

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
Jason Zimmerman, MA

***The Birds* (1963)**

Alfred Hitchcock

OVERVIEW

Director Sir Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) is a household name and perhaps the best-known British filmmaker. With over 50 films to his credit, Hitchcock helped to shape the modern understanding of the thriller genre. His best-known films include *Psycho*, *Vertigo*, and *Dial M for Murder*, all of which have earned accolades, including preservation by the US Film Registry. In 1960, Hitchcock was inducted into the Hollywood Walk of Fame with two stars for his work in both film and television. He was also the first recipient of the BAFTA Academy Fellowship Award.

Film Loosely based on Daphne du Maurier's 1952 short story of the same name, *The Birds* marked the peak of Hitchcock's popular success. While the director would produce several more films, none would have the lasting appeal and name recognition of *The Birds*. The film is also unique in its apocalyptic overtones: never before did Hitchcock shoot a story with such a profound impact on the unseen masses outside his main cast. The film was Tippi Hedren's film debut and featured a substantial amount of special effects to create the numerous bird attack scenes utilizing a special sodium vapor process at Walt Disney Studios to create the final print. Using this technique, the special effects department was able to duplicate the number of birds on screen while keeping their movements lifelike, adding to the film's terrifying realism.

Background *The Birds* is very loosely based on du Maurier's short story: Only the setting and the bird attacks are used, and all other characters are the creation of screenwriter Evan Hunter who had previously written for Hitchcock's television series and *Mystery Magazine*. The majority of the birds seen in the film are real; however, several animatronic birds were created at great expense for key moments. A number of the crows were ravens caught by animal specialist Ray Berwick. He also caught the gulls at the San Francisco garbage dump. The scene where sparrows invade the home used a number of wild sparrows supplemented by pet shop birds to create the sheer mass Hitchcock desired. This was one of Hitchcock's more expensive films with a budget of around \$3.3 million, and it saw incredible returns at the box office, earning Universal over \$11.4 million.

CINEMATIC NARRATION

The Birds remains one of Hitchcock's crowning achievements. None of his previous films would so easily captivate audiences and draw them in with constant suspense. After the first gull attack, we begin to feel unease whenever we see birds gathering, and Hitchcock uses this to his advantage, creating abject horror with what would typically be considered a normal phenomenon. Flocks of birds are not normally viewed with fear, but the threat the birds in the film pose to the population of Bodega Bay only increases as the film continues. Throughout his work, Hitchcock was known to try and focus on 'pure cinema,' and in *The Birds*, he succeeds. Most of the dialogue is unnecessary to the advancement of the plot, allowing viewers to watch the situation unfold as if they were bystanders.

SYNOPSIS

Melanie Daniels, a socialite from San Francisco, meets Mitchell Brenner at a pet store. Mitchell recognizes Melanie from a court case and tests her bird knowledge before leaving without purchasing anything. Intrigued by Mitchell, Melanie decides to surprise him by delivering lovebirds to his family's farm in Bodega Bay. Upon her arrival, Melanie meets Annie Hayworth, Mitchell's ex-lover, who provides her with the Brenner family's information. Despite the tension between Annie and Mitchell due to his mother

Lydia's disapproval, Melanie tries to integrate herself into the Brenner family. However, strange occurrences involving birds begin to occur in the town.

The bird attacks start subtly with incidents like Lydia's hens refusing to eat and a dead gull found at Annie's doorstep. As Melanie spends more time in Bodega Bay, the attacks become more aggressive. During Cathy's birthday party, children are attacked by gulls, and later sparrows invade the Brenner home through the chimney. The situation worsens when Annie is killed by crows while protecting Cathy from an attack. The bird attacks intensify, with gulls attacking a gas station and causing an explosion. Melanie finds herself trapped in a phone booth during an attack but is saved by Mitchell.

As the bird attacks become more relentless, the Brenner family barricades themselves in their home. Birds start pecking through the roof and windows in an attempt to get inside. In a desperate attempt to escape the bird-infested town, Mitchell decides to drive Melanie to San Francisco for medical help for her injuries and trauma from the attacks. The Brenner family, including Cathy's lovebirds, makes a perilous journey through a mass of birds surrounding their home. As they drive away, the film ends with the realization that bird attacks are spreading, leaving the fate of Bodega Bay (and perhaps the world) uncertain.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Melanie

Daniels Melanie is a trouble-making socialite from San Francisco who becomes enchanted by Mitchell Brenner. After traveling to Bodega Bay to prank him, she accidentally inserts herself into the community. She grows to be a major part of the Brenner family as she helps them to survive the bird's attacks.

Spontaneous Melanie has a penchant for the unexpected. She is constantly getting in trouble for her thoughtless actions, whether that trouble is justified or not. Mitchell makes it clear in their first meeting that he thinks her childish antics do nothing but hurt people, mentioning a court case involving one of Melanie's recent pranks that resulted in a broken plate glass window. Instead of leaving things alone, Melanie enacts yet another prank, buying a pair of lovebirds and driving to Bodega Bay to covertly deliver them to his house. She commits a couple of minor but obvious crimes while enacting her pranks. While her childlike and self-centered spontaneity gets her into trouble, sometimes it is her father's connections that she must pay for. Both Lydia and Mitchell believe the rival paper's gossip column about her swimming nude in a Roman fountain when she was pushed in, fully-clothed, by someone else. These instances may reflect little on her as she seems not to care what most people think, but Melanie's father faces threats to readership and credibility because of rival papers sensationalizing Melanie's escapades.

Adventurous Globe-trotter at heart, Melanie doesn't stay still for long. Whether it's traveling to Europe on her father's dime or taking a spontaneous weekend trip to Bodega Bay to enact a prank, Melanie's life seems to be wall-to-wall adventure to the viewer. While she claims to work a couple of small jobs, it's unclear whether this is a joke at Mitchell's expense. Most of her activity has to do with alleviating her boredom. Despite having no plans or contacts in Bodega Bay, she is able to quickly gather information on Mitchell and his family with nothing but confidence and charm, likely gained on her adventures overseas. While many spoiled heiresses would have little to do with disaster, we see Melanie dive in to try and help people with the bird attacks. We see this adventurous attitude pay off when she helps to save the children of Bodega Bay school from the crow attack, but when she tries to help after the gasoline explosion, she ends up trapped in a telephone booth. Even in her fear and panic, she seeks an experience over simple comfort.

Irresponsible A part of her spontaneous nature, Melanie isn't the most prepared person. Only knowing Mitchell's name and his town of residence, she heads to Bodega Bay to enact a prank. When she gets there, we see just how ill-prepared she is. However, with a little charm, she's able to trick the helpful townsfolk into giving her more information about Mitchell and even prepare a covert means of transportation for her. Likewise, she often lies in ways that could cause her major trouble, such as when

she says she's staying with Miss Hayworth. Luck and charm work wonders for her, however, as Miss Hayworth has a room for rent and is willing to rent it for the weekend after a little convincing.

Mitchell Brenner

Mitchell is a brother to Cathy, a son to Lydia, and a potential lover to Melanie. Working as a defense lawyer in San Francisco, he makes his home in the tiny town of Bodega Bay. Melanie begins her relationship with him as an annoyance, yet they come to love one another.

Responsible Opposites attract. Where Melanie is spontaneous and irresponsible, Mitchell takes his responsibilities very seriously. As a lawyer, he does his job admirably, even defending those who don't necessarily deserve it to the best of his ability. He takes his responsibility as a son and breadwinner very seriously as well, working hard to provide for his mother and sister and giving them a comfortable life in Bodega Bay. His distaste for Melanie comes from her childish behavior and self-centered attitude. This dislike makes Mitchell appear much more self-righteous than he actually is, as seen in the pet store when he tricks Melanie into acting like a shopkeeper to embarrass her. When the bird attacks come, Mitchell does everything he can to protect his family, fending off the sparrows that attack after Cathy's birthday and almost single-handedly boarding up the house after the attack on Bodega Bay. Because of his responsible nature, the others look to him for a plan when they need to escape.

Selfless Mitchell's responsible nature shows his selfless side at times. Even though he doesn't like her, and she has just pulled an elaborate joke on him, Mitchell helps Melanie into the nearby restaurant and tends to her wounds after the first gull attacks her near the water. He also is the first to dive into harm's way when seagulls attack Cathy's party, and again when sparrows invade his home. This occurs again and again as the bird attacks intensify: he's the first out of the restaurant when the birds attack Bodega Bay for the first time, and he comes to Melanie's rescue when she finds herself trapped in the phone booth. Toward the film's end, he exits the home during a lull in the bird's assault to see if the car is usable, putting himself at major risk to get his family and the injured Melanie out of Bodega Bay to the relative safety of the city.

Loyal Mitchell proves to be a loyal man to those he loves. Before his sister's birthday, he does his best to find her the gift she wants--a pair of lovebirds. Likewise, he does a lot to keep his mother happy, going as far as to continue living in Bodega Bay despite working in San Francisco a couple of hours away. He shows some loyalty to Miss Hayworth, too, remaining close friends even with the failure of their romantic relationship. Despite his mother's nagging, trying to put a wedge between him and Melanie, Mitchell grows to show Melanie the same loyalty he does to his mother and sister. He does all that he can to protect her from the bird attacks, saving her several times during the movie.

Lydia Brenner

Lydia is mother to Cathy and Mitchell. She is a lonesome woman despite her close relationships with her children, a long-suffering widow who can't move on from her husband's death. While she is quite possessive of Mitchell, she is also defensive of the children in the face of the intensifying bird attacks.

Emotional Lydia is prone to emotional outbursts. She shows this when she nags her son after their first dinner with Melanie, telling her son nasty gossip about her because of the fear of losing him. She even admits that her behavior is out of line, but this doesn't stop it from continuing. When she sees Dan's body later in the film, she is so struck by fear and disgust that she cannot speak, pushing past the farmhand and Mitchell when they try to find out what's wrong. Likewise, she has a breakdown in front of Melanie, driven to panic over Cathy's safety at the school. This behavior rears its head once more when the family locks down: she forgets herself in a panic, screaming insults at her son for not having a plan.

Possessive Lydia fears losing her son to anyone. Part of this is a psychological attachment to anything that reminds her of her late husband, but there's a bit more to it. She seems jealous of anyone who would come between her and her family. This happens off-screen with Miss Hayworth soon after the death of

Lydia's husband, but it's a trend that continues. Lydia sees Melanie as a threat to everything she holds dear, using her gossip column understanding of the woman to justify her dislike. When it becomes clear that Melanie is more than a rich troublemaker, her attitude changes. While bedridden after the shock of seeing Dan Fawcett dead, Lydia confides in Melanie, telling her about the constant watchfulness of a single mother and how tiring it is. We see Lydia share the burden somewhat as she asks Melanie to bring Cathy home from school, trusting her with the task after bonding and seeing Melanie's softer side.

Cathy Brenner

Cathy is Mitchell's younger sister. Melanie purchases a pair of lovebirds as a part of an elaborate prank, and she quickly bonds with her. Despite Cathy's young age, she is quite observant and intelligent.

Lively Being a young girl, Cathy is active and playful, but she is portrayed as particularly lively. Perhaps this is to highlight Lydia's age. The first time we see Cathy, she breaks out in a sprint to greet Melanie, thanking her for the lovebirds with an excited hug. She also participates in lively conversation with Melanie after dinner, shocking her mother when she refers to Mitchell's rougher clients as 'hoods.' The only time we see Cathy without energy is when the stress of the bird attacks makes her physically ill, but even this doesn't keep her down for long. Despite the stress and illness, she is quick to help Melanie after the attack in the upstairs bedroom.

Kind Cathy is shown to be a very kind young girl. She is shown hugging and thanking Melanie profusely in her first appearance on screen, unprompted by her mother, who seems to dislike Melanie outright. This kindness continues as Cathy offers coffee and other comforts to their guest throughout the first night. Likewise, she invites the near stranger to her birthday party, seeing just how much Mitchell seems to like Melanie and wanting the two to be closer. In the scene where the crows attack the school children and one of the girls trips, she calls out for Cathy, who bravely and kindly turns around to help the injured girl to her feet and into the cover of a nearby car.

Miss Hayworth

Annie Hayworth is an old and close friend of Mitchell's. Despite their failed relationship, she moved to Bodega Bay to be closer to him. Miss Hayworth is also a beloved schoolteacher in the small town.

Observant Miss Hayworth is very observant. While we don't see a lot of her on screen, we do see her being intuitive and picking apart Melanie's lies quite easily. She is quick to understand that Melanie is trying to see more of Mitchell, and seems to warn her about the problems she faced with Lydia while she was trying to date Mitchell. Miss Hayworth is one of the first people to put two and two together when it comes to the bird attacks. This makes it easy for Melanie to gain her cooperation when she tries to evacuate the Bodega Bay school: Melanie simply points out the growing number of crows in the playground and Miss Hayworth completely changes her plans, telling the children they'll be having a fire drill instead of going to recess.

Unhappy Miss Hayworth's main on-screen portrayal is that of a deeply unhappy woman. The inability to form a lasting relationship with Mitchell seems to have a **lingering** impact on her as a woman. While she claims to be close friends with the Brennens and enjoys her simple schoolteacher's life in Bodega Bay, it's easy to see there's some resentment left in her life, especially when it comes to her initial interactions with Melanie: she's jealous. Miss Hayworth wishes Mitchell had tried harder to form a relationship with her, and is dissatisfied that her choice to move to Bodega Bay never brought them together again.

THEMES

Love Juxtaposed with violence, love is a central theme of *The Birds*. Like in many of Hitchcock's films, the protagonists begin the film with negative feelings for one another. The first interaction between Mitchell and Melanie is one of outright antagonism. Feeling snubbed and somewhat drawn towards

Mitchell, Melanie purchases a pair of lovebirds for his younger sister in an elaborate prank. These birds often serve as a potent theme of love, as they are the only birds shown on camera who never harm anyone. They also represent Mitchell and Melanie's relationship, which quickly becomes quite close. Despite finding her antics annoying, Mitchell is the first person to help Melanie when the seagull attacks her. From there, their romance blossoms quickly. Much like the lovebirds, Mitchell and Melanie quickly become inseparable, frequently seen side by side in many scenes leading up to the bird attack at the Brenner farm. Mitchell's love for his family is obvious as well. He is a very successful lawyer, who is said by his mother to do "whatever he wants," yet he maintains his home about a two-hour drive from the city where he works out of love for his mother and younger sister. Lydia, as well, exemplifies this theme towards the film's end when she and Melanie begin bonding. In the movie's final scene, she holds Melanie tightly in the back of the car as Mitchell drives away, showing that there has been a major change in their relationship: Lydia trusts and cares for Melanie after all they've been through.

Violence This theme is at odds with the other major theme of love and plays out mostly through the actions of the birds. While the caged lovebirds pose no threat and never so much as give the humans a dirty look, the gulls, sparrows, and crows featured throughout the film quickly become menacing after the first gull attack on Melanie. As they gather, their intent is clear: they want to harm humans for some reason. The ornithologist at *The Tides* gives an ecological reason for this, saying that humans cause unimaginable harm to the natural world in our attempts to tame it. While she refuses to believe that the birds are intelligent enough to attack in reprisal, it becomes clear that her observation about humanity may be what is driving the birds to self-defense or revenge. Like Hitchcock's previous film, *Psycho*, *The Birds* eschews the Hayes Code in its gory depictions of those killed by the birds, such as the farmer Dan Fawcett and Miss Hayworth. The extended attack against Melanie in the upstairs room of the Brenner house mirrors the infamous shower scene in *Psycho* in its length and intensity.

Women Not only are there a lot of women in this film, but they also represent an important theme. Focused on the sexual tension between Melanie and Mitchell, we see the struggle to maintain a healthy balance between the women Mitchell loves. These relationships define him. He is a good brother to Cathy, a loving and supportive son to Lydia, and a good friend to Miss Hayworth, who gave up her city life just to be closer to him despite their romance falling apart. All of these women love and support Mitchell because he respects them. We watch these various women overcome their dislike for one another throughout the film. Melanie is seen as a disruption at first, mistrusted by Miss Hayworth and Lydia. However, by the film's midpoint, their opinions have changed. Miss Hayworth and Melanie share in girlish conversation about Mitchell after it becomes clear he is falling for Melanie. Miss Hayworth, despite her lingering attraction to him, wants Mitchell to be happy and seeks to help him by giving Melanie friendly advice and encouragement. Likewise, Lydia seeks to be rid of Melanie at the film's beginning because of her rowdy past. Toward the film's end, though, she comes to rely on Melanie to help keep her family safe, and we see her gratitude in the film's final scene, where she and Mitchell escape the farmhouse to get Melanie proper medical care following the film's final attack. She smiles and comforts the injured woman in the back seat of the car, no longer threatened by Melanie's presence, realizing that she won't be losing a son but gaining a daughter.

Complacency This theme shows itself most clearly through the self-absorbed behavior of the protagonists: Melanie is a bored socialite with a penchant for childish pranks. Mitchell is a self-righteous lawyer. Miss Hayworth wallows in self-pity for not being in a relationship with Mitchell. And Lydia is incredibly possessive of her son because of a fear of abandonment. Some film analysts argue that this makes the characters unsympathetic, allowing the audience to more easily take the point of view of the birds. I wouldn't go that far, seeing as the interpersonal struggles are all addressed heavily throughout the film, resulting in closer bonds and new relationships between all the characters. Complacency arises multiple times as the camera shows us great flocks of agitated birds while the humans below take no notice or make self-centered complaints about the noise. Likewise, as more bird attacks occur, those around the protagonists refuse to believe that anything is wrong. It's only after the largest attack that anyone begins to believe the threat is real. We hear this echoed in the news reports, showing us a calamity on the horizon: until it physically affects us, we're often unable to believe that a threat is pressing or real.

Nature Nature is a large theme in *The Birds*, though only rarely addressed directly. It comes up in a long conversation with the ornithologist at The Tides, who brings up humanity's environmental impact on nature. In many ways, the birds are nature's rage given form. For too long, humans have done exactly as they like without any consideration of the other creatures who share the planet with them. It's often theorized by critics and film scholars that this was meant to be easily inferred as the true cause of the bird attacks. The inverse of this dynamic is presented as multiple species of birds begin working together to attack humans. At the end of the film, we hear that the bird attacks have spread out from Bodega Bay and we are left wondering if they won't spread across the world as the birds wage war against the humans who destroy the natural world that sustains us all.

Unknown / Mystery Through this theme, the apocalyptic overtones of the film become clear. It's only after the attack on Cathy's birthday party that we see this theme really come into force. After the attack, child and adult alike stare toward the sky, unsure of what is coming next. Fear of the unknown arises again and again after this point. It causes the mother at The Tides to lash out at Melanie, blaming her for the bird attacks. When the attacks on Bodega Bay escalate, Mitchell and Lydia have two different plans. While Mitchell believes they can 'ride out the storm' of the bird's attacks, Lydia is insistent that they try to escape by car before the next attack begins. Not knowing when the birds will strike next causes Lydia to side with her son for the moment, but they both agree they cannot stay in the home after Melanie is attacked in the upstairs bedroom. Mitchell faces this fear, stepping out among the throngs of gulls encircling his home. Through this act, he finds that the birds will tolerate people so long as they are calm and quiet. The film ends with an uneasy feeling based in the unknown. Will this be the end of the bird attacks, or will they only spread further from Bodega Bay?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Would you consider this film environmentalist?

How are homes and cages juxtaposed throughout the film?

In what ways does the camera help the viewer to identify with specific characters?

How do the film's special effects hold up to today's standards?

Women play pivotal roles in *The Birds'* plot. In what ways is Mitchell defined by his relationships with women?

PLOT

Davidson's Pet Shop- The camera picks out a well-dressed blonde woman among the crowded pedestrians walking along San Francisco's streets. Suddenly, someone whistles, causing the young woman to turn with a coy smile. She looks up for a moment, noticing the birds swarming loudly overhead, before walking inside a nearby pet store. She makes her way upstairs to an elderly saleswoman who calls her 'Miss Daniels' before they discuss her order of a mynah bird being delayed. Miss Daniels says she'd like the bird delivered, and the saleswoman moves into a back room to call her supplier. A man enters the shop and ascends the stairs, asking Miss Daniels for her help, as if she were a store clerk, concerning a pair of lovebirds for his younger sister's birthday. Miss Daniels plays along, quickly proving she knows nothing about birds when the man asks about their species and behaviors. Despite this, the man asks her to retrieve a bird from a cage to show it to him, but she accidentally releases it, allowing it to fly in a panic around the store.



"I know you"- The saleswoman emerges from the back office, adding to the panic while she and Miss Daniels try to catch the bird. After a few moments, the canary lands in an ashtray, and the man deftly catches it with the help of his hat. He smiles, returning the bird to its cage and saying, "Back to your gilded cage, Melanie Daniels." Melanie is stunned, asking, "How did you know my name?" The man tries to brush this off, saying, "A little birdie told me," before trying to leave. Melanie stands in his way, demanding to know how he knows her. "We met in court," he says, matter-of-factly, before talking about her recent court case for vandalism. It doesn't take long for Melanie to realize that he's been teasing her the entire time, calling him "a louse" before he finally leaves. "I'm glad you didn't get your lovebirds!" Melanie shouts after him. After a moment, she asks the saleswoman if she knows the man, and when she says she doesn't, Melanie rushes downstairs after him, watching him pull away. With a satisfied look, she jots down the license plate number.



Call for a favor- From upstairs, the saleswoman apologizes for the delay in the delivery of Melanie's mynah bird before Melanie asks to use the phone. She quickly dials a number to a local newspaper, getting in touch with someone she knows, and asking him to do her a favor. The man on the other end seems reluctant, but eventually, he gives in, promising to call the Department of Motor Vehicles and find out who owns the license plate she wrote down. With the promise that she'll run by her father's office at the newspaper later that evening for the information, she hangs up and turns her attention back to the saleswoman, saying she wants a pair of lovebirds. In a pattern becoming typical, the woman says she has no lovebirds in stock, asking if tomorrow morning would be alright, and Melanie agrees, a strange expression on her face.



Lovebirds- The next day, Melanie walks into an apartment building with a pair of lovebirds in a cage. She steps into an elevator and the camera pans up to a man, a resident of the building, looking down at the birds. Melanie and the man get off at the same floor, and the man looks confused. It's clear he doesn't know her and wonders what she's doing there. At an apartment door, Melanie stoops to place the birds and an envelope with "Mr. Mitchell Brenner" written on it in front of the door. But before she can leave, the man stops her. He is Mr. Brenner's neighbor. Melanie is a bit deflated to learn that Mr. Brenner will be out for the weekend and won't be able to retrieve the birds. From the neighbor, Melanie learns that Mr. Brenner spends many weekends out at Bodega Bay, about 60 miles to the north of San Francisco. Melanie sighs before there is a hard cut to the lovebirds sitting in their cage on the floorboard of a roaring car. Melanie speeds down the coastal highway, the birds leaning comically on their perch as she takes turn after turn at recklessly high speeds.



Post office- Melanie rolls to a stop in front of a small post office and general store. After walking inside, she talks to the man sorting letters, asking if he knows where Mitchell Brenner lives. The man is helpful, stepping out front to point out the Brenner property on the other side of the bay. After mentioning she wants to surprise them, the store owner says that she could rent a boat and “cut right across the bay.” Melanie asks him to arrange a boat for her, and he obliges. While he’s trying to reserve a boat for her, Melanie keeps interrupting him, asking about Mitchell’s younger sister’s name, but he can’t seem to remember it. Repeatedly interrupting his call, Melanie manages to wheedle the name of the girl’s school teacher out of the man: Miss Hayworth. He gives her directions to the teacher’s home before she leaves and saying thanks.



Miss Hayworth- Melanie noisily guides her Porsche through town and past the schoolhouse to Miss Hayworth’s home, where she parks out front. She rings the doorbell, and a woman cries out from behind the house, “Who is it?” “Me,” Melanie says plainly. “Who’s me?” the woman asks. The two meet beside the house, where Melanie introduces herself to Miss Hayworth. She then asks the name of the Brenner girl, and Miss Hayworth is quick to name her, “Cathy.” Melanie mentions that the general store-owner wasn’t sure of her name, and the schoolteacher sarcastically remarks, “Which is why the mail never gets delivered to the right place in this town.” Miss Hayworth offers Melanie a cigarette and asks about what she wants to see Cathy about. Melanie answers a bit cryptically, saying she doesn’t plan on staying long. Miss Hayworth responds equally cryptically, saying that Mr. Brenner seems to meet a lot of people in San Francisco before Melanie drives away.



Across the bay- Melanie writes "To Cathy" on an envelope outside the general store. After stepping back into her car, she starts it and rolls down to the docks. There, she meets a fisherman who starts a motorboat and helps her in. Despite her looks, she handles the small craft deftly, quickly making it across the bay where she watches Mr. Brenner and his family for a moment. Mitchell says goodbye to his mother and sister, who drive away in a sea-green Ford pickup truck. Afterward, he heads into a nearby barn and disappears. Melanie takes out an oar and silently maneuvers to the dock in front of the property where she disembarks with the birds. On shore, she quickly makes her way inside, placing the birdcage and the note where Mitchell will see it and constantly glancing to make sure she won't be caught. As quickly as she came, she heads back to the boat and paddles back into the bay.



Seagull- Watching the farmhouse, Melanie sees Mitchell enter, and she grins with anticipation and delight when he comes running out, looking for the intruder. When he dashes back inside, Melanie tries to restart her motor, but she can't before Mitchell returns with a pair of binoculars and spots her. He smiles and rushes to his car, a sort of chase ensuing as he drives the road around the bay recklessly fast to beat Melanie to the other side. Finally approaching the dock, Melanie smiles at Mitchell, who stands watching her. Shooting him a playful look, Melanie is suddenly struck by a swooping seagull. She's shocked to see blood on her glove. Mitchell jumps into her boat when it gets close enough and helps her to shore, having seen the attack. He mentions how odd it is and rushes her to a nearby diner, where he knows they have a first-aid kit.



The Tides- Mitchell guides Melanie to a seat inside The Tides restaurant. The owner comes rushing over, having noticed the blood dripping down Melanie's face from her scalp. He asks a waitress to fetch some cotton and antiseptic and she returns quickly. Using the cotton and peroxide, Mitchell helps Melanie clean the wound on her head while she asks him about his life. She learns that he's a criminal defense lawyer. "You mean, you came all this way to bring me those birds?" Mitchell asks eventually. "To bring your sister those birds," Melanie corrects. "You said it was her birthday." She then lies, saying that she's old friends with Annie Hayworth and was coming to visit for the weekend anyway. When the wound is clean, Mitchell asks Melanie to keep pressure on the cotton while he sits down across from her in the booth. "I think you came up to see me," he says. "You must've gone to a lot of trouble to find out who I was and where I lived." Melanie lies again, saying, "I simply called my father's newspaper." Their conversation continues for a while before a woman who recognizes Mitchell enters the restaurant: it's his mother. He introduces Melanie and says he's invited her to dinner. Melanie barely contains her look of surprise before accepting the invitation and lying that she's staying with Miss Hayworth for the weekend.



Room for rent- Sometime later, Melanie jogs up to Miss Hayworth's door and rings the bell before checking her hair in the window's reflection. When Miss Hayworth answers, Melanie gestures to her room for rent sign in the window and asks to stay overnight. Miss Hayworth initially says she wants to rent the room for the long term, but Melanie quickly convinces her to change her mind. She also says she knows Melanie didn't plan on staying long before asking what changed, but Melanie dodges the question, asking to use the phone. Miss Hayworth invites the temporary border inside, noting the swarming seagulls overhead, saying, "Don't they ever stop migrating?"



Waiting for the Brenners- Later that evening, the seagulls still swarm loudly in the sky as Melanie pulls her car to a stop in front of the Brenner farmhouse. She gets out and trots across the porch to the door where she rings the bell. Receiving no response, she walks back down the porch and peers around the corner of the house where she sees the Brenners walking around one of the farm buildings and toward the house. "Hi!" Melanie says, receiving an identical greeting from a young girl who runs to meet her. It's Cathy, and she's so thankful for Melanie's gift of lovebirds that she hugs her. "They're just what I wanted!" she says, asking Melanie questions about the birds while Mitchell's mother looks on warily. She mentions that her chickens aren't eating while they all head inside and cross the room to the phone. "Hello, Fred?" she says when the line connects. "Lydia Brenner... Fred, that feed you sold me is no good." They bicker for a while, and Mitchell offers Melanie a drink in the background. After hanging up, Lydia clarifies the conversation we overheard. It seems another local chicken farmer, Dan Fawcett, is having a similar problem with his birds, and Lydia says she's planning to talk to him about it soon.



Piano- After dinner, Melanie plays Arabesque #1 by Debussy at the piano while Mitchell and Lydia clear the table in the background. Cathy stands by the piano, talking to Melanie. "I still don't understand how you knew I wanted lovebirds," the girl says. "Your brother told me," Melanie replies with a grin. "Mitch knows a lot of people in San Francisco," Cathy says. "Of course, they're mostly hoods." Her mother snaps at her from the dining room. "Well, Mom," Cathy says, "he's the first to admit it." "In a democracy, Cathy," Lydia says sternly, "everyone is entitled to a fair trial. Your brother's practice..." Cathy interrupts her, saying, "I know all that democracy jazz. They're still hoods." With that, she turns her attention back to Melanie, "He has a client who shot his wife in the head six times. Six times! Can you imagine it?" Melanie, still playing the piano, looks to Mitchell in the dining room folding the tablecloth, asking "Why did he shoot her?" Mitchell says he was watching a baseball game and his wife changed the channel. Cathy invites Melanie to her surprise party the next day, saying she's figured it all out from her family's plans, but Melanie says she has to go back to San Francisco.



Dishes- Lydia stands at the sink, rinsing the dishes before placing them in the nearby dishwasher. “She’s a charming girl, isn’t she, Mitch?” she asks her son. He mutters an affirmative. “How long have you known her?” Lydia asks. “We met yesterday,” Mitchell says, “in a bird shop.” Lydia keeps asking probing questions until Mitchell interrupts her, saying, “Mother? Where did you go to law school?” Lydia chuckles and apologizes before asking some more questions about Melanie’s life, such as who her family is. Mitchell confirms that her father owns a large newspaper, and Lydia scoffs about how often Melanie appears in the columns for her antics, mentioning that she jumped into a fountain in Rome the year before. She mentions that the gossip column said Melanie had done so in the nude. Mitchell insists that Lydia stop her probing and gossip, saying, “I think I can handle Melanie Daniels by myself.” Lydia responds sadly: “As long as you know what you want, Mitch.”



“Jumping into fountains”- Later that evening, Mitchell walks Melanie to her car, asking if she knows the way back to town. She says she does while Mitchell opens her door for her, and she sits in the driver’s seat. “Will I be seeing you again?” Mitchell asks. Melanie replies, “San Francisco’s a long way from here.” “I’m in San Francisco five days a week,” Mitchell says, “With a lot of time on my hands. I’d like to see you. Maybe we could go swimming or something. Mother tells me you like to swim.” Melanie looks offended, saying, “How does your mother know what I like to do?” “I guess we read the same gossip column,” Mitchell says with a wry smile. “In case you’re interested,” Melanie interrupts Mitchell, “I was pushed into that fountain... The newspaper that ran that story happens to be a rival of my father’s paper.” While Melanie continues trying to defend herself, Mitchell manages to corner her into admitting that she lied about knowing Miss Hayworth. They begin arguing about her true intentions before Mitchell finally asks, “What do you want?” “I thought you knew,” Melanie replies with fire in her voice. “I want to go through life jumping into fountains naked.” With that, she starts her car and drives away. Mitchell notices the telephone and power lines covered in squawking crows before heading back inside.



Brandy- In her living room, Annie Hayworth sits reading a paper. Melanie enters and Miss Hayworth begins a conversation, noticing her frown. She offers Melanie brandy, and Melanie accepts with a thankful sigh. Miss Hayworth keeps calling Melanie 'Miss Daniels,' and she asks her to call her by her first name instead. With the brandy poured, Miss Hayworth settles down at a nearby desk and asks, "How did your evening go?" Melanie makes it clear she'd rather not talk about it, so Miss Hayworth changes the subject: "How do you like our little hamlet?" "I despise it," Melanie says, but Miss Hayworth just chuckles, saying it takes some getting used to. Melanie asks Miss Hayworth about her life, learning that she's from San Francisco, too, and ended up in Bodega Bay after meeting Mitchell. "He's been over and done with a long time ago," she assures Melanie. Melanie claims that there's nothing between herself and Mitchell, but Miss Hayworth scoffs, saying, "Maybe there's never been anything between Mitch and any girl." "What do you mean?" Melanie asks.



Annie and Mitch- "I think I'll have some of that," Miss Hayworth says, pouring herself a glass of brandy. She tells her story of her budding romance with Mitchell some years ago, saying they saw each other often in San Francisco and that one day, he invited her to come to Bodega Bay to meet his mother. "Of course, things may be different now." Melanie looks confused, "Different?" "With Lydia," Miss Hayworth clarifies, asking if Melanie noticed her mood. She says Lydia was distant and Miss Hayworth remarks that things may not be different before telling Melanie about how Lydia tried to drive Mitchell and her apart all those years ago. "Lydia liked me. That's the strange part. Now that I'm no longer a threat, we're very good friends." Melanie is still confused and Miss Hayworth responds cryptically and sarcastically that Lydia can't give her son the love he deserves, and it makes her possessive of him, afraid to be abandoned. As Melanie begins to light a cigarette, she stops in surprise when Miss Hayworth admits to still liking Mitchell "a hell of a lot." It's the reason she moved to Bodega Bay, even though there was no chance of rekindling their relationship.



"It's Mitch, for you"- The phone rings, and Miss Hayworth crosses the room to answer it. "It's Mitch," she says to Melanie, "for you." Melanie looks a little surprised before standing and accepting the receiver from Miss Hayworth. She sits by the phone and speaks politely. Miss Hayworth sits on the couch, puffing on her cigarette in the foreground. It quickly becomes clear what the conversation is about when Melanie says, "Well, no, I wouldn't want to disappoint Cathy." She bids him good night and hangs up the phone before telling Miss Hayworth that Mitchell was asking her to Cathy's birthday party, and she agreed to go. "Should be fun," Miss Hayworth responds, saying further that she'll be there to help. Melanie says she's going to bed, but before she does, she asks Miss Hayworth if she should go to the party, fearing Lydia's scorn. "Never mind Lydia," Miss Hayworth says, smiling. "Do you want to go?" "Yes," Melanie answers after a moment's thought. "Then go," Miss Hayworth says. There's a sound at the door and Miss Hayworth rises to investigate. She and Melanie discover a seagull dead on the porch. "Poor thing," Miss Hayworth says. "Probably lost his way in the dark." "But it's not dark, Annie," Melanie says. "There's a full moon."



Hilltop- With Cathy's guests arriving in the background, Mitchell and Melanie climb a nearby hill overlooking the bay. At the crest of the hill, Mitchell gestures around at the natural beauty before uncorking the carafe in his hand and pouring Melanie another drink. "I really shouldn't have anymore," she says. "I'm driving." Mitchell invites her to stay for dinner, but Melanie declines, saying she has to get back to San Francisco for work. "You have a job?" Mitchell says, surprised. "I have several jobs," Melanie replies, lining out her weekly itinerary. Some are sarcastic jokes (such as her weekly study "finding new four-letter words" at Berkeley), but she explains that her trip to Rome made her feel the need to contribute something, "So on Mondays and Thursdays, I keep myself busy." Melanie then tells Mitchell about her "straight-laced" aunt whom she's buying the mynah bird for: "Can you see my Aunt Tessa's face when this one tells us one or two of the words I've picked up at Berkeley?" After an uncomfortable moment where Melanie reveals that her mother ran off when she was a child, she suggests that they head back to the party.



Birthday- Miss Hayworth leads the girls in a party game, becoming distracted when she sees Melanie and Mitchell coming down the hill toward the party. Lydia emerges from the house with a pink-frosted birthday cake in her hands, giving her son and Melanie a wary look. Suddenly, a seagull swoops down on Cathy, who wears a blindfold for the game. “Hey!” she shouts. “No touching allowed!” Suddenly, more birds begin swooping down, hurling their clawed feet and beaks at everyone within reach. The children begin screaming, and Melanie and Mitchell drop their glasses, running to help get the children inside. Miss Hayworth and Lydia are already trying to corral the panicked children and party-going mothers. It takes a few moments, but all the children are eventually led inside. Luckily, most escaped without injury, but a few have suffered cuts and bruises from the seagulls’ attack. As soon as they came, the gulls fly off. Mitchell watches them with a confused and concerned look on his face. “That makes three times,” Miss Hayworth says to Melanie. Relaying the information about the gull at Miss Hayworth’s the night before, Mitchell invites Melanie to stay until she must leave for San Francisco.



“What’s the matter with all the birds?”- The Brenners busy themselves setting up their plates for roast beef sandwiches while the lovebirds chirp wildly in their cages. “What’s the matter with them?” Cathy asks while she brings coffee to Melanie seated in the living room. “What’s the matter with all the birds?” Lydia asks sharply, covering the lovebirds’ cage. Cathy says she thinks Melanie ought to stay the night before the adults begin discussing the various routes to get back to the city. Suddenly, the lovebirds stop chirping. A sparrow hops across the nearby hearth. “Mitch...” Melanie barely gets out before a swarm of sparrows rushes down through the chimney. They begin attacking everyone while Mitchell shouts for them to protect their eyes. The birds swarm endlessly while Melanie and the Brenners swat impotently at them and cower in the corners of the room. Mitch does his best to block the chimney and shepherd the raging birds outside through the back door, but it takes some time. Melanie takes a chance and leads Cathy and Lydia outside, and soon Mitchell follows suit.



“Attack’s a pretty strong word”- Sometime later, a police officer stands inside the Brenner farmhouse, examining the dead sparrows littering the floor. “That’s a sparrow, alright,” he says. “We know what it is, Al,” Mitchell says impatiently. Lydia begins collecting broken china from the floor, while Al and Mitchell argue about the potential causes of the bird attack. The lawman refuses to believe this was anything but a freak accident: “Attack’s a pretty strong word, don’t you think? I mean, birds don’t go around attacking people without no reason.” Al suggests that Mitchell put a screen at the top of his chimney and offers to help clean up, but Mitchell sends him away. Melanie offers to put Cathy to bed and accepts Mitchell’s new offer to spend the night. The scene fades out while Lydia looks out the back window, a frightened look on her face.



Visiting Dan Fawcett- The next morning, Mitchell works out in the yard, presumably burning garbage and dead birds from the night before. Lydia calls to him. In the guest bedroom, Melanie puts the final touches on her makeup in a mirror before crossing to the window and looking out. “I’m going to drop Cathy off now,” Lydia shouts to her son, saying she’ll probably visit the Fawcett farm before heading home. Mitchell says, “Okay,” and the truck starts before driving away. Sometime later, Lydia pulls the truck into the Fawcett farm and asks a worker about Dan’s whereabouts. “Ain’t seen him this morning,” he replies, “but he ought to be in there.” He nods towards the house, and Lydia thanks him before heading inside. When Dan doesn’t answer her knocks or calls, she walks deeper into the house, noticing all his coffee cups broken. When she gets to the bedroom, she notices it in complete disarray. A dead seagull, poised as if in mid-flight, dangles from the broken window. In a corner by the bed, she notices Dan Fawcett, dead with his eyes pecked out. Frightened, she runs from the house and jumps into her truck.



Tea- After speeding back home, Lydia staggers out of her car, crying. Mitchell and Melanie rush to her, asking what's wrong. She pushes them aside and runs inside. Sometime later, Mitchell says he's going to see what's going on at the Fawcett farm before hugging and kissing Melanie goodbye. Melanie then takes a tray of tea up to Lydia, who lies in bed, still shaken by what she's seen. Melanie tells Lydia about the Santa Rosa police being called in to investigate Dan Fawcett's death before Lydia shares her concerns about Cathy's safety at the school: "... they have such big windows at the school. All the windows are broken in Dan's bedroom. All the windows!" Melanie does her best to console and calm Lydia, but she's obviously shaken and rightly worried: The bird attacks are escalating. Lydia begins talking about her late husband, sharing her deep feelings of loss with Melanie.



"Always done exactly what he wanted"- Melanie asks if Lydia would like for her to give her some privacy, but Lydia stops her. "I feel as if I don't understand you at all," she says, "and I want too much to understand... my son seems to be very fond of you, and I don't quite know how I feel about it." They have a short conversation about the importance of Lydia liking Melanie. When the younger woman says Lydia's opinion must be important to Mitchell, Lydia sighs, saying, "Mitch has always done exactly what he wanted to do." Lydia then breaks out in tears, saying she doesn't want to be left alone. Melanie crosses to the bed and sits by her, comforting her and encouraging her to get some rest. Lydia lies down, but she continues fretting about Cathy's safety. Melanie offers to go pick up Cathy and bring her home, and after she leaves, Lydia finally seems to calm down.



Bodega Bay school- A bit later, the camera catches Melanie driving her convertible to the Bodega Bay school where she parks out front. The sound of the children's singing emits quietly from the school as Melanie enters, growing louder when she enters the classroom. Miss Hayworth notices her and silently asks for a few minutes to complete the music lesson. Melanie exits the classroom and heads back outside while the children continue singing. She looks around outside for a moment before making her way down the stairs. Spotting a bench nearby, she makes her way there, sitting down with the playground behind her. Seated on the bench, Melanie takes a moment to light a cigarette. One by one, crows begin to gather on the jungle gym behind her. The camera flashes back to Melanie's face, and she takes a deep drag from her cigarette. Another crow lands behind her. Another puff, another crow.



Crows- Toward the end of her cigarette, Melanie looks up and notices a crow flying above her. The camera watches it circle before landing on the jungle gym behind her. Now every surface that could hold them is crammed with crows. Melanie rises, looking to the schoolhouse in panic, but containing it. She quickly but calmly walks back to the school and enters. Miss Hayworth instructs the children to get ready for recess and opens the side door, but Melanie gets her to close the door quickly before bringing the wholesale murder of crows outside to the teacher's attention. Understanding Melanie's worry, Miss Hayworth then instructs the children to quiet down and prepares them for a 'fire drill.' Despite their disappointment, the children listen to their beloved teacher and exit the school. All hell breaks loose when the crows take off all at once, attacking the children as they begin running for cover. In the confusion, Melanie and Cathy end up trapped in a nearby car when she stops to help a girl who is under a particularly vicious attack. As quickly and quietly as the crows came, they disappear.



Ornithologist- The scene fades in on Melanie calling her father from the Tides Restaurant. Her father doesn't want to believe her about the bird attack, thinking his daughter is spinning a yarn. Customers eating meals inside the restaurant eavesdrop on Melanie's loud conversation, varying looks of worry and incredulity on their faces. An elderly woman enters, asking for change. After the older woman buys her cigarettes at the nearby vending machine and Melanie hangs up the phone, the older woman gives Melanie a quick ornithology lesson, explaining the difference between blackbirds and crows. She also scoffs at the idea of bird attacks, citing the creature's lack of brain matter as proof. When Melanie disagrees, the woman identifies herself as an ornithologist and says, "Birds are not aggressive creatures, miss. They bring beauty into the world. It is mankind, rather, who..." A waitress interrupts her with an order: "Three Southern fried chicken!" "It is mankind, rather," the ornithologist continues, "who insists upon making it difficult for life to exist upon this planet." She and the restaurant owner bicker about the attack, while Melanie tries to reach Mitchell on the phone. "It's the end of the world!" a drunk man cries from the end of the bar, stirring the others in the restaurant into a mild frenzy of conversation.



Santa Cruz last year- The drunk man begins quoting scripture about the end of days. The waitress quips back with a verse about avoiding "strong drink." "I hardly think a few birds are going to bring about the end of the world," the ornithologist smirks. "These weren't a few birds," Melanie replies, hanging up the phone. The restaurant owner comments that he didn't know there were so many crows in Bodega Bay, and this causes the ornithologist to go off on another lesson about bird behavior. A fisherman interrupts her, chiming in that he's been having trouble with gull attacks. A mother asks the waitress to ask the people at the bar to quiet down: "They're frightening the children." The conversation continues at a softer volume, but as the reports of attacks grow with each new patron chiming in, everyone gets worked up again, talking about the birds starting a war on humans. Mitchell soon enters with Al, telling everyone that Dan Fawcett was killed by birds. Al disagrees, but a man at the bar brings up a similar attack that took place in Santa Cruz the year before. The mother bundles her children outside, asking another man to help lead them to the highway. "It's the end of the world!" the drunk man says pleasantly to them as they leave.



Gasoline- Mitchell and the sailor begin bickering about the best course of action. Despite bringing up the gull attacks, the sailor isn't convinced that there is a problem just yet. Above their arguing, a din of bird cries and flapping wings begin, and Melanie takes notice. She looks out a nearby window at a gas station and watches as gulls attack an attendant pumping gas. He's knocked out, and the pump handle falls from his hand, spilling gasoline out onto the road that forms a small river reaching a parking lot. The others in the restaurant crowd at the window and watch in horror as a man steps out of his car and unwittingly lights his cigar above the quickly spreading gas. They fling the window open and beg the man to stop, but it's too late. The gasoline explodes into flames and the car beside him explodes as well. At that moment, the bird attack begins in earnest. They swoop in and pelt those trying to fight the blaze.



Phone booth- Melanie and others from inside the restaurant head outside to help with the emergency and are caught up in the attack. Melanie is trapped in a phone booth while ducking for cover, the birds flocking so thickly that she can barely shut the door again when she tries to open it. All she can do is watch in horror as her fragile shelter begins to fall apart and those trapped outside are pecked to death by the swarming birds. The firemen arrive, but they too are unable to stand up to the birds' assault. Gull after gull careens into the glass, cracking it with each strike and showering Melanie with glass. Suddenly, Mitchell appears and helps Melanie to the nearby restaurant, where they quickly dive inside.



The cause- It seems empty inside the restaurant, eerily so. Mitchell grabs Melanie's hand and leads her toward the back, where a group of women and children huddle in the hallway. The mother from before stands and walks toward Melanie. She demands to know why the birds are attacking. No one answers. "They said when you got here, the whole thing started," the mother says, tears streaming down her face. Everyone looks at Melanie. "Who are you?! What are you?! Where did you come from?!" the mother shouts, stepping closer to Melanie. "I think you're the cause of all this! I think you're evil! EVIL!" Melanie strikes the woman. The restaurant owner enters and tells everyone he thinks the attack is coming to an end. Mitchell and Melanie take the lull in the birds' attack to run up the hill and get Cathy from Miss Hayworth's house.



"Crows again"- Outside the Bodega Bay school, Mitchell and Melanie stop running. Crows line the roof and nearby power lines. They continue towards Miss Hayworth's house on the other side of the school, walking briskly, but they stop when Melanie notices a presence in the schoolyard. "The crows again!" she says, Mitchell shushing her and holding her tight as the birds croak and squawk. They continue walking, noticing a few crows on Miss Hayworth's roof and something lying on her front steps. To their horror, it's Miss Hayworth, dead with her eyes pecked out. Melanie can't help but scream before frantically asking, "Where's Cathy?" Mitchell looks up and sees his younger sister inside the house. She peers through the window, sobbing. He then shepherds Cathy past the body to Melanie before picking up a stone, rearing back to throw it at the crows in his rage, but Melanie stops him: It would only provoke another attack. Instead, Mitchell covers Miss Hayworth's body with his jacket and carries her body inside.



Convertible- The trio makes their way back down the hill, but the crows seem agitated. They only make it to Melanie's car before the sound of flapping wings erupts. Mitchell quickly raises the roof and starts the car, driving down the hill while Melanie holds Cathy beside him. Between sobs, she tells the other two what happened: 'When we got back from taking Michelle home, we heard the explosion, and we went outside to see what it was. All at once, the birds were everywhere! All at once, she pushed me inside, and they covered her!' Melanie holds the crying girl tighter and Mitchell puts a comforting hand on his sister while he navigates the town's roads.



Boards- The camera pans across the Brenner house while the sound of hammering rings out. All the windows are boarded shut. "Give me another one, darling," Mitchell says from the top of a ladder, and Melanie passes him up another board which he nails into place covering the upstairs window. He looks up and notices a growing group of birds. Melanie asks how long they've been gathering. "About fifteen minutes," he replies before getting back to work. "Seems like a pattern, doesn't it? They strike, then disappear, and then start massing again." After finishing the barricade and climbing down the ladder, Mitchell asks if Melanie tried calling her father, and she replies that the line was dead. Mitchell asks about power, and Melanie says they still have it when Lydia calls from inside, "I'm getting something on the radio!" Melanie and Mitchell head into the house.



News report- “I can’t get any of the local stations,” Lydia says over the news report while Mitchell and Melanie sit nearby. “I think this is San Francisco.” The radio announcer comes through more clearly: “In Bodega Bay early this morning, a large flock of crows attacked a group of children who were leaving the school during a fire drill. One little girl was seriously injured and taken to the hospital in Santa Rosa, but the majority of the children reached safety. We understand there was another attack on the town, but this information is rather sketchy.” Mitchell is frustrated with the report, saying, “Was that all?” before moving to check the fire in the fireplace and saying he needs to collect more wood.



Lydia’s panic- Lydia asks if Mitchell has finished boarding up the house and asks in a panic when he thinks the next attack will come, fretting that larger birds will be able to get into the house despite the boards. “It’s just a chance we’ll have to take,” Mitchell says. Lydia says they should leave, but Mitchell thinks it’s suicide to go out there while the birds are massing. Lydia keeps pushing Mitchell for more, becoming more and more emotional when he says he doesn’t have a plan. After shouting, “If only your father were here!” Lydia realizes that she’s acting harshly and apologizes. Leading Melanie outside, she and Mitchell watch as a flock of gulls flies inland. “Come on,” Mitchell says. “Let’s get the wood.” The camera zooms in on Melanie’s concerned face before fading out.



Lockdown- Sometime later, the camera finds Lydia seated in the corner by the piano, looking up at the roof with a worried expression on her face. Melanie and Cathy sit on the couch holding each other while Mitchell walks around the house, checking that the boards over the windows are sturdy and that the doors and windows are closed. Cathy asks her brother if she can bring her lovebirds into the living room, and Lydia screams, “No!” When Cathy says that they’re in a cage, Lydia responds harshly, “They’re birds, aren’t they!” After defusing the situation, Mitchell continues his perimeter check. As he exits the kitchen, he looks at the lovebirds in their cage who stare back at him. The four of them begin settling in for the evening, Cathy asking why the birds are attacking. “I wish I could say,” Mitchell responds. Lydia stands and collects their coffee cups, taking them to the kitchen and returning quickly.



Another attack- The camera looks at each of the four people trapped in the house, their eyes staring at the ceiling, listening for the sound of the next bird attack. Suddenly, Cathy is struck by a spell of coughing and vomiting, and Melanie leads her to the bathroom to be sick. When they return, Cathy looks pale and clammy, and Melanie daubs the sweat from her brow with a handkerchief. Without warning, the sparrows start chirping. It's pleasant at first, but it soon becomes a din of squawks and flapping wings. Mitchell rushes across the room and throws more wood on the fire while Melanie cowers on the couch and Lydia and her daughter scamper from corner to corner, trying to find somewhere safe to hide. Suddenly a window pane breaks and Mitchell jumps up to close the shutter that's been broken open by some gulls. They peck his hand and arm bloody as he tries desperately to secure the shutter, eventually succeeding. In the moment of relative calm, Mitchell treats his wound, going into the front of the house to retrieve



Front door- Despite their preparation, the birds are just too numerous. They peck at the front door, the beaks of gulls poking through. Mitchell notices this on his way back into the living room and quickly pushes a piece of furniture in front of it, nailing it into place. The power cuts out, and Mitchell returns to the living room with a flashlight. Despite splinters flying and the birds seeming to be almost through the barricades, they soon fly off to regroup. "They're gone..." Mitchell says in disbelief while the camera dollies back through the house, watching Mitchell, Melanie, and Lydia looking up in fear.



A noise from upstairs- The fire roars, and all but Melanie sleeps during the relative calm. There's a sudden sound of birds squabbling, spurring Melanie to investigate. She takes the flashlight and follows the sound upstairs to what used to be Cathy's bedroom. Opening the door, she sees a hole in the roof and hundreds of birds resting on every surface. As soon as the light passes over them, they strike Melanie with their beaks and bodies while she shrieks and tries to cover her eyes. She tries to open the door and escape, but the mass of birds is just too much. Little by little, her strength fades and she slumps against the door. When all seems lost, Mitchell and Lydia manage to pry open the door and drag Melanie out and back downstairs. While the others try to administer first aid, Melanie's eyes snap open, and she begins striking out at the birds that were attacking her. Mitchell calms her down, but it's obvious the attack has traumatized Melanie deeply. He quickly realizes bandages and antiseptic will only do so much, telling Lydia they have to get to a hospital.



Garage- Easing out of the front door, Mitchell is met by the sound of the wind and a literal sea of birds. They flock calmly around him, hopping out of the way of his footsteps and croaking from the nearby trees. Keeping his cool, Mitchell walks from the house to the nearby garage, ignoring the pecks and bites of several birds who are displeased with his presence. He enters the garage, smiling when he sees the chicken wire in the skylight holding the birds at bay. Before rolling the car outside, he takes a moment to listen to the radio. "The bird attacks have subsided for the time being," a radio announcer says. "Bodega Bay seems to be the center, though there are reports of minor attacks on Sebastopol and a few on Santa Rosa..." The report continues for a moment before Mitchell switches it off and opens the garage door. He then rolls the car out of the garage, careful not to squash any of the gulls gathered in what used to be his driveway.



Not-so-hasty getaway- Back inside the house, Mitchell and Lydia lead Melanie to the door. She seems almost comatose until they open the door and try to lead her out. “No...” she says. “NO!” Lydia and Mitchell manage to quiet her and slowly lead her to the convertible. In the relative safety of the car, Melanie seems to calm down a bit more, and Mitchell makes the same trip to get Cathy. He agrees to bring her lovebirds along since they haven’t hurt anyone. In the back of the car, Melanie lies in Lydia’s arms. She looks up at the older woman, who smiles warmly and holds her closer: Despite everything, their bond has grown. With everyone in the car, Mitchell starts the engine and drives away, this time a little less careful not to run over the birds. Sunlight streams between the clouds, illuminating the sheer mass of birds gathered in Bodega Bay. As the car fades into the distance, we’re left wondering whether or not the birds will gather more force and take their war to the rest of humanity.

