

The Fight with Mand

Medb sent Mand Muresci, the son of Dáire of the Domnannaig, to fight against Cú Chulainn. Mand was own brother to Damán, the father of Fer Diad. This Mand was a violent fellow, excessive in eating and sleeping. He was scurrilous and foul-spoken like Dubthach Dóel Ulad. He was strong and active and mighty of limb like Munremar mac Errcind. He was a fierce champion like Triscod, the strong man of Conchobar's household. 'I shall go forth unarmed and crush him in my bare hands, for I scorn to use weapons against a beardless whippersnapper.' So Mand went to attack Cú Chulainn who, with his charioteer, was on the plain keeping a look-out for the host. 'A man comes towards us,' said Láeg to Cú Chulainn. 'What manner of man?' asked Cú Chulainn. 'A dark, strong, fierce man who comes unarmed.' 'Let him go past,' said Cú Chulainn. Thereupon Mand came to them.

'I have come to fight against you,' said Mand. Then they fell to wrestling for a long time and thrice did Mand throw Cú Chulainn, so that the charioteer urged him on, saying: 'If you were striving for the hero's portion in Emain,' said Láeg, 'you would be powerful over the warriors there.' So then his hero's rage and his warrior's fury arose in Cú Chulainn, and he dashed Mand against the pillarstone and shattered him into fragments. Hence the name Mag Mandachta, that is, Mand Échta, which means the death of Mand was there.

The next day Medb sent twenty-nine men against him to Cú Chulainn's bog. Fuiliarn is the name of the bog which is on this side of Áth Fhir Diad. These men were Gaile Dáne and his twenty-seven sons and his sister's son, Glas mac Delgna. At once they cast their twenty-nine spears at Cú Chulainn. Then as they all reached for their swords, Fíacha mac Fir Fhebe came after them out of the encampment. He leapt from his chariot when he saw all their hands raised against Cú Chulainn, and he struck off their twenty-nine forearms. Then said Cú Chulainn 'What you have done is timely help.' 'Even this little,' said Fíacha, 'is in breach of our covenant for us Ulstermen. If any one of them reach the encampment (to tell of it), our whole division will be put to the sword.' 'I swear my people's oath,' said Cú Chulainn, 'that now that I have drawn my breath, not one of those men shall get there alive.'

Thereupon Cú Chulainn killed the twenty-nine men, with the two sons of Ficce helping him in the killing. These were two brave warriors of Ulster who had come to exert their might against the host. That was their exploit on the Foray until they came with Cú Chulainn to the great battle. In the stone in the middle of the ford there is still the mark of the boss of their (twenty-nine) shields and of their fists and knees. Their twenty-nine headstones were erected there.

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