

The Banshee

Death is coming,
Death will come,
Death is coming,
Death will come,
Death is coming,
Death will come,
Death is coming...



By: Jacob Selar and Keanna Sandoval

The Banshee

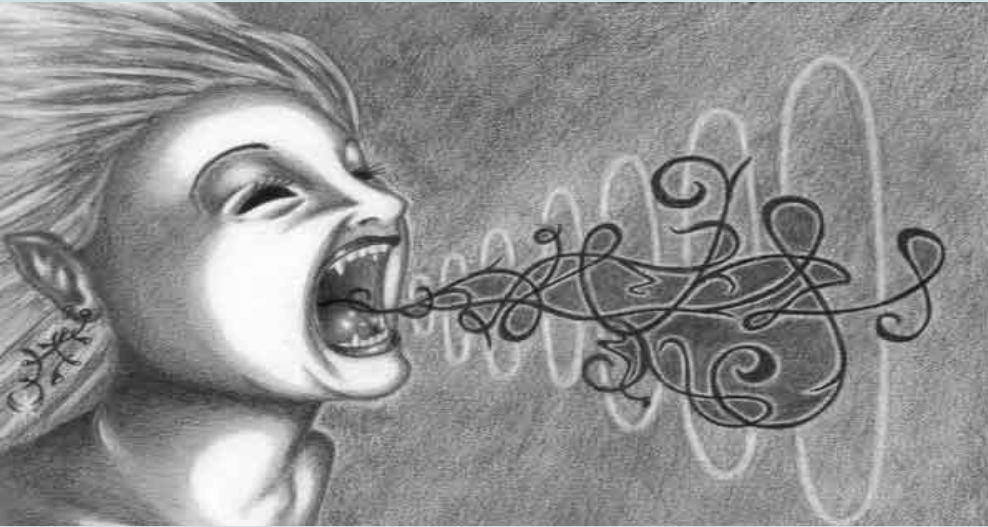


- a monster from Irish Celtic mythology that is said to let out cries and wails that foretell incoming death for whoever hears them.
- Typically in the form of an old, sorrowful woman with gray hair, who wears a green or gray dress.



- Comes from the Irish language “*bean sídhe*” which translates to “woman of the mound or underworld”.
- The banshee is said to let out her moans around dawn, twilight...or midnight.

A History of the Banshee



The Banshee is an ancient legend that originates from Pre-Christian Ireland.

It is believed that the legend of the Banshee was based off an old Irish tradition, where women would sing a wail to signal someone's passing.



The name "banshee" is also connected to the Irish countryside, which contain tumuli. Tumuli are covered graves said to be home to spirits of the dead.



Etymology

According to one Irish tradition, a banshee can only cry to the O'Neils, the O'Briens, the O'Connors, the O'Gradys and the Kavanaghs.

Banshees in Literature



“The banshee figures prominently in nineteenth-century Ireland in folklore collections, such as T. Crofton Croker’s *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*” (Weinstock 27).

The Banshee: The Irish Death Messenger, a successful book by Irish folklorist Patricia Lysaght, published in 1986.

...And loads of local legends, myths, and folklore to be found about the Banshee throughout Irish and Celtic texts!

Banshees in Poetry


John Todhunter (1839–1916) was a poet and playwright from Ireland active in the 19th and 20th centuries.



His cryptic poem "The Banshee" survives to this day. It is many, many lines long – so the next slide offers a morbid excerpt.



The Banshee



An aged desolation,
She sits by old Shannon's flowing,
A mother of many children,
Of children exiled and dead,
In her home, with bent head, homeless,
Clasping her knees she sits,
Keening, keening!

John Todhunter

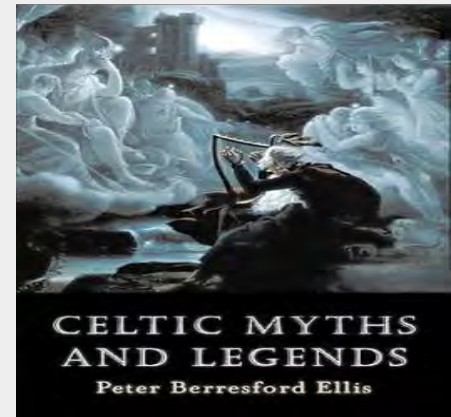
Historical Accounts of Banshees

An unknown individual wrote a letter to *The Weekly Irish Times* in April of 1893.



They wrote: "I do not believe that the banshee's cry is not now heard in Ireland. I most distinctly heard it about five years ago, previous to the death of my dear brother; he was ailing at the time. It was 12 o'clock at night. I was up with him watching in case he required a drink, when suddenly I heard an indescribably mournful cry."

According to *The Irish Times*, "the banshee would grip readers for months as sceptics and witnesses lined up to fill the columns of the Editor's letter box." This was a popular tale across the nation.



The Irish Love Their Superstitions!



**"For everyone is a visionary, if you scratch him deep enough.
But the Celt, unlike any other, is a visionary without scratching."**

**- W.B. Yeats (1865-1939), world-renowned Irish writer, poet and
politician**

An Argument for Argument's Sake - Banshees are Scariet than monsters that try to Kill You

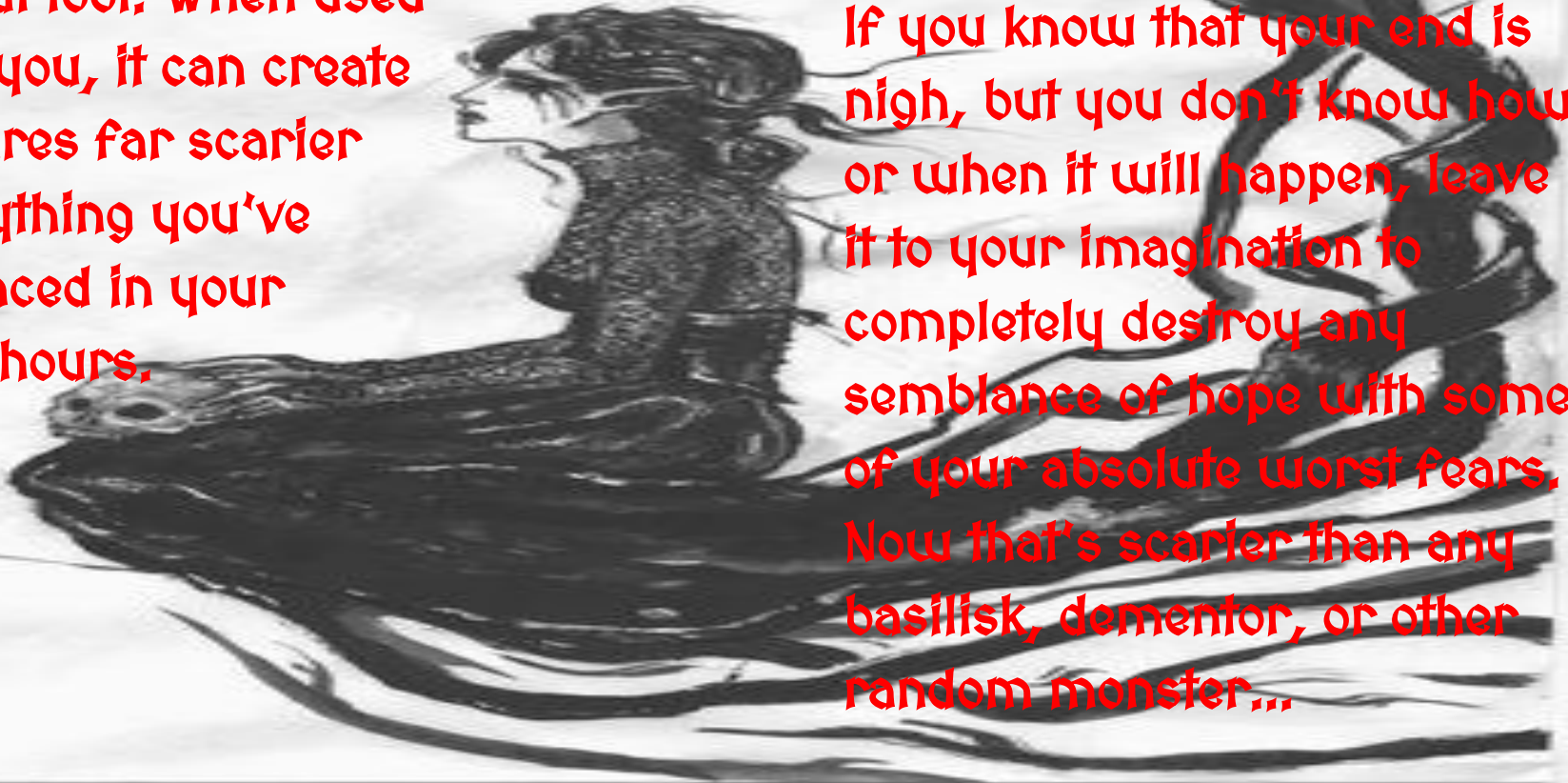
- You know the drill: Banshees don't try to end your life. They merely *warn* you that it's going to end, and soon!
- This is scariet than some random monster trying to take your life. Why?
- Well, once the Banshee alerts you that death is near, your mind conjures up images and ideas that are scariet than what's in front of your face.



The Argument Continued

The mind is an incredibly powerful tool. When used against you, it can create nightmares far scarier than anything you've experienced in your waking hours.

If you know that your end is nigh, but you don't know how or when it will happen, leave it to your imagination to completely destroy any semblance of hope with some of your absolute worst fears. Now that's scarier than any basilisk, dementor, or other random monster...





What Did You Just See?

An oil on canvas painting by artist Tomas O'Maoldomhnaigh done in 2014

It is on the market for \$600!

The artist's explication of what was painted:

“The banshee in Irish means woman, therefore woman of the sidhe. Woman of the fairy or spirit world. It is said, when a person hears the wail of the Banshee, there is going to be a death in the family. She is a major character in Irish folklore.”

Could you possibly be a Banshee?

Ever wondered if you are a Banshee? Let's have a little fun and see if you check off of our list.....

- Is your way of communication keening or howling?
- Are you obsessed with your hair or take lots of time brushing it?
- Do you mostly wear black or grey clothing?
- Do you tend to cry a lot or enjoy crying?
- Are you on top of your laundry?
- Are you always feeling cold?
- Are you aware you may have a sixth sense or having the power to predict what will happen next?
- Are you nice?
- Are you terrified of death?

Did you check off almost everything? Congratulations!!! You are a Banshee!

The Forms and ways a Banshee may appear

Banshees come in three possible forms.

She may appear as a crouching hag with a wrinkled face.



She may also appear very beautiful with this long hair and youthful face.



Other times she may also look very tall and skeletal like, somewhat like Slenderman.



Manifestations of My Sisters

Not only am I just one of a kind, but I also have sisters. They are truly the opposite and could possibly....drive you insane.

Meet Lianhand Sidhe or as some may call her, the "Sweetheart Fairy". She is very mischievous and mortal men tend to have this desire over her. This desire would drive men insane and ultimately destroyed them.



This is Bean Nighe or as others call her, the "Washing Woman". Instead of crying and wailing at night to warn somebody of a death, Bean would wash bloody clothing of the person who is about to die. You may find her washing near any water source.



Are they really Fairies or Ghosts?

Although banshees are known to be called ghosts, they fall back to also being known as fairies. They are not the charming fairies we see in fairytales, nor like tooth fairies who reward others with money. They are actually the spine-chilling fairies who worry more about death. They are descended from fairies but they do not necessarily have wings of their own.



The Misconceptions!

Banshee are known to be fairies who send signals of upcoming death. Banshees are seen in America as ghosts who roam around Ireland and deliver messages of death. Although this is not entirely wrong, Banshees are not known as ghosts.

There are sources that also say Banshees are witches or witch's spirits. This is entirely disrespectful to the Banshee because they are fairies, and are one of a kind. They do not do any kind of witchcraft or witch activities.



Many believe that Banshees have the power to kill people. Their job is to alert others of death with a high pitched scream. They are the predictor of death and will never be seen killing an individual.

Banshees do not have the ability to morph into an animal such as a crow, owl, weasel, or stoat. They actually have the ability to take over any mortal's body.

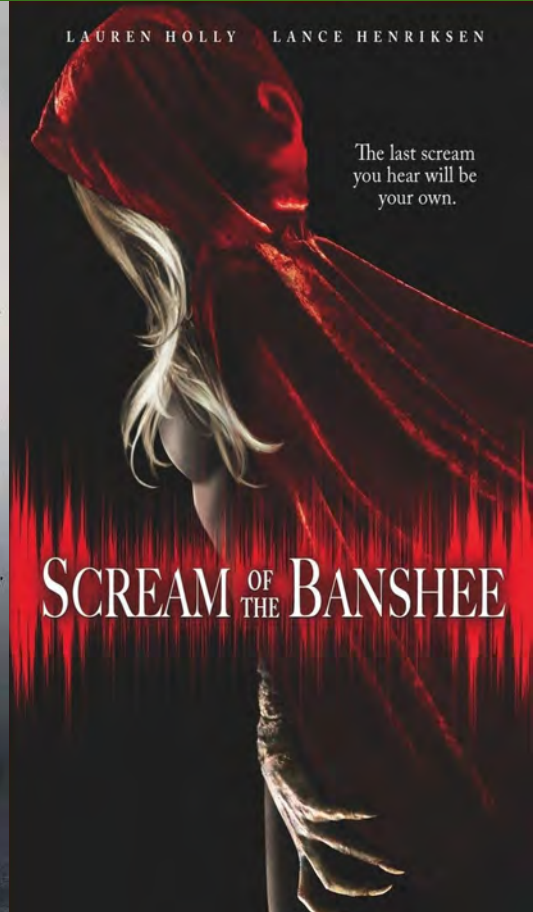
Their Weaknesses

Banshees can be harmed by using cold-forged iron or even a golden blade. Banshees are like humans and can also be decapitated. You are able to also kill a banshee by ripping their heart out.

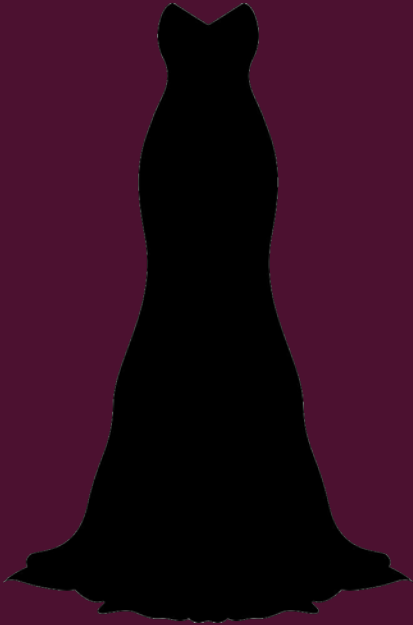
Just like every other spiritual movie, salt is one of the biggest uses that can repel away Banshees.



Real Representation of a Banshee



Let's become a Banshee



How to Escape the Banshee: a (Satirical) Diagram

Are You Currently in Ireland?

Yes



Leave Ireland



No



Don't Go to Ireland

Discussion Between a Banshee and her Victim

Victim: "What's that noise outside my window?"

Banshee: "AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

Victim: "Wow, that's rude, whoever it is please shut up!"

Banshee:

Banshee:

Victim: "Ha! That's what I thought."

* Two Days Later *

Victim: *Dies*

Goodbye...For Now

We bleed;

we need;

we agreed to this greed;

we dine;

we drink;

we stand alone and stare;

we romance;

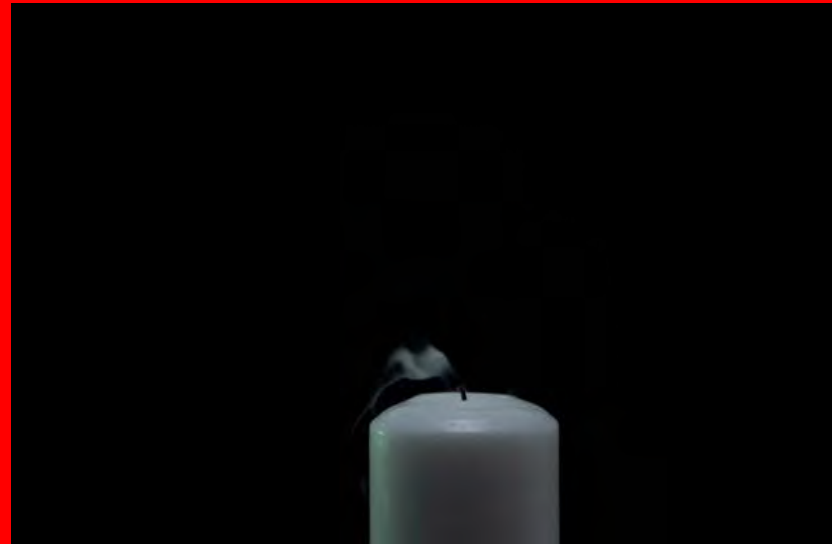
we chance;

we fantasize with death!

Because in the end, we are all just a single breath.

-Unknown

Let's hope you don't hear
the wailing of a Banshee
anytime soon!



Citations

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