toy down. Then, according to the Wolfhound General Rules, it *could* be his as long as you're not laying in top of it or presently have it clamped between your teeth like a crocodile. If he's bold enough and fast enough, legal ownership then transfers to the puppy.

The good news? Puppies sleep a lot. The second those eyes flutter shut and the bone touches the floor, you can snatch it again and not have to worry about the lawyers (or pesky humans) getting involved. Carpe bonus, seize the bone!

But then there's this: If Clive is a young puppy, he may not have a firm understanding of the rules yet. He may just teeter over and try and take it from you, even if it's in your mouth. This is where it gets dicey. Most dogs universally recognize the 16-Week Rule. If a

puppy is under four months old, he gets a pass from being eaten for breaking the rules. Puppies can be a terrific pain because they're out of control, regular scofflaws.

Grit your teeth. Bide your time. Check off days on the calendar. You'll know when he hits the 16-week mark. His scent will change. He loses his puppy license and he's fair game. At which point you can snarl, glower, loom and do whatever else (short of eating him) that you have to to see that he follows The Rules. He probably knows them already from when he was with his baby brothers and sisters. He just hasn't wanted to follow them. Now the jig's up. Be the enforcer.

Just be aware, this is the point where the lunkheaded humans will probably step in. They're not big on dog law. They probably think Clive is "soooooooo *CUTE!*" Unless Clive has the wits of a Q-tip, he's probably running with it, batting those big lashes and giving the humans lots of puppy kisses. The humans may *take* the bone from you and give it to the little grifter. That's okay. They have to sleep sometime. Clive understands this. Clive sees your murderous looks. Clive wants to live to see sunrise. Clive will probably drop the bone at your feet the second the humans shut the bedroom door. Clive's no dummy.

And slowly and surely, law and order will return to the land...

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.