

THE CAIRN - BEAT SHEET

1. Opening Image

A gray dawn over a misty Scottish village. The young woman stands at the threshold of her home, clutching her belly—alone.

2. Setup (1–3 pages)

Introduce the woman's exile: Her husband has discovered her pregnancy by another man.

She is cast out under the weight of shame and tradition.

The village whispers of the Cairn—where judgment awaits the damned.

3. Catalyst (Page 3–4)

The woman, desperate and nearly due, sets out toward the Cairn, a sacred mountain trail few dare to climb.

4. Debate (Pages 4–6)

She struggles with fear, pain, and the memory of the man she loved.

Visions or symbolic signs appear—echoes of her past, the village, her child's uncertain future.

She questions if this journey is penance or sacrifice.

5. Break into Two (Page 6–7)

Reaching the foot of the Cairn trail, she accepts that she must climb to the top to face whatever fate awaits.

She begins the steep, storm-swept ascent.

6. B Story (Pages 7–9)

Flashbacks or symbolic visions hint at her relationship with the young man, the tenderness between them.

The contrast with her husband's pride and fury becomes clear.

7. Fun and Games / Rising Conflict (Pages 9–12)

The mountain punishes her: terrain worsens, a storm brews, her contractions begin.

She falls, crawls, and fights every step as the environment mirrors her physical and emotional collapse.

8. Midpoint (Page 12)

She reaches the Cairn, now a towering silhouette against stormy skies.

The ethereal Sentinel appears—barely corporeal, cloaked in wind and fog.

She lays down in front of it, offering the pebble—then succumbs to the pain of labor.

9. Bad Guys Close In (Pages 12–14)

She delivers the baby alone, blood soaking the stones.

The storm rages. The Sentinel watches silently.

She dies beneath the cairn—peaceful, yet abandoned.

10. All Is Lost (Page 14–15)

Her body lies buried among the stones.

The Sentinel disappears into the mist.

11. Break into Three (Page 15–16)

Days later, the husband climbs the path, carrying guilt.

He finds her grave and the newborn crying beneath the stone pile.

12. Finale (Pages 16–18)

The husband performs a grim Caesarean, cutting the baby from her corpse.

He returns to the village, broken.

Instead of keeping the child, he gives it to the young man—the lover—as a gesture of atonement.

13. Final Image (Page 18–20)

The Cairn looms over the mountain, now silent.

In the village, the young man holds the child.

A cycle is broken—or perhaps reborn.

