

The Secret of the Scottish Stones

Book One of *Into the Kaleidoscope Series*

Long ago, a Pictish girl saved a mermaid's life. In gratitude, the mermaid gifted her three red stones: powerful relics known as the Stones of Life. Brimming with wonder and danger, the stones were hidden across the ages by a secret line of Wise Women to protect the world.

Centuries later, off Scotland's northern coast, a scuba diver vanishes while searching for the Stones. That diver is twelve-year-old Zoe Flores's beloved great-aunt Aggie. Zoe's family rushes to the Orkney Isles to find her.

Upon arrival, Zoe inherits an unexpected gift: Aggie's Wonderbelt. Part hippie gear, part magical toolkit, it holds enchanted tools—including a brass kaleidoscope that doesn't just bend light—it reshapes time and space. With the right combination of spinning glass wheels, Zoe unlocks a powerful secret: the ability to summon Scotland's fiercest forgotten women—queens, rebels, scientists, and witches. Known as the Clan, they're a ghostly sisterhood who bring centuries of wisdom, mischief, and second sight—even to Zoe. Though often intense and awkward, more comfortable with clues than classmates, the Clan sees what she could be: a leader.

To recover the Stones of Life, Zoe must unravel a gauntlet of cryptic challenges hidden across Orkney's ancient landscape. Guided by riddles etched in bone, constellations that map the dead, and symbols built from seaweed, she deciphers clues disguised as nature itself. Each discovery demands not just courage, but logic, empathy, and imagination. Her kaleidoscope and Wonderbelt may be magical, but it's Zoe's puzzle-solving mind that carries her through illusions, ancient traps, and underwater bargains with legendary beasts. Every step tests who she is—and who she's meant to become.

She's joined by Anna, her violin-virtuosa little sister; Sandy, a Scottish boy with spy-movie swagger; and Huey, a disco-loving Hogboon who snacks on toenails. Together, they decode runes, unlock relics, and cross treacherous tidal paths to uncover what really happened to Aggie.

But others seek the Stones. Magnus Groat, an oil magnate obsessed with legacy, hoards a secret collection of Selkie skins—holding the Selkies hostage to power his empire. Gunnhild, an exiled Viking sorceress, plots her return from the grave. And the Finfolk demand the Stones be returned to the sea.

At first, Grisel Goar, the so-called "Orkney Witch," seems guilty. A vocal environmentalist and owner of the Lucky Charm potion shop, she's an outcast in a town that favors convenience over conservation. But Zoe discovers Grisel isn't the villain after all—she's a Wise Woman, misjudged and misunderstood. In a twist, Grisel's courage and sacrifice not only save Aggie but reveal the kaleidoscope's deeper truth: difference is strength.

The final showdown erupts on the vanishing isle of Heather Blether. Zoe must outwit Gunnhild's ghostly Vikings, resist Finfolk illusions, and break the curse of the Raven Banner. With help from legends like Mary, Queen of Scots, and Flora MacDonald—whose boldness and sacrifice teach her what real courage looks like—Zoe faces a choice: seize power or free the Selkies. She chooses freedom, and in doing so, rescues Aggie. But the cost is high: the veil hiding their world begins to fray.

Zoe's bravery earns her a place in the Clan, and she becomes guardian of the kaleidoscope. But one Stone is still missing. Gunnhild and the Finfolk are still plotting. And the world is still warming. This Orkney adventure is only the beginning—as revealed in the final pages by Scota, the mythic mother of Scotland, who has been quietly narrating all along.