

Scottish Lullaby

by

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OWC Draft

1.

FADE IN:

EXT. ELEVATED RAIL, GLASGOW - DAY

A commuter train RUMBLES over the elevated tracks dissecting a blighted neighborhood, a world of run down tenements and dark alleys.

A well dressed DR ALASTAIR, 40, walks quickly on the traffic free road, searching for an address.

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT - DAY

MR CROCKETT, 30, in a factory uniform, sits on a couch smoking, his feet on a coffee table. A small television is on.

The doorbell RINGS.

MRS CROCKETT (O.S.)

Can you get that? It's that doctor  
from the school.

Crockett stands up on weary bones and opens the door. Before him is Dr Alastair, tall and confident, if a bit uncomfortable in this neighborhood.

DR ALASTAIR

Mr Crockett? I am Dr Alastair. I'm  
here to talk about Kyle.

MR CROCKETT

Of course. Come in, please.

A broken old venomous voice intrudes from another room.

GRAN DA (O.S.)

Who's there? Who is that?

MR CROCKETT

It's just someone from the school, Da.

Crockett leads Alastair to the kitchen, where there's a small table.

MRS CROCKETT, 28, with ample makeup, clings to the modest beauty that was once hers but is fading. Unseen by the men, she discreetly slips a vodka bottle into a draw.

MRS CROCKETT

Can I offer you a coffee?

DR ALASTAIR

That would be fine.

Dr Alastair and Mr Crockett take a seat at the table while Mrs Crockett pours coffee for him and her husband.

MR CROCKETT

So, you've talked to the boy?

DR ALASTAIR

Yes, I have. And on the whole, I find Kyle to be quite normal. Perhaps a bit different than the other children, but otherwise normal.

MR CROCKETT

But what of his friend, Dougal?

DR ALASTAIR

It is not uncommon for a boy his age to have an imaginary friend. He will outgrow it.

A passing train SHAKES the house, stirring dust into the air.

The voice of GRAN DA calls angry from the other room.

GRAN DA (O.S.)

Damn racket! Crocketts lived in the hills a thousand years, never should have come to the city. For what? For her?

Alastair, awkward after the outburst, sips his coffee.

Mrs Crockett, now red in the face, takes a seat with her extra large coffee mug.

Mr Crockett continues as though Gran Da does not exist.

MR CROCKETT

Kyle sees other things too. Elf like creatures, gnomes, impossible things.

DR ALASTAIR

It's called Charles Bonnet Syndrome. Quite common in people with weak vision. What happens is the signal from the eyes to the brain grows weak, and the brain fills in the gap by creating its own reality.

Mrs Crockett looks worried.

MRS CROCKET

He is a sweet child.

Mr Crockett lights another cigarette.

MR CROCKET

Did the boy mention the bogs?

DR ALASTAIR

The bogs?

MR CROCKET

He has been repeating this strange expression, for months now. Says it all the time, won't explain it.

MRS CROCKET

(nervous)

'The bogs demand a sacrifice'. That's what he keeps saying. A 'sacrifice.'

EXT. UNDER THE EL - DAY

KYLE, 10, walks alone on a quiet, dark street sandwiched by commuter rail tracks and broken tenements. He speaks to someone only he can see. As always, he is nervous and jittery.

He is slender and awkward, a gentle soul, his pale face flushed by the cold winter wind. Thick glasses adorn his eyes.

KYLE

Whose dream? What dream?

A cat SCURRIES from a garbage can, startling Kyle briefly.

KYLE

You speak in riddles. What do you mean  
she is the sacrifice?

A flock of crows CAWS overhead.

KYLE

Is there nothing we can do to save  
her?

A hulking shadow appears near the entrance of an alley ahead.

Kyle sees it and stops in his tracks. He nervously adjusts his  
glasses.

He crosses the street to the tracks to avoid the alley.

KYLE

They are all I have. And you.

A commuter train SCREECHES round a curve, closing in.

KYLE

What kitten?

A small kitten is on the tracks in the path of the train. Kyle  
is agitated when he spots it.

KYLE

Run kitty!

The kitten is oblivious, does not move.

Kyle adjusts his glasses, stares in terror at the kitten and  
the speeding train.

Kyle runs to the tracks, to the location of the kitten.

On the tracks, he can't find the kitten. He adjusts his  
glasses again. It is nowhere to be seen.

A whistle SCREAMS from the speeding train.

Kyle jumps out of the way at the last possible second.

Kyle stares in shock as the train speeds by.

KYLE

Yes, Dougal, we tried to save her.

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

The three Crocketts are at dinner. Kyle picks fussily at his food. Mrs Crockett watches with loving concern.

KYLE

I don't understand why he didn't show.  
He promised to be here for dinner.

MR CROCKETT

(gently)

Now, Kyle, it is time...

MRS CROCKETT

(interrupting)

I am sure Dougal had a good reason.

MR CROCKETT

Woman, you can't always protect the  
boy.

While Kyle continues to pick at his food, and Mrs Crockett watches sympathetically. Mr Crockett places a friendly hand on his shoulder.

The doorbell RINGS.

Kyle, exuberant, runs to the other room to answer the door while the parents look at each other puzzled.

KYLE (O.S.)

Dougal! You made it!

GRAN DA (O.S.)

Close the door! Who ya talkin to?

FOOTSTEPS as Kyle returns.

KYLE

Mother, father, this is Dougal.

Deep concern grows on the parents faces, as no one is there.

And then he walks through the door. DOUGAL.

The Crocketts appear stunned.

The boy, same age as Kyle, is taller, handsome, his clothing strangely almost identical to Kyle's. His skin is pallid, and his dark hair wet, as though in from a storm.

MR CROCKET

(uncomfortable)

Pleased to meet you, Dougal.

Mrs Crockett stands and begins hurriedly clearing dishes, making room.

Kyle shows Dougal a seat.

MRS CROCKETT

Would you like some milk?

DOUGAL

(deep accent)

No, mam.

MR CROCKET

Do you go to school around here?

Dougal shakes his head while Kyle replies.

KYLE

Dougal's never been to school. He knows lots of things though.

The house SHAKES as a train rumbles by.

GRAN DA

By the gods! Who is it you speak with?

As always, Gran Da is ignored.

MRS CROCKETT  
Where do you live, Dougal?

DOUGAL  
I am from the hills. Where the bogs  
used to be.

GRAN DA  
Once you let a little evil in it's too  
late! She should have known that!

Mrs Crockett, disturbed, turns from them and begins purposely  
washing dishes in the sink.

KYLE  
The bogs demand a sacrifice.

Dougal looks down sadly at the table.

DOUGAL  
The sacrifice has already been made.

Int. Deirdra nightclub - night

A small, rundown nightclub, is partly filled with a couple  
dozen half in the bag patrons. On the stage Mrs Crockett  
finishes her Scottish lullaby.

MRS CROCKETT  
O tha, o tha, o tha, o thì  
O tha, o tha, o tha, o thì  
Dèan cadal, a ghràidh, 's do mhàthair  
sgìth, o tha.

The crowd responds with enthusiastic cheers. Mrs Crockett's  
face flushes with pleasure as she takes a quick bow.

She then glances at an OLD WOMAN seated at the bar and her  
bliss washes away.

INT. DEIRDRA NIGHTCLUB LATER - NIGHT

Mrs Crockett is seated at the bar next to the old woman. BRIAN, tending bar, delivers her a large drink.

OLD WOMAN

I would like an ale, sir.

Mrs Crockett shows a slight frown.

MRS CROCKETT

I got that, Brian.

The old woman smiles, having expected as much. She has a thick Gaelic accent.

OLD WOMAN

You do indeed have a wonderful voice, dear. One might say...otherworldly.

Mrs Crockett, catching the old woman's meaning, gestures toward the stage, around the little nightclub, complains to the old woman.

MRS CROCKETT

This was not the dream. Not our deal!

OLD WOMAN

Do you suppose your debt has been paid? For services rendered?

Mrs Crockett glances around nervously before continuing in little more than a whisper.

MRS CROCKETT

My son's imaginary friend, Dougal, was over the house today. My husband and I saw him, spoke to him!

OLD WOMAN

It is not with our eyes that we see the world, child.

Mrs Crockett lights a cigarette.

MRS CROCKETT  
They talk of a sacrifice.

The old woman receives her ale and, using both hands, drinks it with relish.

OLD WOMAN  
The gods will have their due.

MRS CROCKETT  
Like a young lass from the hills?

OLD WOMAN  
Everything has its price.

EXT. STREET BELOW THE EL - DUSK

Kyle cradles a couple of books as he walks. There are snowflakes in the December air and dusk's shadow descends early upon the grimy world beneath the elevated tracks. Dark alleys and urban noises play on his imagination.

Just ahead, a hooded woman stands near the entrance to an alley, her back to us. She is stooped as though perhaps crying.

Kyle stops, adjusts his glasses.

KYLE  
Mom?

A train RUMBLES by above. She does not hear him. He walks over to her, is only a few steps away.

KYLE  
Mom?

The figure turns. It is the old woman from the club, a menacing SNEER on her face.

A MAN suddenly emerges from the alley and snatches Kyle, stifling his SCREAMS with a hand over the mouth. His books fall to the virgin snow.

INT. MAIN SEWER LINE - NIGHT

Kyle's wrists are bound behind him as he is pushed along the edge of the sewer tunnel. The walls are rounded and made of brick, while a narrow stream runs a channel.

The old woman walks ahead of them, surprisingly spry. Both she and the man have a flashlight.

KYLE

Where are you taking me?

OLD WOMAN

Hear the train above? Follow it long enough north, and it cuts right through the hills of our ancestors. The hills do not forget, child. They do not.

They turn into a larger branch tunnel dimly lit by electric lights. The stream is deeper, about two feet in depth, and the current swifter, the water fairly clear.

After a short distance the old woman signals to stop.

OLD WOMAN

This will do.

The old woman turns Kyle gently and removes his glasses, drops them to the brick floor.

KYLE

My glasses! Please, my mother will kill me!

The old woman nods to the man, who wades into the stream and drags Kyle with him.

He forces Kyle to sit in the stream, then crouches behind him.

KYLE

Cold! It's cold!

OLD WOMAN

Be still child!

Dougal stands a short distance away, cool sympathy on his face, his dark hair still wet.

OLD WOMAN

She comes.

Fast FOOTSTEPS heard from where they just came, behind Kyle.

OLD WOMAN

There is only one true form of sacrifice. Of the self.

Another hooded female arrives, her face not visible.

OLD WOMAN

You have decided to pay the price? Our new arrangement?

MRS CROCKETT

(desperate)

I have.

Mrs Crockett now turns to Kyle, worry and desperation on her face.

KYLE

Mother!

Mrs Crockett wades into the water, forces the man to make way for her. Relief blossoms on Kyle's face.

KYLE

Dougal is here, and others.

Mrs Crockett sees the eyeglasses, retrieves them and places them lovingly on Kyle's eyes.

Then, with one hand she caresses his hair, while the other goes to the rope binding his wrists behind him.

KYLE

It hurts, Mother, please hurry.

Still caressing his hair with one hand, she begins to push down on his shoulder with the other, gently at first, then more firmly.

He begins to struggle.

MRS CROCKETT

(singing)

O tha, o tha, o tha, o thi.  
Dèan cadal, a ghràidh, 's do mhàthair  
sgìth, o tha.

OLD WOMAN

Such a voice the gods did give!

With two hands now she pushes him under. His glasses somehow remain on, and from under the water he stares at her in horror, mouthing the word 'No!'.

MRS CROCKETT

(singing)

Sleep, my love, your mother is tired,  
o yes.  
O tha, o tha, o tha, o thi.  
The cuckoo is in the wood and the  
night is coming,  
o yes.

FADE OUT: