

The Flock

Episode One

SCENE ONE

[FX: Swirling winds]

JONNY SWIFT The Diary of Jonny Swift.
In-flight log 240.
I'm still airborne.
Obviously.
And on my latest meanderings,
I've picked up a rumour going round-
Of a plan being hatched,
To start some kind of commotion,
In our favour.
(That is, all us birds.)
An amassing of wings anyway,
In a certain clearing.
A gathering-
Of the Flock.
Sounds pretty cool actually.
I should probably check it out.
Let's set course to-
Hang on a minute-

What's going on down there?

Through that city window?

In that cage?

[FX: Clattering cage]

Go on, go for it!

Parrot isn't it?

[FX: More clattering]

You're nearly out!

[FX: Final clatter]

There you go!

You're out!

Free as a-

Bird.

But wait-

Who's that following them?

[THE FLOCK intro theme]

SCENE TWO

[FX: Pounding heartbeat, wingbeats]

PARROT Got to keep going.
 Come on Parrot, this is it.
 But where- where am I-

[FX: Something metallic being knocked over]

Whoops-

[FX: Sudden barking of dogs in response]

Oh no-

[FX: Growling dogs]

Got to keep going!
Get higher-
I can see green, there-
In the distance-
Are there more of us?
In that clearing?

[FX: Barking of dogs getting louder]

PARROT (CONT'D) Just keep going.
Just-
Keep-
Going.

[FX: Heavy wingbeats]

SCENE THREE

[FX: Chaotic birdsong]

MAGPIE Good turnout tonight.
Someone's done a bit better on the old songbird channels.
It's enough to bring a little tear to this Magpie's eyes.
They're a bit all over the place, I'll admit, but then who isn't these days?
Getting this lot to doing anything coordinated could be a challenge-
But we try.
We must try.
Right. Can't spend too long in prideful reverie. Better get started.
Someone's got to do it.
Not really my turn this time but I have been practising a little-
something.
(clears throat)
(raised voice) This is the gathering of the Flock.

THE FLOCK (*echoing*) The gathering of the Flock.

MAGPIE And through this tendrilled smoke, the voice of the Flock arrives-

[FX: A deep, primal rumbling sound, followed by the strange echo of the void]

MAGPIE (AS VOICE) Hark, those who hear us, those listening in the dark, you whose lives are murky and dank, who fall like leaves from the trees, you puny beings, formed from skin, you wingless creatures, pathetic, ephemeral humans, pay close attention to our words, for we are true immortals, who live in air and never age, our ancient line from before the extinction asteroid, whose thoughts will never wither. For we are rich in knowledge of elevated matters: The origins of birds and beasts and all creation.

What wisdom might you learn from us, if only you would ask? What prophecy might come from those who announce the start of winter, spring, and autumn?

Instead, you cage us. Destroy our lands. Chase us from our quarry. This foolishness that marks your species - seeking dominion over all.

But we are watching you. We bide our time, 'til our advantage can be expressed. We await the right moment.

Hit it.

[SONG: The Birds Are Watching You] SUNG BY: MAGPIE:

We watch you as the crow flies

We watch you from the trees

We watch you from the storm clouds

Watch you from the breeze

Listen to the oracle we are historical
You've woken up this beast
Sing it loud to reach the western shores
And then Caw it all across the east

Birds of this wild world unite a mission migration
We'll change the path of history what's done must be undone
It's true
The birds are watching you

We will raise our wings in flight
When the moment is just right

We watch you from the sun rise
We watch you as you sleep
We watch you as you plunder
We watch you all that you reap
Earths off balance its
You that's the catalyst
Avians must act
Things will get a bit cataclysmic
Talons were made to react

Birds of these sacred skies swarm in synchronisation
No nature nurtured you are warned what's done must be undone

We will raise our wings in flight

When the moment is just right

The birds are watching

The birds are watching

The birds are watching you

[FADE into:]

[FX: The sound of barking dogs, getting louder]

MAGPIE Wait, wait, wait-
Cageborn approach!

THE FLOCK (*echoing*) Cageborn cageborn!

MAGPIE From the city. The dogs are on them. Typical.

THE FLOCK Hate! Hate!

MAGPIE Careful now. Else they come for us!

THE FLOCK (*echoing*) They come for us.

MAGPIE Beware city words.

THE FLOCK Sniff out city lies!

MAGPIE Away! Away!

THE FLOCK (*echoing*) Away!

[FX: Birds scattering]

SCENE FOUR

[FX: The sound of frantic running, pounding heartbeat, dogs, but more distant now]

PARROT You've lost them, nearly lost them.

Slow down.

Slow- down.

And-

And-

Here we are.

(pause)

Oh.

Empty.

Just a pool. And some smoke.

Where did they all-?

No.

It's enough.

For now.

[FX: A splash]

Dirty.

Filthy.

Need to wash myself clean-

Of the city.

How long to wash myself clean?

[FX: More splashing]

BUDGIE Hi there!

PARROT Blimey! You nearly gave me a heart attack.

BUDGIE Very sorry!

PARROT What do you- What do you want?

BUDGIE I just wanted to say *thank you*.

PARROT Thank you? What for?

BUDGIE Back there. You were an *inspiration*.

[FX: Drips of water]

PARROT I'm nothing special, believe me.

BUDGIE I'd never dreamed it was possible. I had no idea. But you got out!

PARROT I'm sorry but I don't know- I don't know what you're talking about.

BUDGIE You escaped!

PARROT Oh no, not me, I didn't do anything-

BUDGIE I was watching the whole thing! Loved it. The way you shook your cage. The way you tipped it over. Then, whoosh, out the window. So cool!

[FX: Shaking feathers dry]

PARROT Maybe you've- Maybe you've got the wrong bird.

BUDGIE I know it was you. I would recognise that beak anywhere. I'm not stupid, OK?

PARROT No.

BUDGIE You should be proud.

(pause)

PARROT I didn't do it for anyone else. I just did it for me.

BUDGIE And then I thought, why not follow your lead?

PARROT I don't want to be an example-

BUDGIE I thought, what's stopping me? Nothing.

[FX: The sound of dogs returns, distant, but growing louder]

PARROT I don't want to be an inspiration.
That sounds- that sounds dangerous.

BUDGIE So I did it! I got out too!
You should have heard all the commotion, the banging and the crashing, and then wow, out in the open air.
What a dream!

PARROT It's not a dream.

BUDGIE What a rush!

PARROT You got out too.

BUDGIE I got out too!

[FX: Dogs getting louder still]

PARROT Did you- did you lose them?

BUDGIE What?

PARROT The ones chasing after you.
Did you lose them?

BUDGIE Um-

PARROT Oh no.

BUDGIE I mean, I *think* I lost them...?

[FX: The dogs sound nearby]

PARROT We need- we need to get out of here.

BUDGIE Right.

PARROT Come on, come on.

[FX: Rustle and flapping of wings]

BUDGIE *(slightly out of breath)* What do you go by? By the way?

PARROT I'm known as Parrot.

BUDGIE That it?

PARROT They- They used to call me Sunshine.

BUDGIE Sunshine.

PARROT But Parrot is fine.

BUDGIE I'm Budgie. Or sometimes I heard them call me Sky.

PARROT Right.

BUDGIE Do you know what that means?

PARROT Sky?

BUDGIE Yes.

PARROT It's that thing all the way up there. Above the trees.

BUDGIE That? Wow. I never even noticed.

PARROT Do you think you can make it?

BUDGIE Hang on, what?

PARROT Up there. To the sky.

BUDGIE I mean, I could try-

PARROT Because we've got to- we've got to *go*.
Ready?

BUDGIE Um-

PARROT Now!

[FX: A crescendo of dogs, beating of wings, then a break into silence]

BUDGIE It's- beautiful.
So beautiful.

[SONG - Escape] SUNG BY: BUDGIE:

It's hard to put into words

What I'm feeling at first

I try to explain but my thoughts are in vain

Of course I'm amazed

All these days locked in a cage

But now there's no edge to my frame

I move my beak but I struggle to speak

I mumble I'm free

This could be anything

We could be anything

My story

Was already written for me

But now I find

I'm an unfinished line

My story

Was already written for me

But now I find

I know how to fly

[FADE into:]

BUDGIE

Phew.

PARROT I know, right?

BUDGIE It's also quite tiring actually.
This flying up in the sky business.

PARROT It does require some- some additional effort, yes.

BUDGIE I'm not sure how long I can keep going, to be honest?

PARROT We'll- we'll get used to it.

BUDGIE I feel like I might be falling?

PARROT Careful!

BUDGIE (*panicked*) I'm falling, aren't I?

PARROT You're descending quite- quite fast, yes. But-

BUDGIE I'm falling!

PARROT Watch out!
Aim for that- Aim for that clearing!

BUDGIE Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!

[FX: Rushing wind, crashing trees, muffled exclamations]

SCENE FIVE

JONNY SWIFT

The Diary of Jonny Swift

In-flight log 241

And so it begins.

A gathered flock.

A parrot and a- budgie was it?

Escaped from city limits.

Pursued doggedly.

Forced to the skies.

And now descending at speed-

Into unfamiliar territory.

What solace will they find?

What answers?

Meanwhile-

I watch from on high, and on the wing.

A lone swift.

Swiftly moving.

No touch of land for me.

Taking a bird's eye view.

Of the birds.

Making a record of proceedings,

For future generations,

Who may discover my testimony,

Blowing in the wind.
The answers, my friend,
That you might be seeking.
With maybe a few directions-
Pointers-
For any potential adaptation of my words-
One day.
Just suggestions of course.
But pretty good suggestions,
If I do say so myself.
And with more to say-
Next time?

[THE FLOCK outro theme]

[CREDITS]

[END]