

Copyrighted Excerpt - Scene from Chapter 6 of *The Secret of Hillcrest House* by
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The Secret of Hillside House

When Jessica walked from the front door to her car, a huge crow slid down the mansion's metal roof. Its claws screeched like chalk on a blackboard. She cringed. Covered in lustrous, black plumage, a lone white feather stuck out from the side of its neck. It cawed and squawked, bobbing its head up and down. The sound got louder and louder as more and more crows arrived. Their cacophony was deafening. One of the incoming birds swooped past Jessica. It flew close enough that she felt its wingtips graze her head. It swept to the railing of the widow's walk – now black with the raucous creatures.

Frightened, she struggled to get her thumb onto the unlock button of her key fob. When she succeeded, she pushed it and dove into her car, locking it behind her with all the windows wound up.

The crow with the white feather flew down from the roof and landed on the hood. She screamed and hit the horn but it did nothing to dissuade the creature. Instead, it walked to the windshield and started tugging at the wiper blades.

Shaking, when Jessica tried to put the key in the ignition, she dropped the ring onto the floor. She reached down to retrieve it without taking her eyes off her feathered nemesis. Still more crows flew in. Besides the birds on the railing, they lined up along the eaves of the house. More perched on the overhead hydro wires.

When she got the car started, Jessica threw it in reverse. She gunned the engine, almost losing control as she backed out of the driveway. Where had they all come from? She had never seen so many crows in one place in her life. There were too many to count. A real-life episode of *The Birds* played out in front of her.

The sooner she got away from here, the happier she would be. After she turned right onto Royal Avenue, the moving van crested the hill in her rear view mirror. She would have to return to the house and those birds.

Jessica pulled her car over and waited for the truck to turn onto Richard Street. When it did, she used someone's driveway to turn around and drove back to Hillcrest House. Peering out the car windows before exiting, she saw that the crows were gone. They had disappeared as fast as they appeared. Creepy.