

The Achiltibuie Stone

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PEBBLE BEACH, ACHILTIBUIE, NW HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND - DAY

SHIORI a Japanese woman in her 20's walks along the beach. She stops and picks up a pebble, examines it, drops it. She picks up another pebble, examines it, puts it in her pocket.

The sound of children laughing catches her attention. Shiori looks up the croft.

EXT. CROFT BESIDE THE SEA, ACHILTIBUIE, NW HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND - DAY

DOUGLAS SUTHERLAND, 10 years old, blond hair and his neighbour KATE MACLEOD, 11 years old, red hair and freckles, run down a croft towards the sea. The dyke stops at a fence that runs parallel to the beach. In the distance are the Summer Isles.

The children head for the Bullan, a large boulder with cup marks, on a patch of grass over the fence. Kate carries a carton of milk in her hand.

DOUGLAS  
Wait for me?

KATE  
Hurry up then.

Douglas catches up with Kate. He points to Shiori on the beach.

Kate waves. Shiori waves back.

DOUGLAS  
Who's that?

KATE  
An artist. She's going away tomorrow.

DOUGLAS  
How do you know?

KATE  
Mum let her camp at the top croft.

DOUGLAS  
What's she make?

Kate shrugs. She slowly walks around the bullan and holds the milk up.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)  
Tell me about the Celts again.

KATE  
They were fierce warriors ruled by  
a blue queen.

DOUGLAS  
Wow! And they had gods too?

KATE  
Yes, they had fierce gods. And  
before the blue queen would go into  
battle she would offer the gods a  
sacrifice.

DOUGLAS  
A hamster?

KATE  
Sometimes a person.

DOUGLAS  
Cool.

Douglas climbs on top of the boulder.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)  
But we can use milk instead.

KATE  
Yes, milk's fine. As long as it's  
whole milk as they wouldn't have  
had skimmed in the old days.

DOUGLAS  
You're so clever Kate!

KATE  
The Blue Queen had a special  
sacrifice stone with holes in it.  
Probably this one.

DOUGLAS  
And the sacrificed pet would fill  
up the holes with blood.

Kate holds the milk over a small hole.

KATE  
The Blue Queen would ask the gods  
to help her in battle against her  
deadly foes.

Kate pours some milk into the hole.

KATE (CONT'D)  
 Tomorrow at school, Janice Wilkie  
 will fall and her cut her knee.

DOUGLAS  
 Don't forget the football.

KATE  
 Oh, and Douglas Sutherland will  
 score a goal.

ANNIE (O.S.)  
 Coooeeee. Douglas. Dinner.

Douglas jumps off the bullan.

He runs up the path.

Half way up he takes a short cut by clambering over the dry  
 stone dyke.

Some of the stones tumble down. Douglas goes flying into a  
 clump of bracken.

Kate arrives.

KATE  
 You okay?

Douglas sits up and looks at the stone lying at his feet. It  
 is the size of his head. Lines and V's are carved into the  
 stone. Kate sits down beside him and runs her finger down a  
 marking.

KATE  
 Ancient.

DOUGLAS  
 Do you think it belonged to the  
 Blue Queen?

KATE  
 Maybe.

ANNIE, Douglas's grandmother, 60's, long grey hair , tied up  
 in a scarf, ruddy features, arrives, out of breath.

ANNIE  
 You fair gave me a fright!

Douglas and Kate hold up the stone between them.

A voice echoes over the wall.

PEGGY (O.S.)

Kate MacLeod what are you up to!

PEGGY, Kate's mother, 40's, curly red hair, walks through the large gap in the wall.

ANNIE

Look what Douglas found. A runestone!

Douglas and Kate show the stone to Peggy.

DOUGLAS

From the Blue Queen.

Kate looks at Douglas.

KATE

Or the Vikings.

INT. KITCHEN IN THE SUTHERLAND CROFT HOUSE - DAY

Douglas, his father CALUM, 40's, swarthy, bald, and Annie sit at the kitchen table.

Douglas scrubs the runestone with an old toothbrush.

Annie leafs through tractor magazines.

Calum looks though books on archaeology and rock art.

CALUM

It must be worth a fair bit.

ANNIE

But it's not gold or anything.

Calum closes a book. He opens another and looks through the pictures.

CALUM

Doesn't matter. It's rare. Nothing like it in any of these.

ANNIE

Enough for a new tractor.

CALUM

And a holiday abroad.

DOUGLAS

Abroad. Wha'like Skye?

Calum and Annie both laugh.

Calum gets up and goes over to the phonebook. He looks through the pages.

CALUM  
Ullapool Museum. Perhaps they'll  
buy it?

Calum picks up the phone and dials.

CALUM (CONT'D)  
Yes, I'd like you to put me through  
to the curator. Yes, I'll hold.

INT. KITCHEN IN THE MACLEOD CROFT HOUSE - NIGHT

IAN MACLEOD Kate's father, 40's, brown hair, beard and Peggy sit beside the fire. Peggy plays Sudoku. Kate is at the table playing a horse jumping computer game.

IAN  
Come here a minute Kate!

KATE carries on playing her computer game.

PEGGY  
Kate MacLeod. Your father is  
talking to you. Put that computer  
off right this second my young  
lady!

KATE  
Yes, Mother.

Kate sighs and saves her computer game. She gets up and walks over to Ian.

IAN  
See this line running down here?

KATE  
Yes.

IAN  
Where did you find the rune stone.  
Was it on this line?

KATE  
I didn't find it. It was Douglas.

IAN

Okay Douglas. Where did he find it?  
Look there's the path down to the  
sea. And there, where the old ruin  
is.

Kate chews her finger then points on the map.

KATE

There.

IAN

Are you sure?

KATE

Yes. It was just up from the bullan  
Just over the fence.

IAN

What?

KATE

Big rock wi'holes in it.

Ian shakes his head.

IAN

It's a shared wall.

PEGGY

Isn't it treasure trove or  
something then?

IAN

We could be due a percentage of  
it's value.

Ian looks at Kate.

IAN (CONT'D)

It depends on who discovered it.

KATE

Douglas found it!

IAN

Right. Young lady. It's bed for you  
with no supper. And another thing.  
I don't want you playing around  
with that Douglas Sutherland.

Kate gets up and runs to her room, trying not to cry.

INT. KATE'S BEDROOM IN THE MACLEOD CROFT HOUSE - NIGHT

Kate's bedroom is covered with posters of horses and warriors from throughout history.

Kate hears shouting from downstairs and the sound of a door slamming. A few minutes later there is a knocking at the door of her bedroom. Peggy comes in with a tray of food and sits down beside Kate.

PEGGY

You Okay?

Peggy strokes Kate's hair and gently pushes the food tray into Kate's lap.

PEGGY

Here. Sit up and eat this.

Kate picks up a spoon and looks at the soup.

PEGGY

Curried parsnip.

(beat)

Just imagine if you had found that little old stone there would be enough money to buy a pony.

KATE

A pony. Really?

PEGGY

The MacKay's are selling that, you know the white pony at Achnahaird?

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYING FIELDS - DAY

Kate watches from the edge of the field as Douglas plays football on the school playing field. Douglas runs forward and tackles another player, a girl JANICE WILKIE. She falls and Douglas runs past her with the ball and scores a goal. The referee blows a whistle. Janice sits holding her knee.

JANICE WILKIE

Foul, foul

Douglas runs around holding his hands in the air. Kate watches but is not smiling. Douglas waves to her. She turns and walks towards the exit.

EXT. SINGLE TRACK ROAD - DAY

Kate strolls along the road.

DOUGLAS (O.S.)  
Wait for me.

Douglas catches up, out of breath.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)  
We're going to get our photos taken  
at the museum.

KATE  
Oh.

DOUGLAS  
Want to come and see it cleaned up?

KATE  
Cleaned up?

DOUGLAS  
I gave it a good scrub and got all  
the dirt off.

KATE  
Hope you haven't damaged it. They  
usually clean these things with  
small brushes.

DOUGLAS  
I used a toothbrush.

KATE  
That should be okay then.

DOUGLAS  
So are you coming to see it?

KATE  
About the runestone, I found it.

DOUGLAS  
What?

KATE  
I found it.

Douglas frowns.

EXT. SUTHERLAND CROFT HOUSE - DAY

Annie opens the front door. Professor Jorgestone comes out of  
the house carrying a box. He opens the car door and puts the  
box on the seat.

PROFESSOR JORGESTONE  
I'll be in touch. The MacLeod  
family have also put in a claim.

INT. ULLAPOOL MUSEUM - ONE WEEK LATER - DAY

Kate's parents are standing on either side of a large glass display box. The runestone sits on a plinth within it. Kate is sitting below the display and a group of photographers snap photos.

SUPERIMPOSE: " ONE WEEK LATER"

Peggy unties the corner of her blouse, pops it into her mouth then rubs some dirt off Kate's forehead. Kate squirms out of the way.

PHOTOGRAPHER  
Smile for the birdy!

Peggy adjusts her new dress and beams for the cameras.

EXT. CROFT - NIGHT

Kate rides a white pony along a field. She sees Douglas in the distance. She waves. Douglas turns away.

INT. KITCHEN IN DOUGLAS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Annie stares at the newspaper photograph. Douglas cuts vegetables at the sink.

ANNIE  
Professor Jorgestone says that it  
is the most significant find of the  
century and will put the Ullapool  
Museum on the map.

Annie scans further down the page and read out loud.

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
"However there is a dispute of  
ownership. Mrs Annie Sutherland  
claims that her grandson.."

DOUGLAS  
Grannie I'm off to bed.

Annie looks up from the newspaper.

ANNIE  
Is there anything wrong?

Douglas shakes his head.

INT. SUTHERLAND HOUSE - NIGHT

Douglas , carrying a torch, goes down the stairs and out the front door.

He walks down the croft towards the bullan.

Douglas shines his torch at a carton of milk in his other hand. He pours some milk into the bullan.

DOUGLAS

I want Kate to be sorry for what she's done.

EXT. BUS STOP, ACHILTIBUIE - DAY

Pensioners VICTORIA and ROSEMARY are chatting at the bus stop. Rosemary pulls a paper out of her bag and opens it up.

ROSEMARY

Worth a fortune.

VICTORIA

Doesn't look like much.

The Ullapool bus arrives around the corner. Rosemary puts the paper back in her bag. Victoria and Rosemary get onto the bus.

Shiori runs up the road with a rucksack on her back. Breathless she gets onto the bus.

EXT. CROFT - DAY

Douglas watches from a distance as Kate is riding on her new pony. Half way down the croft is a makeshift jumping fence; a long length of wood suspended a foot of the ground on either side by cattle feeding buckets.

Kate rides the pony to the top of the croft. She waves at Douglas. He ignores her.

Kate bends forward and clicks the pony with her heels. The pony rushes forward at a gallop.

Suddenly the pony stops at the jumping fence.

Kate is thrown off. She SCREAMS.

Douglas runs down the croft towards Kate.

DOUGLAS

Kate! Kate!

Kate is lying on her back. She is unconscious. Her leg is at a strange angle. Douglas bends down and touches her face.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)  
Kate. Can you hear me?

INT. BUS. STREET , ULLAPOOL - DAY

Shiori makes her way out of the bus. On the way past the driver she stops.

SHIORI  
When's the Glasgow bus due.

BUS DRIVER  
Not for another hour miss.

EXT. STREET, ULLAPOOL - DAY

She walks towards the Ullapool Museum.

INT. ULLAPOOL MUSEUM - DAY

Shiori looks around the museum. She turns a corner and comes across the runestone in the display case. She GASPS . She reads the description and starts LAUGHING.

Professor Jorgestone comes out of his office.

PROFESSOR JORGESTONE  
(angry)  
Can I help you?

Shiori manages to stop laughing.

SHIORI  
My father.

PROFESSOR JORGESTONE  
What about your father?

SHIORI  
I carved that stone for him.

EXT. CROFT - DAY

An ambulance drives away. Douglas watches from a distance as Annie walks back down from the top of the road. She is crying.

DOUGLAS  
How's Kate?

ANNIE

They say she'll never walk again.

Annie SOBS and goes into the house.

EXT. CROFT - DAY

Douglas cries as he runs down the croft, carrying some milk.

He sits on the bullan. He pours the milk into one of the holes in the stone. He holds out a penknife and cuts his thumb. He lets three drops of blood drip into the milk.

DOUGLAS

I wish that Kate could walk again.

INT. WARD, HOSPITAL - DAY

Kate lies unconscious in a bed. She is hooked up to a, breathing machine, heartbeat monitor and drip feed. Peggy reads in a chair next to her bed.

The monitor suddenly BLEEPs LOUD and fast. Peggy stands up. She looks over Kate.

PEGGY

Kate?

EXT. MACLEOD CROFT HOUSE - LATER

Douglas has a plaster on his thumb. He bangs on the front door with his fist.

A red-eyed and dishevelled-looking Ian opens the front door.

DOUGLAS

Mr MacLeod. How's Kate?

IAN

Peggy's just phoned. There's no change.

DOUGLAS

Is she still...?

IAN

Still in a coma.

EXT. CROFT - LATER

Douglas sits on the bullan. He pours the milk into one of the holes in the stone. He holds out a penknife and cuts his other thumb. He lets blood flow into the milk.

DOUGLAS  
I wish that Kate could walk again.

INT. WARD, HOSPITAL - DAY

Kate is lying unconscious in a bed. Peggy is sitting reading in a chair next to her bed.

The monitor suddenly BLEEPS LOUD and fast. Peggy stands up.  
The BLEEP slows down.

EXT. MACLEOD CROFT HOUSE - LATER

Douglas has a bandage on both his thumbs. He bangs on the front door with his fist.

Ian opens the front door. He looks exhausted.

DOUGLAS  
Kate?

Ian shakes his head.

IAN  
No change.

EXT. CROFT - LATER

Douglas sits on the bullan. He pours the milk into one of the holes. He holds out a penknife and cuts his wrist. He lies down and lets blood flow into the milk.

DOUGLAS  
I wish that Kate could walk again.

He faints.

INT. WARD, HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Kate lies sleeping in a bed. She is hooked up to a monitor and drip feed. Peggy reads in a chair next to her bed.

The monitor suddenly BLEEPS.

EXT. SUTHERLAND CROFT HOUSE - NIGHT

Annie stands at the door and shouts.

ANNIE  
Douglas. Dinner's out. Douglas?

EXT. CROFT - NIGHT

Calum and Annie search down the croft with torches. Calum's torch catches Douglas lying on the bullan.

CALUM

Douglas?

INT. WARD, HOSPITAL - DAY

Douglas is lying sleeping. His hands are bandaged. Kate comes into the ward in a wheelchair being pushed by Peggy.

KATE

Douglas?

Douglas wakes up.

DOUGLAS

Kate? It's my fault.

Kate touches Douglas on the arm.

KATE

It's ok.

DOUGLAS

No. Its my fault. I cursed you. I tried to undo it but..

KATE

No its really ok. I mean I've just bruised it. They say I'll be up and about in a week.

Douglas breaks out into a smile.

EXT. CROFT - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:" ONE WEEK LATER"

A large group of villagers have turned out for the replacing of the runestone ceremony.

Kate sits in a wheelchair in the background. Douglas stands behind holding onto the back of the wheelchair. He has a bandage on his wrist.

A reporter and a camera crew are filming as Calum and Ian build up the wall, leaving a space for the runestone.

They stand back.

Shiori fits the runestone back into the wall.

SHIORI

Rest in peace father.

Everyone claps. There is a NEIGHING sound from Kate's pony.

Annie passes around scones and Peggy goes around with a tray with a pot of tea, jug of milk and cups.

DOUGLAS

Can I borrow that jug?

Peggy smiles and nods. Douglas takes the jug. He gives it to Kate.

Douglas pushes Kate's wheelchair down to the Wishing Stone where the pony is standing.

Kate slowly gets out of her wheelchair. Douglas helps her climb up onto the boulder.

They pour the milk together.

The pony bends down and licks the milk up. Kate gets onto the pony's back.

She grabs the reigns and goes galloping up the croft. Douglas laughs and runs after them.

THE END