

CLOSE ENOUGH  
"BIRDS OF THE NETHER"  
(Spec Script)

written by

Joel Svendsen

**ACT ONE**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. DUPLEX - SUNRISE - ESTABLISHING**

The sun is starting to come up. An alarm clock **rings**.

**INT. JOSH AND EMILY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Emily wakes up and struggles around a bit before shutting the alarm off.

She **yawns** and looks over at Josh and Candice still fast asleep. Both are spread out and disheveled. Josh is drooling while Candice **snores**.

Emily opens the closet and grabs an old track suit from a box. The box includes various medals and pictures from her high school track and field days. She grabs one of the old framed photos and wipes the dust off of it.

EMILY

Skinny bitch.

**EXT. DUPLEX - MOMENTS LATER**

Emily is dressed for a run. She stretches and plugs her earbuds into her phone.

EMILY

You got this, me. So you haven't jogged in ten years, so what? How hard can it be? It's like riding a bike... without the bike. You'll be fine!

SMASH CUT TO:

**EXT. PARK - MOMENTS LATER**

Emily is beet-red and out of breath as she struggles to run through the park. A look of excruciating pain across her face as she clenches onto her sides.

EMILY

Dammit, I forgot about the side cramps!

Emily falls to the ground. An Elderly Man jogs right past her.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
Need... water...

She sees a water fountain in the distance between a few trees. She crawls towards it.

A couple moments pass and she climbs up the fountain, turns the dial, and starts drinking the water as if she's been in the desert for days.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
So rusty, but so necessary.

She continues drinking and finally gets the strength to stand on her feet again.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
Minor setback. Now it's my time to shine!

Emily gets in position to run again but she's suddenly dive-bombed by a BIRD (small, Red-winged blackbird).

EMILY (CONT'D)  
The hell?!

She shoos the Bird out of her hair. It flies up to one of the trees and **chirps** at Emily.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
Fricken birds! To think you used to be dinosaurs... Now look at you... Pathetic.

The Bird flies over Emily's head. She **yells** and gets down in the fetal position.

Emily looks up to see the Bird perched in another tree now. She picks herself up and walks in the opposite direction of the Bird.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
That's what I thought, bird-brains!

The Bird attacks Emily again. She **screams** and swats the sky.

As she unsuccessfully takes swipes at the Bird the Elderly Man from earlier jogs by again, completely unfazed.

**CUT TO: OPENING CREDITS**

**EXT. DUPLEX - DAY - ESTABLISHING**

Emily stumbles back home, nervously looking up and around for any birds.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Candice is glued to the TV watching Saturday morning cartoons while Alex lazily watches from the couch. Emily walks inside.

CANDICE  
(STILL WATCHING TV) Hi mom!

EMILY  
(TO CANDICE) Hey, sweetie!

ALEX  
Am I sweetie?

EMILY  
I was clearly talking to my daughter. Why are you the one watching her and not any other adult in this house? Where's Josh?

ALEX  
I don't know. He said it was a surprise. Something to do with you taking up jogging again. Pfff, jogging. It's just one big scam.

EMILY  
I told him not to get me anything, that I just wanted to do this the old-fashioned, natural way. I hope he's not getting equipment. Imagine if he brought home a Pelaton or something!

ALEX  
Oh, Emily, I don't think you need to worry about anyone in this house bringing home a Pelaton.

**INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Emily steps into the kitchen. Bridgette grabs a few things out of the fridge and sets them down on the counter.

BRIDGETTE  
Hey, girl. You look like crap. I take it your jog went well.

EMILY

Yeah it went really well actually!  
Why are you looking at me like  
that?! I'm not lying! It was  
perfect!

BRIDGETTE

Okay, you're clearly dealing with a  
whole thing I don't really want to  
get into right now.

EMILY

Making a big breakfast there?

BRIDGETTE

Not just any breakfast...

Alex enters the kitchen.

BRIDGETTE (CONT'D)

Breakfast budget burrito!

ALEX

Breakfast budget burrito!

EMILY

No, no! I know what it is, you  
don't need to explain it to me-

ALEX

Allow me to explain it to you!  
First weekend of every month you  
take all the food that's about to  
go bad-

BRIDGETTE

The food with our names on it.

ALEX

Yes, the food with our names on it.  
You take all of that, tuck it in a  
tortilla, slather it in old hot  
sauce packets lying around, and  
BAM! Breakfast budget burrito! An  
old Dorpenberger favorite!

Alex and Bridgette high-five.

BRIDGETTE

They're bad, but not as bad as they  
sound. Or smell.

ALEX

My breakfast budget burritos are  
the whole reason Bridgette even  
married me!

BRIDGETTE  
And why I divorced him.

ALEX  
And why she divorced me!

**Loud car engine sounds from outside.**

EMILY  
What is that?

CANDICE (O.S.)  
(SHOUTING FROM LIVING ROOM) Mom! I  
think another junkie is parked in  
our driveway!

EMILY  
You know I don't like when you  
teach her new words, Alex.

Alex shrugs his shoulders.

**EXT. DUPLEX - CONTINUOUS**

Josh steps out of an old beater car. Emily, Candice, Alex,  
and Bridgette step out onto the porch.

JOSH  
Check it out! Did I do good or  
what?

BRIDGETTE  
I'd go with 'or what'.

ALEX  
Yeah, what is that?

JOSH  
It's my new hot rod! I figured with  
Emily getting back into jogging  
maybe we can afford a little bit of  
carbon in our footprint.

Some engine exhaust violently cranks out. Everyone but Josh  
covers their noses.

ALEX  
That piece of crap is spitting out  
more than just carbon, my friend.

BRIDGETTE  
And not just a "little bit" either.

EMILY

Don't you think this is something we should have talked about? Can we even afford this.

JOSH

Oh, we can definitely afford this baby. It was only fifty bucks!

Josh slaps the hood and a small piece of it snaps off.

EMILY

Okay, but what about insurance?

JOSH

Already took care of it! No charge on this baby!

EMILY

Really?

JOSH

Yep! Our insurance guy refused to let us insure this baby.

EMILY

Stop calling it that!

JOSH

(TO CANDICE) Want to go on a little joyride? It'll be yours one day.

A tire falls off.

EMILY

Absolutely do not put our daughter in that death trap.

A Hummingbird swoops down by the porch. Emily squeals and drops to the ground. Everyone is put off by her reaction.

BRIDGETTE

See now I want to get into whatever it is you're dealing with.

ALEX

Is Emily scared of birds?!

EMILY

No!

Emily stands back up.

CANDICE

Mom?

EMILY

I'm fine, sweetie! Mom's totally fine! I just thought maybe that was Bloodwing.

JOSH

Bloodwing?

EMILY

Yeah, it's the name I gave to this mean bird from this morning to make it sound intimidating to other people... Does it sound intimidating?

Alex shrugs his shoulders. A small fire erupts on the hood of Josh's new old car.

#### **EXT. NATURE TRAIL - DAY**

A group of Birdwatchers hike through the nature trails. They're looking at various birds through their cameras, binoculars, and phones. They're led by a nerdy TOUR GUIDE who's overly dressed like he's going on a multi-day hike.

TOUR GUIDE

And over to our left towards the back of the pond you'll see a Great Blue Heron! Their diet mostly consists of small fish, but they can be known to eat insects, crabs, rodents, and even other small birds.

The Heron stretches her wings and takes flight. The Birdwatchers take pictures. Emily is in the crowd. Another bird **chirps**, causing her to panic and look all around.

TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)

Did you folks hear that? That's the sound of a Red-winged Blackbird! These little guys can be quite territorial during mating season. Fortunately that's a few months off so no need to worry! Of course, you'd have to be a pathetic little wuss to be scared of one of them!

The Birdwatchers **laugh**. Emily is not amused.

EMILY

I don't know about that. They're pretty aggressive, even in the non-mating months. I think it's perfectly acceptable to be at least slightly apprehensive of them.

TOUR GUIDE

Excuse me? I don't know where you think you get your bird facts from, but how about a show of hands from anyone here who completed the Birder Certification Online program?

Only the Tour Guide raises his hand.

TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)

Oh? Just me? Yeah that's what I thought. Moving on!

EMILY

Wait! I actually am having problems with an extremely aggressive bird. Maybe some of you are familiar with him. I call him Bloodwing.

TOUR GUIDE

Oh, boy. Here we go. Another hysterical bird amateur that thinks they know more than me! Well listen, lady, I know more about birds than anyone in history besides maybe Alexander Wilson!

EMILY

Sorry, who?

The Birdwatchers **gasp**.

TOUR GUIDE

Only the father of American ornithology?

EMILY

Ornitholo-what?

TOUR GUIDE

Oh my God! Ornithology! The study of birds! What are you even doing here?!

EMILY

Trying to learn about birds, but I guess I came to the wrong place.

TOUR GUIDE

You're not welcome here!

The Tour Guide throws a granola bar at Emily.

EMILY

What the hell, dude?!

The Birdwatchers **boo** and throw more snacks at Emily. One Birdwatcher holds another back from attacking Emily.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Are all birdwatchers this messed up?! I thought you were mostly just mildly racist?

Emily starts walking away.

TOUR GUIDE

LEAVE US!!!

The Birdwatchers **squawk** and flap their arms at Emily as she leaves. They're all pretending to be birds now. Emily tries to run away, but quickly goes back to walking.

EMILY

Side-cramp, side-cramp!

CUT TO:

**EXT. DUPLEX - AFTERNOON**

Josh is washing his car while listening to **classic rock**. He's wearing a white T-shirt and very short-shorts. He's acting as if he were in a Whitesnake video. Alex watches with indifference and takes a bite from his budget burrito.

Candice is must more modest as she cleans her Big Wheel.

Emily and Bridgette walk out of the house.

BRIDGETTE

Emily's gonna fight a bird, you want to come watch or would you rather watch...

Bridgette watches Josh get really into waxing his car as he **giggles**.

JOSH  
(LAUGHS) Wax on, wax off!

BRIDGETTE  
... Whatever this is?

Alex gets up.

ALEX  
Yeah, I'm down.

CANDICE  
(TO EMILY) Can I come?

EMILY  
Sorry, Candice, but someone has to watch your father.

CANDICE  
Again? Fine!

EMILY  
Just don't let him buy another "car".

JOSH  
Headed to the park? I could give you a ride!

EMILY  
Nope! Never getting in that thing!

Emily, Alex, and Bridgette leave just as Pearle and Randy step outside.

RANDY  
What is that thing?

JOSH  
My new baby. Pretty cool, huh?

RANDY  
Maybe if you like fire hazards.

PEARLE  
So someone actually bought that hunk of junk?

JOSH  
Ha! Thought you might recognize her. Got her at the police auction this morning.

PEARLE

Why?

JOSH

It was affordable!

PEARLE

This beater's been through the system a number of times, Josh. I don't think you're gonna like it.

JOSH

Like what? Some cool drug deals? Vehicular manslaughter?

PEARLE

Yeah those, plus child abduction, a few hate crimes, and that time in the 80's when we found all those skinheads having an orgy to name just a few.

JOSH

... Oh.

Josh drops the rag he was holding and stares at the ground in disappointment. A tire suddenly catches on fire.

CUT TO:

**EXT. PARK - SUNSET**

Bloodwing is perched on a branch. Emily, Alex, and Bridgette approach the bird.

ALEX

Is this Bloodwing?

EMILY

That's him alright.

Bloodwing pecks at his wing.

BRIDGETTE

Wow. Terrifying.

EMILY

He is! You just haven't seen him in action yet! Alex! Step closer to it!

ALEX  
 Why am I being sacrificed to it? Is  
 that all I am to you?

Emily shrugs her shoulders.

BRIDGETTE  
 Oh my God, just do it.

ALEX  
 Fine!

Alex steps closer to Bloodwing and turns his back on the bird  
 to face the others.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 See! Totally fine!

Suddenly a giant beak comes down and swallows Alex whole.

EMILY  
 Alex!

BRIDGETTE  
 ALEX?!

They look up in the tree and find that Bloodwing is huge now.

BLOODWING  
 (DEEP SCARY VOICE) You didn't  
 really think he could best me, did  
 you Emily?

Bloodwing's **squawk** is so powerful that it lets out a gust of  
 wind, knocking Emily and Bridgette to the ground.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO****FADE IN:****EXT. PARK - SUNSET**

The sky turns red as dark clouds roll in. Emily helps Bridgette back up on her feet.

BLOODWING

Foolish human. You and I have been engaged in a never-ending battle since the dawn of time.

Bloodwing lifts one of his wings to reveal a vision of battles over the years. A black hole absorbing a star. A meteor crashing into a planet. A Tyrannosaurus-Rex fighting a Triceratops. A Dolphin attacking a Shark. A Fish biting a hooked Worm. A Monkey chasing a Frog.

EMILY

What is all this?

BLOODWING

Our past lives, child. You and I have been reincarnated through the ages, always seeking the other out to destroy.

EMILY

How come you remember all these 'past lives' but I don't?

BLOODWING

It seems as if humans are the lowest life-forms in existence and lack the intelligence to recall their past lives.

BRIDGETTE

Makes sense.

EMILY

Yeah that checks out.

BLOODWING

Yet this pathetic form of yours has bested me for decades.

Bloodwing reveals another set of visions.

**MONTAGE - EMILY ACCIDENTALLY KILLING ANIMALS**

A) A newborn Emily is set down in her crib. A Spider crawls in, but Emily grabs it and eats it.

B) Young Emily (the spitting image of Candice) is trying to ride a small bicycle with training wheels. EMILY'S DAD helps her get moving. She's eventually riding by herself and rides over a Worm.

C) A preteen Emily takes a Hermit Crab out of a shoe box. The Hermit Crab angrily pinches her. She flings it off and it hits a wall and dies. Emily is horrified by her reaction.

D) A teenage Emily with braces is driving with some EMO TEEN BOY. They're too busy rocking out to a "NOW That's What I Call It's Not A Phase This Is Who I Am Now" CD to notice a Raccoon that they run over.

E) A slightly older teenage Emily (from the track photo) is running in a track meet. She crosses the finish line first and steps on a Caterpillar.

F) College-aged Emily is walking around campus with college-aged Josh.

BLOODWING (O.S.) (CONT'D)

This one time I almost got you.

A Bumblebee tries to sting Emily, but accidentally gets inhaled by Josh. It stings the inside of his throat. He swells up as Emily dials for 9-1-1.

**END OF MONTAGE.**

EMILY

I remember that! We're still paying for the ambulance ride!

BLOODWING

And now that I've learned dark magic from some wizard I can return the favor!

BRIDGETTE

Ohhh, okay. I was wondering how it could turn all big.

Bloodwing **squawks** another gust of wind. Emily and Bridgette run away. Bloodwing takes flight.

Emily and Bridgette run past a "Giant Tortilla Contest at the Park" banner. They run straight through all the giant tortillas on the ground. The Attendees run away **screaming** at the sight of Bloodwing.

Bridgette slips on one of the tortillas. Emily turns around to find Bloodwing rolling up a **screaming** Bridgette in one of the tortillas.

BLOODWING  
Breakfast Bridgette burrito!

Bridgette **screams** again as Bloodwing swallows the Bridgette burrito whole.

**EXT. CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS**

Emily is still being chased by Bloodwing. Pedestrians **scream** as Bloodwing flies overhead. Cars come to a **screeching** halt.

The Tour Guide and some other Birdwatchers walk out of a building. They're mid-conversation. The Tour Guide recognizes Emily.

TOUR GUIDE  
YOU AGAIN?!

The Tour Guide is suddenly impaled by Bloodwing's beak. Bloodwing opens his beak causing the Tour Guide to split clean in half.

EMILY  
Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God!  
Just gotta keep running!

A realization.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
Oh my God! I'm doing it! I'm  
running! And my sides don't even  
hurt that- wait, no there it is.

She keeps running despite the pain.

**EXT. DUPLEX - MOMENTS LATER**

A bummed-out Josh stares at his junker car. He **sighs**.

EMILY (O.S.)  
JOSH! Start the car!

JOSH  
Huh?

Josh looks in the distance and sees Emily being chased by Bloodwing.

EMILY  
Start the car!

Josh **yelps** and quickly starts the car. The steering wheel sets on fire but he pats it out just as Emily gets in.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
I did it, Josh! I ran!

JOSH  
I love you.

EMILY  
I know.

Emily puts the car in reverse and peels out of the driveway.

JOSH  
(LAUGHS) I have a cool wife.

Emily faces Bloodwing down in the street. She **revs** the engine. Bloodwing **squawks**. Emily slams on the gas. Bloodwing glides towards the car.

Emily jumps out at the last minute. The car and Bloodwing collide, resulting in a **huge explosion**.

The sky turns back to normal. Emily gets up in a daze. Alex and Bridgette are laying awake on the ground. They're covered in bird guts and look horrified.

EMILY  
Hey! You guys are okay!

They pay her no attention. They're clearly traumatized.

EMILY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Alright, you guys need a minute.

Josh walks over to Emily.

JOSH  
Was that the bird?

EMILY  
Yeah. That was the bird.

They observe all the damage around them.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
Maybe I should have just found a different park to jog in.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**END OF SHOW**