

Dullahan

The **Dullahan** or **Dullaghan** (Irish: **dúlachán**, /ˈduːləˌhɑːn/) (also called **Gan Ceann**, meaning "without a head" in Irish), is a type of Mythological creature in Irish folklore.^[1]

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The Dullahan is depicted as a headless rider, usually on a black horse, who carries their own head in their arm. Usually, the Dullahan is male, but there are some female versions. It is said to be the embodiment of the Celtic God Crom Dubh.^[2] The myth of the Dullahan comes from Ireland.

The mouth is usually in a hideous grin that touches both sides of the head. Its eyes are constantly moving about and can see across the countryside even during the darkest nights. The flesh of the head is said to have the color and consistency of moldy cheese. The Dullahan is believed to use the spine of a human corpse for a whip, and its wagon is adorned with funeral objects: it has candles in skulls to light the way, the spokes of the wheels are made from thigh bones, and the wagon's covering is made from a worm-chewed pall or dried human skin. The ancient Irish believed that where the Dullahan stops riding, a person is due to die. The Dullahan calls out the person's name, drawing away the soul of his victim, at which point the person immediately drops dead.^[3]

There are rumors that golden objects can force the Dullahan to disappear.^[4]

In popular culture

- The Death Coach is driven by a Dullahan in *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*. When it arrives, it calls out Darby's name in place of his daughter and he enters the coach, and is only saved by the trickery of the king of the leprechauns.
- *Dullahan* is a common name for headless warriors - predominantly knights - in Japanese video games. The influence from this has resulted in Japanese young adult media commonly portraying 'Dullahans' with traits not associated with the original Irish folklore, such as wearing plate armor.^[5]
- In the *Durarara!!* light novel and anime series, it features a Dullahan named Celty Sturluson as a main character.
- The *Monster Musume* anime and manga series features a Dullahan named Lala who is one of the main characters in Kimihito Kurusu's harem.

- *Interviews with Monster Girls* also features a Dullahan main character who is named Kyoko Machi.^[6]
- *Lost Girl* one of the lesser antagonists
- The *Overlord (novel series)* Light Novel and Anime have a Dullahan as a member of the Pleiades. Her name is Yuri Alpha.
- In the anime *Konosuba* one of the Demon King's Generals is a Dullahan named Verdia.
- Maou Sadao, the demon overlord from *Hataraku Maou-sama!* calls his bicycle 'Dullahan'.
- Irish author Derek Landy's work draws from Irish folklore. *Skulduggery Pleasant: Mortal Coil* features a Dullahan who drives the Coach-a-Bowers, which is pulled by four headless horses. He is summoned to collect any human who has heard the call of a banshee.

See also

- Headless Horseman
 - Headless Horseman (Legend of Sleepy Hollow)
- Crom Dubh

References

1. Croker, Thomas Croften (1834). *Fairy legends and traditions of the south of Ireland* (<https://archive.org/details/fairylegendstrad00crokrich/page/n6>). pp. 209–286.
2. "The Dullahan of Celtic Mythology" (<https://www.theirishplace.com/heritage/the-dullahan/>). *theirishplace.com*. Retrieved 31 December 2019.
3. "5 Famous Monsters That Are Way Scarier in Other Countries" (<http://www.cracked.com/quick-fixes/5-famous-monsters-that-are-way-scarier-in-other-countries/>). *Cracked.com*. Retrieved 24 May 2016.
4. "Hidden Ireland | The Dullahan" (<http://www.irelandseye.com/paddy3/monstatxti.htm>). *www.irelandseye.com*. Retrieved 10 May 2019.
5. *The Supernatural Revamped: From Timeworn Legends to Twenty-First-Century Chic*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. 2016. ISBN 9781611478655.
6. Petos (2016). *Interviews with Monster Girls 1*. New York: Kodansha Comics. ISBN 9781632363589.

External links

- The Dullahan of Celtic Mythology (<https://www.theirishplace.com/heritage/the-dullahan/>), via The Irish Place
- The Dullahan Legend (<http://www.scaryforkids.com/dullahan/>) at Scary For Kids.
- Dullahan Website (<http://www.dullahan.com>)
- How tales of the headless horseman came from Celtic mythology (<https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad/how-tales-of-the-headless-horseman-came-from-celtic-mythology-1.4060086>), via the Irish Times, Wed, Oct 23, 2019.

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