

# An Bhean Síde

## in Irish Folktales



Image Source: Lowenael on DeviantArt

### Who is the Banshee/*Bean Síde*/*Bean Sí*?

- “Woman of the *Sídhe*” (*Sídhe* = fairy mounds, fairies)
- Can appear old or young, usually with blonde, red, white, or gray hair. Often wears white, red, or a combination thereof, and sometimes gray or black. She keens (wails, cries loudly) to foretell a death.
- Often seen combing her hair, washing clothing (and sometimes body parts or weapons), or moving toward the house of the dying. Sometimes, instead of seeing the banshee, only her cry is heard moving across the countryside or through the house.

Comb: pining.com



Image Source: David West, 3D Artist Online



### Two Main Tale Formats:

- Someone sees or hears the banshee, and then someone dies.
- Someone takes her comb and then has to return it when she comes seeking it.

### Possible Origins:

The fairies are related to the Tuatha De Danann, so it is likely that the banshee has goddess roots. One theory links her to the *Badb*, who was associated with the Morrígan, the Irish war goddess.

### Analysis:

The banshee blends with other funerary imagery in Irish culture. She may also embody wild, untamed, and “dangerous” femininity.

—Kayleen Gill