

once upon a dog

## Beat Harvard!



Hear a rousing chorus of "Bulldog" sung by the Yale Glee Club at [yalebulldogs.cstv.com/trads/songs.html](http://yalebulldogs.cstv.com/trads/songs.html).

Bull-dog! Bull-dog! Bow, wow, wow,  
Eli Yale!

Bull-dog! Bull-dog! Bow, wow, wow.  
Our team can never fail.

It doesn't seem like much of a song on paper, but Cole Porter's "Bulldog" has been firing up Yale football fans since it was introduced in 1911. The stirring march was written to honor the memory of Handsome Dan, the first in a long line of Yale Bulldog mascots of that name.

The original Dan came to Yale in 1889, when a member of the football team bought him for \$5 from a New Haven blacksmith. His howling aversion to crimson, the school color of hated rival Harvard, quickly endeared Dan to the student body. He is said to be America's

first college mascot, and the Handsome Dan mystique became so integral to Yale athletics that one-time AKC Chairman William Rockefeller (graduating class of '36) established an endowment to cover the medical expenses of every successive Handsome Dan to wear Yale blue.

Eighteen-year-old Cole Porter, of Peru, Indiana, enrolled at Yale in 1909, the only son of a prosperous businessman and doting mother. If Porter's colorful wardrobe made him the most conspicuous boy on the staid campus, it was his talent that put him among the most popular.

"Even as a college freshman," wrote Porter biographer William McBrien, "Cole knew that he had an unfailingly seductive power to summon audiences of all kinds with his songs and his showmanship."

Of several football songs Porter wrote in his college days, "Bulldog" is the one that clings to Yale as tenaciously as the breed it honors. It bears no hint of the pure melody and ingenious rhyming one might expect from the future composer of "Anything Goes," "Night and Day," and several dozen more of the world's most-loved pop standards, but, as a recent story in the *Yale Daily News* said, "Porter's rousing and spirited anthem has remained relevant over the years. 'Bulldog' is the Yale fight song, and nothing else can replace it."

*When the sons of Eli break through the line,  
That is the sign we hail,  
Bull-dog! Bull-dog! Bow, wow, wow,  
Eli Yale!* ♡

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