

THE CAIRN

A Short Film by Robin Johnston

Logline

Banished and pregnant, a young woman ascends a treacherous mountainside to a sacred Cairn, where a spectral guardian holds the fate of her unborn child.

Genre & Tone

- **Genre:** Supernatural Drama / Folk Horror
 - **Tone:** Bleak, mystical, and atmospheric with emotional intensity
 - **Influences:** *The Witch*, *The Babadook*, *The Others*, Scottish folklore
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Synopsis

Set in a remote and ancient Highland village, *The Cairn* follows a young woman cast out by her husband after he discovers she carries another man's child. Rejected and shamed, she embarks on a desperate journey up the mountainside to the Cairn—a sacred place of judgment watched over by a spectral guardian. Battling exhaustion, shame, and the elements, she must confront her past and plead for her unborn child's life in a world where myth and morality collide.

Visual Style

- **Landscape:** Rugged Scottish Highlands—misty, rain-soaked, and imposing
 - **Palette:** Desaturated earth tones, grey-blues, and moss greens with moments of muted gold
 - **Lighting:** Naturalistic and moody—candlelight, fog diffused light, backlit silhouettes
 - **Camera:** Intimate handheld shots contrast with sweeping wide-angle mountain vistas
 - **Mood:** Visceral, poetic, and elemental—anchored in realism with spectral touches
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Thematic Focus

- **Redemption and Judgment**
- **Female agency and societal shame**
- **Myth, ritual, and spiritual reckoning**
- **Isolation and resilience**

Target Audience

- Fans of folklore horror and arthouse psychological dramas
- Festival audiences (Sundance, BFI, Tribeca, SXSW)
- Viewers of A24-style indie storytelling

Key Characters

- **The Woman:** Vulnerable, determined, and heavily pregnant—an outcast driven by love and fear
- **The Sentinel:** A dreamlike figure of fate—part spirit, part myth, part nature itself
- **The Village:** An unseen but oppressive presence—tradition-bound, superstitious

Director's Vision

"*The Cairn* explores the thin boundary between myth and truth, between forgiveness and fate. It's a film about resilience in the face of societal cruelty, told through a lens of poetic horror and spiritual reckoning. The landscape is not just a setting—it's a judge, a mirror, and a gatekeeper."

Production Notes

- **Format:** Short Film
- **Length:** 15–20 minutes
- **Location:** On-location shoot in the Scottish Highlands
- **Language:** English with Gaelic influences
- **Visual FX:** Minimal CGI—practical and atmospheric effects preferred

Status

- Script: Final Draft Completed
- Concept Art & Mood Boards: Completed
- Seeking: Co-producers, funding, distribution partners, and festival entry