

In Irish folklore, the Bean Sidhe ("woman of the hills") is a spirit or fairy who presage a death by wailing. She is popularly known as the Banshee. She visits a household and by wailing she warns them that a member of their family is about to die. When a Banshee is caught, she is obliged to tell the name of the doomed.

The antiquity of this concept is vouched for by the fact that the Morrigan, in a poem from the 8th century, is described as washing spoils and entrails. It was believed in County Clare that Richard the Clare, the Norman leader of the 12th century, had met a horrible beldame, washing armor and rich robes "until the red gore churned in her hands", and had been warned by her of the destruction of his host.

The Bean Sidhe has long streaming hair and is dressed in a gray cloak over a green dress. Her eyes are fiery red from the constant weeping. When multiple Banshees wail together, it will herald the death of someone very great or holy. The Scottish version of the Banshee is the Bean Nighe.

Aiobhill is the banshee of the Dalcassians of North Munster, Cliodna of the MacCarthys and other families of South Munster.

Common name for the Irish *Bean Sidhe*. In Scotland the banshee is known as *caoineag* (wailing woman) and, although seldom seen, she often heard in the hills and glens, by lakes or running water.