

TOOTH AND CLAW

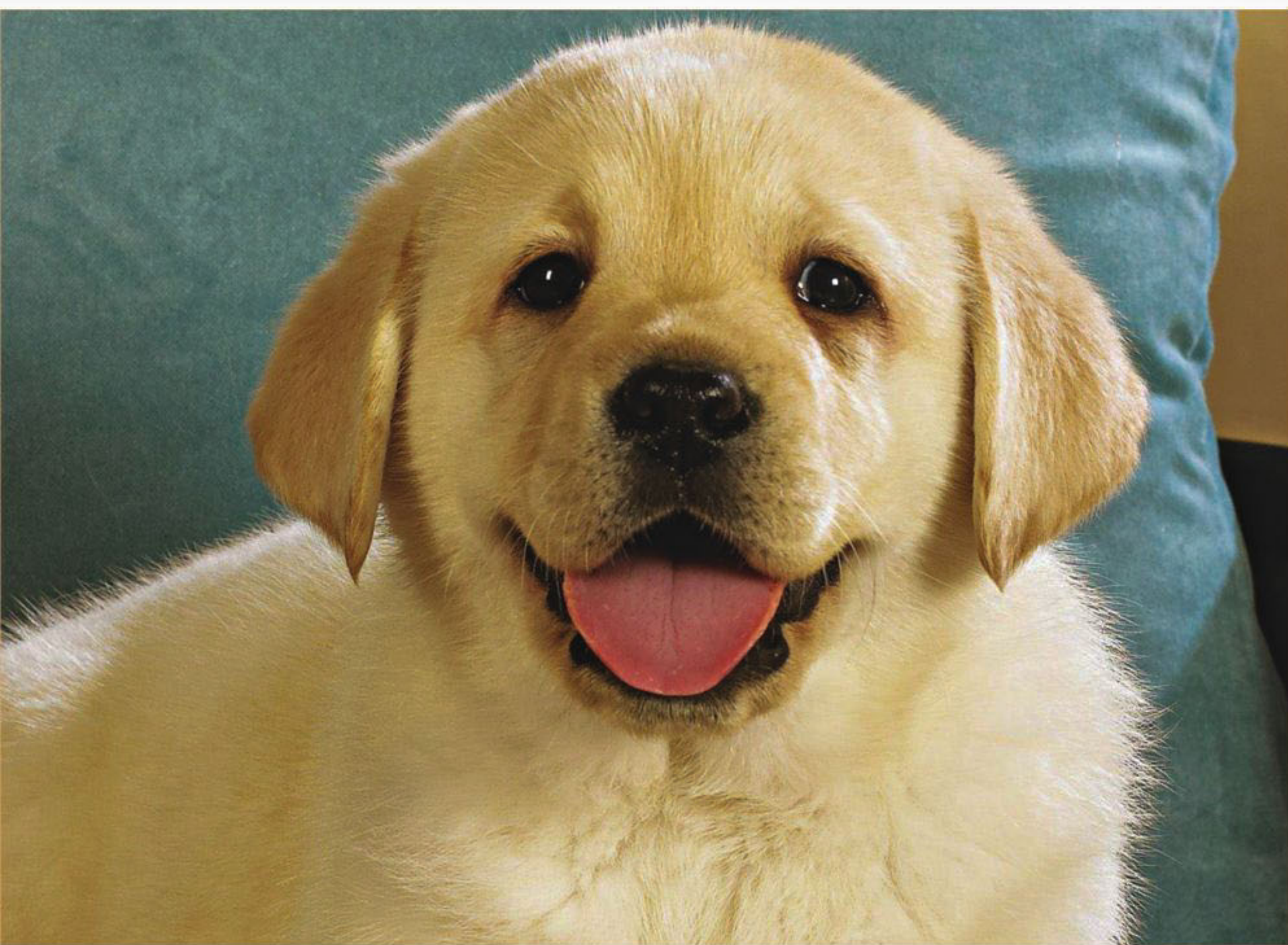
KLOW

When Nabila started drooling every time the bua served dinner, chasing cars down the street and running about in circles while trying to look at her own bottom, we all thought she was taking her A Levels a little too seriously. Our mother sat her down and told her that it was all right and she needn't push herself so hard and that going to just three different tutors should be enough to see her through Class XI at least and she didn't really need to take 8 different subjects: at the very least she could drop metallurgy. My sister responded by leaping at my mother and trying to lick her face, which my mother thought was strange but at least she wasn't selling drugs and buying sub-woofer systems like the other kids. I happened to know that she'd also just had a bad break-up with her boyfriend of two years, Yasin Afif Joarder, and that possibly that played a role as well. I realize that most teenage girls, when their

sister's mental health in my own hands. Took to the internet and asked it: "So my sister seems to think she's a dog does anyone know what this is?" and the responses were many and varied. A few people suggested psychiatric help and recommended some great doctors I couldn't contact (see previous paragraph), some people asked me if my sister was acting like a b____ and I guess I'd just handed them that one, and still others told me to hang in there and sent me Pepes for good luck. Did you know that the Diamond Pepe is the rarest of all Pepes?

Though I said danke to all these memes I began to despair of finding something that'd help me among all the dross. After four days of constant searching I was ready to call it quits and console myself with some Fawly Towers, when my phone popped. I had mail, and it was from a certain Jormundr Manflayer, and here is it in its entirety:

"Hail, Brave Heart. Jormundr raises up his cup in toast to you, the cup cloven from the skull of Erik, Braga's son, scourge of Yvendalf and shearer of beards, long may the skalds sing of your fortune! Tidings have come to me and



This is not my sister, it is a nice doggo from the internet.

hearts crack open, relieve the pain using John Green, Lana del Rey and, increasingly and surprisingly, Rumi. They do not start sniffing your trousers and gnawing through the garbage. In my defence, I didn't consider Nabila to be like most girls.

Still I knew things had gotten too far when we had to stop her urinating on the telephone pole outside the house. She's far too old to be indecently exposing herself like that; what'd everyone say? I tried to broach the topic of psychiatric help to our father but he responded with his usual enigmatic grunt, and my mother wouldn't hear of having the word spread that the loony doctor was examining her eldest daughter. What would, after all, people say? Their solution was to wait it out, food-bribe some beggars to pray for Nabila's recovery, and meanwhile keep her shut up at home. Her school called up the first couple of days, but so long as the fees were regular they didn't much care.

So I decided to go vigilante, take my

one need not hang himself from the Tree of Knowledge or sacrifice an eye to see what lies writ large in your account of your sister's result bearing. Your sister - that noble lady, long may she bear mighty pups! - is what the legends speak of as a werewolf! The skalds say that of old, the mightiest warriors were the wolfkin, and they would ride into battle atop their feral brethren, and all enemies would flee from their savage teeth long as knives!

O happy is the day that your sister received the moon's gift! But there is more that you must do. The hunger of the wolf knows not the sanctity of mother's blood, and your sister will soon succumb to her bestial ways and you must protect yourself and your kin from her predations. You must arm yourself with a shield of oak to parry her strikes, an ashen spear to her claws at bay, and thus exhaust her in mighty combat. Once she is at your mercy you must bind her to your will with a wand of rowan! Then, and only then, will she be yours and then you can earn the name of Wolf's Kin!"

This was a lot to take in at once, and needed thinking about. Where could I get a rowan wand in Dhaka?

MY SISTER SAIYARA

RAYAAN IBTESHAM CHOWDHURY

My sister Saiyara was a ticking time bomb on most days. What surprised me the most was that nobody else in the house could feel it. They just saw her going through the motions, doing everything she was supposed to do with that stoic look on her face. Kind of strange, the sort of dead people we live with. Saiyara kept telling me she felt dead. But to me she was the most alive person in the house.

My sister Saiyara had a short fuse. I hoped and prayed everyday that I would be around whenever Saiyara felt like her fuse was about to go. I wanted to keep her ink flowing, keeping other things in place. If you left Saiyara to her devices, she could do one of two things. One, she could lock her doors and lose herself in that blog with just the one follower. That one follower always waited intently for the 'pop' to go off on his phone, alerting him of her posts. Two, she could walk down to the living room and sit there, probably hoping that somebody would notice something was amiss and ask her about it. But those enquiries never came and she went back to her room disappointed.

My sister Saiyara always hated it when someone told her it was a phase. I know because I was the first one to make that mistake. I told her about the time that girl in high school had broken my heart and left me feeling blue for weeks. I spent a number of months trying to make it up to her and she only let up when I agreed to stay up till dawn with her, to hear how the early morning birds sing. She preferred those birds over humans and I started to slowly learn why someone would do that as I sat there with her. You could learn things from my sister Saiyara.

My sister Saiyara always listened when I told her it wasn't her fault. That was one of the few rare moments when her star seemed to shine a bit less and my words seemed more valuable than her's. At every other moment it would always be me listening to her. But during these moments her big round eyes would fix themselves on me as I repeated the same message over and over. She never told me what it was that wasn't her fault and to this day I don't know. But I made it clear that that thing, whatever it was, was not her doing and she never asked for it and during these brief exchanges my sister Saiyara seemed like what she was, just a scared little girl. But as soon as my words dried up, she'd go back to looking decades older than both of us combined.

My sister Saiyara tried taking pretty photos to feel nice and clean and sometimes she'd ask me to be in them. Everyone else in the house rolled their eyes at this little practice of ours. Saiyara acted like she hadn't noticed their eye rolls but I know she had, she had always been very observant. She was just an observant soul born into a family of unobservant everyday folk. My sister Saiyara knew this as well as most other things. I don't know which of these things did it for her in the end.

