

Caledonia

By Savannah Morgan

FADE IN:

EXT. FALKIRK FOREST CLEARING - DUSK

A blood moon illuminates a four-foot-tall pillar of rock standing in the centre of a small clearing in the forest. A faint engraving on it of a Pictish crescent catches the light, almost as if it's glowing from within.

A child's trainers dash through the leaves on the forest floor in the reddish light.

CONOR, age 10, clutches his toy soldier and glances over his shoulder with wide eyes as he hurtles into the clearing, past the stone, his eyes scanning the trees -

OOOF! He's tackled by his mud-speckled seven-year-old tomboy sister LUNA as she springs out from behind the pillar.

LUNA
Tag! You're it!

She scrambles up and hares away, immensely pleased with herself.

Conor stands up, brushes himself off and rearranges a small round stone dangling from a thong around his neck. As his fingers touch the stone, it emits a flash of brilliant light.

The Pictish standing stone absorbs the light and funnels it into the grooves of the crescent symbol like molten lead.

Luna spins around at the clearing's edge. She can just make out the outline of her brother - and the stone.

LUNA (cont'd)
Conor?!

Conor reaches out and traces the crescent with his finger. It responds by glowing ever more fiercely.

CONOR
(calling out)
Luna, come see -

Luna races back into the clearing, the glow increasing with every step, blinding her. She shields her eyes.

It engulfs Conor.

LUNA

Conor!

Luna flings herself at the light - and winds up flat in the grass in front of the darkened stone. Conor's toy soldier lies abandoned inches from her face. Her brother is gone.

EXT. FOREST STREAM - DUSK - 7 YEARS LATER

Luna, now 14 but just as mud-spattered, trots nimbly through the forest by the stream's edge, a notepad held close to her chest, torch scanning the bank.

Her gizmo-mad best friend RORY - 14, doughy, eternally rumpled - HUFFS after her, his face obscured by night-vision goggles and a headlamp, his glasses dangling around his neck.

Strapped to his arm, his phone displays a digital compass.

RORY

All this for a stupid rock with a hole in it?

LUNA

It's an adder stone! Come on Rory, where's your sense of adventure?

He stumbles.

RORY

I left it charging next to my bed. Where I should be.

LUNA

As soon as we find the adder stone, we can go home.

RORY

Why's it called that anyway?

Luna pauses to let him catch up, putting on her best "ghost story" voice:

LUNA

Legend says an adder stone is formed from the saliva of a ball of snakes, and the hole in the middle is from the flicking of their forked tongues.

RORY

We're looking for a slimy ball of snakes?! Negative, negative, abort!

He scans the surroundings wildly. Luna shines her light at his goggles and he flinches.

LUNA

Calm down Indiana. Truth is it's erosion from water that does it.

He trips and falls. He holds his hand out for help up and Luna extends her hand... but reaches past him to pick something up. He swaps his night vision goggles for his glasses.

She's holding a smooth, round pebble with a hole in it.

She opens her notebook to a page filled with Pictish symbols, including the crescent from the stone in the forest. Below a sketch of an adder stone are the words:

LUNA (cont'd)

Hidden secrets may be shown /
To one who has an adder stone. /
Fairy gateways, future, past, /
All dance within the druid's glass.

RORY

We're not going home yet, are we.

EXT. FALKIRK FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

The Pictish pillar is dark and mossy. Luna takes a deep breath and puts the adder stone in front of her eye.

Nothing. She scrunches her face up to hold it without her hands.

LUNA

Maybe it has to be the blood moon. Or maybe this isn't the right kind of adder stone? We should find a few more just in case.

RORY

Luna! Can we pause the quest for the holy pebble? It's the first day of school tomorrow!

LUNA

It's the blood moon lunar eclipse!

RORY

Like it was last year. And there were
two the year before that! I've
Lioned, Witched, and Weirdoed that
slab with lidar, radar, infrared - A
stone doughnut is not going to show
you the door to Narni - I mean
Caledonia.

A twig SNAPS. Luna grabs the stone and looks around.
Someone's watching them.

LUNA

Did you hear something?

Rory plucks the adder stone from her palm and looks towards
the noise. His mouth drops open.

RORY

Luna! You were right! I see - a
fairy!

Luna crowds close to him but he won't let her see it.

RORY (cont'd)

It's saying something. I can't
quite - G - Go - to - bed.

Luna shoves him. He shoves her back.

A tiny ball of red light flashes onto a branch nearby.
Luna's thrilled!

LUNA

There it is! The fairy!

It darts away. She's after it like a shot.

RORY

Luna, wait!

LUNA

Keep up Rory!

They hurtle through the trees, Luna ever the more agile, but
the light leads them in circles. Rory stops to catch his
breath and peers into the trees. He swaps his glasses for
night vision again.

RORY

Luna, that's not a -

Luna trips over a stump and face-plants in the mud, losing the adder stone in the process.

RORY (cont'd)

Fairy.

LAUGHTER rings out. It's the TROLLS, a trio of school bullies led by the brooding DUNCAN, 14. They surround Luna and Rory. Duncan holds the laser pointer.

Luna springs upright and meets Duncan's smirk, head high.

LUNA

Duncan.

DUNCAN

Luna.

Duncan's sycophantic sidekick ALISTAIR captures Luna's misfortune with his camouflaged trail camera. She turns her glare on him and he stumbles back another step.

ALISTAIR

(to Trolls)

Told you Loony Luna would be here tonight.

The Trolls HOWL at the moon.

GREG, their burly but none-too-bright third amigo, high fives Alistair and flashes his fingers at her in a signature Troll salute (his fingers making a 'T').

GREG

You've been trolled!

DUNCAN'S POV

Duncan spots the adder stone in the mud. It glows softly. He picks it up, and for a moment the glow intensifies. Puzzled, he pockets it and hurries to catch up to the other Trolls.

INT. LUNA'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Luna, already in her school uniform - a red polo shirt and skirt - checks that the coast is clear in the kitchen before taking her muddy clothes out of a bag and stuffing them into the machine.

Her father's footsteps sound on the stairs.

She dumps detergent in and hits start. The viewing window fills with mud. She blocks it with her body as her dad ARCHIE - late 30s, geeky archaeologist - enters. His shirt says "I loved it when Luke found out the Doctor was his father in Star Trek!"

He waves a cape aloft triumphantly.

ARCHIE

I found it!

Luna forgets her washing machine cover-up as she frowns at the cape. What is her dad up to now?

ARCHIE (cont'd)

For your first day back!

He gives the cape a little shake. She recoils like it's kryptonite. He flips open an article in a parenting magazine titled "Dressing as a Superhero Helps Children Succeed."

ARCHIE (cont'd)

This study that says children perform better when dressed as superheroes.

The psychological effects are profound.

LUNA

Did they also study the psychological effects of dying from embarrassment?
Like I'm not weird enough already.

ARCHIE

(here we go again)

Luna, being weird means you're -

TOGETHER

Wired for greatness.

LUNA

I know dad. But I like to keep that greatness - on the inside.

ARCHIE

Are you sure you want to wear a red shirt?

LUNA

What's wrong with my shirt?

(realising)

Sorry Dad, I don't have time for your Star Wars superstition today.

ARCHIE
 That's Star Trek!
 (off her grin)
 Ha. Got me.

The washer's WOOSHING noise distracts him.

ARCHIE (cont'd)
 Is that the machine?

LUNA
 I - uh, gotta go, don't want to be
 late. Love you!

She gives him a hug and rushes out the door.

Her dad looks briefly deflated. But then he holds the cape on himself and aims an imaginary gun, adopting a '007' shooting pose complete with 'Pow Pow' noises.

INT. SCHOOL LOCKERS - MORNING

The halls are packed, everyone catching up on the first day back. Luna throws her shoulders back and prepares to walk the gauntlet to her locker.

Sure enough, the kids LAUGH and MEOW at her.

The three Trolls cluster together, flanked by the dreaded DOUBLES - SKYE and GRACE - the reigning Princess of Popularity and her lady-in-waiting.

Duncan looks exhausted, dark circles evident under his eyes as he leans against the wall of lockers. Skye hangs on his arm and mocks Luna as she goes by.

SKYE
 Look what the cat dragged in.

Luna feigns surprise and looks Duncan up and down.

LUNA
 Wow. You're right Skye. Duncan does look like a dead rat. Kinda mean to point it out though, don't you think?

Duncan shrugs Skye off and rubs his eyes.

SKYE
 (calling after her)
 I wasn't talking about him!

But Luna's already moved off. Rory stands by his locker, his gaze locked worshipfully on Skye. He barely notices Luna approach.

RORY
Skye talked to you.

Luna rolls her eyes.

LUNA
Rory. RORY!

He focuses on her.

LUNA (cont'd)
Damage report.

RORY
Yes captain! The Trolls scored a direct hit. I. Um. Wow. You wore a red shirt.

LUNA
We should switch parents.

RORY
Guess it can't do any more harm.
Since we're already socially dead.

LUNA
Show me.

Rory holds his phone out to Luna. First, a video plays of them chasing the laser light, juxtaposed next to kittens doing the same.

LUNA (cont'd)
That's not so bad. Everyone loves kittens.

RORY
That wasn't the one that went viral.

He swipes down and a meme of Luna falling awkwardly in the mud comes up, with the caption "Awkwardness +10." Uh oh.

RORY (cont'd)
You're a meme.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Luna washes her hands. Skye and Grace enter.

SKYE

I didn't think you could start the year off worse than last year, but you always were an over-conceiver.

Luna and Grace look confused.

LUNA

Skye. Your mouth is moving: not your best look.

Grace pushes her out of the way so they can monopolise the mirror and proceeds to flip out an extending bag of cosmetics like a serial killer displaying a knife collection.

GRACE

Mirrors are for people who actually care about their appearance.

Luna smiles and SNEEZES on Grace's cosmetics. Grace backs away in horror.

Luna takes her time picking a black eyeliner and proceeds to apply cat whiskers, a nose, and eyeliner.

LUNA

What's the matter? Cat got your tongue?

Luna leaves.

SKYE

Do you think her social status is infractious?

Grace quickly takes out a hand sanitising spritzer and sprays the makeup.

INT. LUNA'S ENGLISH CLASS - MORNING

The students are remarkably well-behaved, copies of Midsummer Night's Dream on their desks. They're seated in their cliques, though Rory manages to be only two seats from Skye.

MR. SCHAFER, their terrifying and emotionless English teacher, drones on.

MR. SCHAFER
Over the next few weeks, we will be
covering the immortal bard's
Midsummer Night's Dream.

Duncan pinches himself, trying to stay awake in the back of the class. He's losing the battle. His sketchpad lies open next to his copy of Midsummer. Skye and Grace watch him, dreamy-eyed.

SKYE
Duncan's my midsummer night's dream.

GRACE
He's my every night's dream.
(Off Skye's kick)
I mean yours. He's - yours.

Alistair overhears and interrupts, a bit jealous. Rory tunes in too.

ALISTAIR
Are you coming to watch the tryouts
tonight?

GRACE
(duh, of course)
Does a toad have ears?

They all look confused. Does it?

SKYE
(covering)
Of course we will. Duncan's playing.
In fact, I think football is going to
be my favourite sport this year. I'm
going to be at every game.

Rory brightens. New goal set in his eternal Skye quest.

RORY
Football tryouts. Of course!

Rory stealthily takes out his phone and types in "football for dummies."

Duncan is out for the count. Skye slides Duncan's sketchbook out from under him and looks at it. Staring back at her is a stunning, exotic girl with studded pointy ears, smoky eyes, and a pirate bandanna hiding her nose and mouth.

SKYE
Who is SHE?!