

## How Cú Chulainn Got His Name

The legends of Ireland are filled with many mighty warriors, but none mightier than Cú Chulainn (pronounced coo-HOOL-in). He was originally named Sétanta. This is the story of how he got the name Cú Chulainn. As a young boy, Sétanta went to live in the house of his uncle the king of Ulster, Conchobar (pronounced CON-ah-war).

One day, Culann the smith invites Conchobar to a feast at his house. Before going, Conchobar goes to the playing field to watch the boys play hurling. He is so impressed by Sétanta's performance that he asks him to join him at the feast. Sétanta has a game to finish, but promises to follow the king later.

Conchobar goes on the feast where Culann shows everyone his hound. Culann says is the greatest guard dog in Ireland, and he has never lost a sheep or cow when that dog was on duty. Culann ushers everyone into the house and then looses the hound to guard the yard. Conchobar has forgotten that Sétanta is coming.

When Sétanta arrives the hound attacks him. Fighting for his life, Sétanta kills the dog in self-defense. When the men rush out of the house, Culann is relieved that the king's ward has not been injured. But he is devastated by the loss of his hound. Sétanta promises that he will rear him a replacement dog, and until it is old enough to do the job, he himself will guard Culann's house. And so he gained the name Cú Chulainn, which means the hound of Culann.