

Creatures of the Night

By
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CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

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CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

For Katie

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

CAST: 2 Men

FLECKWELL

Founder of the Lycanthrope Action Committee

CONK

Member of the Lycanthrope Action Committee

TIME: Current.

PLACE: A shed.

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ACT 1
SCENE 1

A cramped shed. A table and two mismatched chairs among the clutter. FLECKWELL sits at the table, a little tape recorder in hand. CONK, stands nearby, fiddling with a camera. A rope tied to a lawn chair loops along the floor and out the only window.

FLECKWELL. *(Speaking into recorder.)* Record entry number one. This is Fleckwell here with Conk. The time is...

CONK. *(Scrambles to check watch.)* Sorry.

FLECKWELL. Let's start over. Record entry number one. This Fleckwell here with Conk. The time is—

CONK. One thirty-seven A.M.

FLECKWELL. One thirty-seven A.M. We are reporting here from the observation post. Thanks again to my Aunt Meredith for authorizing use of her back shed—

CONK. Yes—mm hm.

FLECKWELL. No activity yet but—

CONK. But let us note that our instruments are rather limited.

FLECKWELL. No activity yet, as I was saying, although we expect something tonight or tomorrow at the very latest. This is a two-day observation. Conk is unable to attend tomorrow evening due to a previously scheduled family function—

CONK. My grandmother's ninety-first birthday—

FLECKWELL. So I alone will be completing the second leg of this observation—

CONK. As my scheduling conflict is unavoidable—

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FLECKWELL. And I will do my best. As for now all eyes are on the decoy dummy. Again, thanks to my father for one of his target deer dummies—

CONK. And to my grandmother for the pot roast we have utilized for bait.

FLECKWELL. This of course is our first night observation since splitting from Milligan's ghost-hunting...

CONK. Social club?

FLECKWELL. Social club.

CONK. Mm Hmm—

FLECKWELL. And all help is much appreciated. (*Notices Conk staring.*) What? (*Recognizes Conk's gesture.*) And thanks to Conk for bringing sandwiches.

CONK. Equal thanks due to Fleckwell for bringing coffee.

FLECKWELL. Noted. Before we get into the hard data, let's record our new organization's open motto. Written by me, Fleckwell.

CONK. Revisions by Conk.

FLECKWELL. And revisions by Conk. (*Reciting.*) We of the newly formed Lycanthrope Action Committee are dedicated to the true study of crypto-zoological beings including—but not limited to—werewolves and other creatures of the night, and we will strive to serve the committee by focusing on true evidence and field study, and will openly oppose all other organizations—

CONK. Like Milligan's—

FLECKWELL. All other organizations based on unscientific myth and current popularity. All those pledged to the Lycanthrope Action Committee and its terms say 'aye.'

FLECKWELL/CONK. Aye.

FLECKWELL. All those opposed? (*Looks around the shed.*) Very well.

CONK. Since we're on the topic, may I have a word—off the record—about Milligan?

FLECKWELL. I'll allow it. (*Turns off recorder.*)

CONK. So...could Milligan's face get any bigger?

FLECKWELL. Off the record—I know.

CONK. He looks like some kind of puppet.

FLECKWELL. He looks like Pat Sajak.

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CONK. Agreed.

FLECKWELL. Milligan...

CONK. Milligan. Hmmm. Wonder what the group is doing tonight.

FLECKWELL. Oh, that's a tough one.

CONK. The old state psychiatric hospital, possibly?

FLECKWELL. Fumbling around in the asbestos, by any chance? With head-flashlights and microphones—

CONK. Bumping into old radiators and a pack of half-brained college girls screaming in your ears.

FLECKWELL. Sounds just fascinating to me.

CONK. Just fascinating.

FLECKWELL. Milligan and his big face. Off the record.

CONK. Hack. Off the record as well...he does have good equipment though.

FLECKWELL. Oh?

CONK. Sorry. Well sort of, yes. Sorry...

FLECKWELL. No need to be sorry. His equipment could take up a room—it's true.

CONK. But I'm glad we split away from him though—

FLECKWELL. Of course you are.

CONK. Of course I am—

FLECKWELL. I would think it goes without saying—

CONK. It does, of course—

FLECKWELL. Because you're smart and you value the science of Cryptozoology—

CONK. Thank you, and I do—

FLECKWELL. I just said you do.

CONK. Yes, I know.

FLECKWELL. So who are you trying to convince?

CONK. Nothing. Nobody. How about you?

FLECKWELL. What? Nothing. Nobody. What do we seek, Conk?

CONK. You don't have to quiz me, Fleckwell, I said I was—

FLECKWELL. Creatures of the night.

CONK. Creatures of the night, I was just going to say.

FLECKWELL. And what drives them?

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CONK. I don't think you have to quiz me.

FLECKWELL. We of the newly formed Lycanthrope Action Committee—

CONK. Nature. Nature drives them.

FLECKWELL. Go on.

CONK. The forces of nature. There you are. Do you...do you smell something?

FLECKWELL. No. Nothing.

CONK. It's like...

FLECKWELL. Forces of nature, you said. Forces of nature. Such as?

CONK. Well, territory, offspring, seasons—

FLECKWELL. Why?

CONK. Because creatures of the night are—above all else—wild animals.

FLECKWELL. Just like?

CONK. Just like us.

FLECKWELL. Outstanding.

CONK. Thank you.

FLECKWELL. Don't mention it.

CONK. So...off the record, can we just take a moment to discuss Milligan's worst trait?

FLECKWELL. Apart from his big face—off the record?

CONK. Indeed—apart from his face.

FLECKWELL. I'll allow it.

CONK. The man doesn't ask questions.

FLECKWELL. You said it, Conk.

CONK. Sorry to say the dumb ones from high school—well they grow up.

FLECKWELL. You don't say.

CONK. Into grown-up dummies. Fleckwell, did you know that vampires actually suck blood?

FLECKWELL. Well of course vampires suck blood. You've watched TV, haven't you?

CONK. TV—exactly. Now...would I be willing to weigh the theory that vampires might use their overgrown fangs to deliver a shot of paralyzing bacteria into their victims?

FLECKWELL. Yes. Yes.

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CONK. Yes, I would. But sucking blood? People are stupid.

FLECKWELL. Don't hate them. Don't even hate Milligan.

CONK. Too late.

FLECKWELL. You have to consider the common-man's ignorant fear—

CONK. Oh, I know it all too well. The dumb ones from high school—

FLECKWELL. An outdated belief that there is such a thing as a soul.

CONK. Medieval.

FLECKWELL. That sucking our blood is sucking our souls out through our necks—

CONK. Malarkey.

FLECKWELL. It's a religious society—even in these circles.

CONK. Consider us out of the circle, good sir.

FLECKWELL. Considered. And we're off the record here?

CONK. Certainly.

FLECKWELL. Then let's not forget Milligan's claims on the motives of werewolves.

CONK. I couldn't forget that claptrap if you paid me.

FLECKWELL. A beast whose body is cursed.

CONK. Possibly because his body rejects Christ.

FLECKWELL. And he—or she—is driven to attack humans in an attempt to prolong the curse by biting and/or scratching.

CONK. As if that can pass anything on but an infection.

FLECKWELL. You don't have to tell me, sir.

CONK. The other day a bee stung me. I ask the court: have I transformed into a bee?

FLECKWELL. Point made—but I'll have you know I actually was stung by a bee the other day.

CONK. No.

FLECKWELL. Yep.

CONK. Sorry to hear it.

FLECKWELL. At any rate...science doesn't lie.

CONK. Right on. Vampires and Werewolves alike crave—

FLECKWELL. It all comes down to hunger—that's why animals hunt.

CONK. They need meat.

FLECKWELL. Meat.

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CONK. *(Softly.)* Meat from people sometimes...

FLECKWELL. Come again?

CONK. Nothing.

FLECKWELL. You said something.

CONK. Creatures of the night. Sometimes...they eat people.

FLECKWELL. Hmm.

CONK. Homeless people disappear all the time—this is true.

FLECKWELL. Hmm.

CONK. No one can deny the disappearance of homeless people.

FLECKWELL. *(Picks up recorder.)* We're back on the record now. Conk has a theory.

CONK. *(As if reciting procedure.)* Yes, yes. Although, although Fleckwell and I have not found significant evidence in our research...okay?

FLECKWELL. Yes.

CONK. I believe, however, that the theory has legs.

FLECKWELL. Mm hmm...

CONK. Why don't we just forget it.

FLECKWELL. Mm-hm. Let's get back on task. Record entry number two. This is Fleckwell with Conk here at the observation post. Conk, check on the decoy dummy if you please.

CONK. *(Checks through the window.)* Deer dummy is still in place—with pot roast. Plenty of slack in the rope.

FLECKWELL. Fine. Go over the numbers if you please.

CONK. Let us note that these findings are current through this past Monday.

FLECKWELL. Go ahead, please.

CONK. Right. Cats missing or unaccounted for: nine. Dogs missing or unaccounted for: one. Ferrets missing or unaccounted for: three.

FLECKWELL. Three ferrets...

CONK. Miss Lambert brought them out to the back stoop, went inside for two minutes, came back...not a trace.

FLECKWELL. Go on.

CONK. Goats missing or unaccounted for: two, although Mr. Renaldo does admit to accidentally leaving the pen door unlatched. And finally—

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and this is a big one—a female llama was confirmed killed, at the llama farm.

FLECKWELL. A llama. Large prey.

CONK. Only teeth and hooves and a tail were found.

FLECKWELL. (*Taking up the recorder.*) Fleckwell here. This thing—

CONK. This thing. These things?

FLECKWELL. These things? Eat bones.

CONK. They eat bones.

FLECKWELL. So. What eats bone?

CONK. Umm...hyenas? Wild hogs? Any footprints?

FLECKWELL. Hard to know without access to the attack site.

CONK. I'm working on it. I went to investigate but the llama-farm guy with the weird nose told me to beat it.

FLECKWELL. That guy's a jerk.

CONK. Agreed.

FLECKWELL. Still, it's important

CONK. I said I'm working on it...think Milligan ever once went out to check for footprints?

FLECKWELL. While still finding time to turn his apartment into a podcast studio? Doubtful. That was off the record.

CONK. Of course. Anyway, so it's not out of the question to assume we're dealing with pack-hunting creatures.

FLECKWELL. Not out of the question, Conk.

CONK. Good.

FLECKWELL. But footprints. Photographs are wonderful, but footprints—

CONK. Wow. Yes, absolutely—

FLECKWELL. We're talking about nature recorded in motion, Conk.

CONK. Wow. Yes. Did you just make that up?

FLECKWELL. Yes. In fact, I'm considering adding it to our open motto.

CONK. Wow.... good.

FLECKWELL. Good indeed.

CONK. I was also thinking of something we could add to the motto—

FLECKWELL. (*Speaking into recorder.*) This is Fleckwell here, with Conk. Conk—go on and check the deer dummy.

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CONK. Yeah, I just did though—

FLECKWELL. The dummy.

CONK. I'd like to record a theory—

FLECKWELL. The dummy, please, Conk.

CONK. (*Not looking.*) No movement...rope still has plenty of slack.

FLECKWELL. (*Recording.*) No movement yet but soon, hopefully.

We'll find out over the next two days...well, I should say I'll find out over the next two days.

CONK. I'm sorry?

FLECKWELL. No...I mean just because you won't be here.

CONK. I'm here right now.

FLECKWELL. Certainly, just not for the whole time. So if the thing strikes tomorrow...

CONK. Then I'll miss it—yes, you've mentioned it before, on the record.

FLECKWELL. Right so I'll find out...I mean if you aren't here.

CONK. Right...anyway.

FLECKWELL. Anyway. Let's discuss size theories.

CONK. Good. The figures don't lie.

FLECKWELL. They don't. I mean, you could tell me that coyotes picking off ferrets in the night, maybe.

CONK. But llamas?

FLECKWELL. We've got something special here.

CONK. You said it...I hope the deer dummy looks believable enough.

FLECKWELL. Why wouldn't it?

CONK. We're not sure if we are dealing with a creature of the night that hunts by sight—

FLECKWELL. Well—

CONK. Like a human—

FLECKWELL. Or hunts by smell and sound, so assumptions are basically useless—

CONK. And that's why I'm not making any assumptions—

FLECKWELL. I hope the pot roast smells believable enough.

CONK. I don't see how it couldn't.

FLECKWELL. I know. Just saying...

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CONK. It'd be nice if we had the money for one of those padded bite-suits and then we could walk around—

FLECKWELL. Assuming this thing is attracted to human prey—

CONK. And be like a moving target instead of—

FLECKWELL. Wild animal, Conk.

CONK. Huh?

FLECKWELL. Good science doesn't always require money.

CONK. I know—

FLECKWELL. Milligan would have you believe—

CONK. I didn't say anything about Milligan—

FLECKWELL. But you don't need a \$10,000 heat-sensing lens to find a wild animal.

CONK. I couldn't agree more.

FLECKWELL. Just give it what it's looking for and then wait.

CONK. Yeah.

FLECKWELL. Catch a tiger by its toe. Right?

CONK. Thanks again to my grandmother for donating the pot roast...I wish you wouldn't quiz me.

FLECKWELL. I'll say it again. We're not finding monsters. We're finding nature.

CONK. I know.

FLECKWELL. I think sometimes you forget.

CONK. *(After a moment.)* May I offer a theory? On the record?

FLECKWELL. I'll allow it.

CONK. Juvenile.

FLECKWELL. Juvenile...I'm listening.

CONK. Supposing we're dealing with half man/half wolf—

FLECKWELL. Supposing.

CONK. Offspring are nurtured until to a certain point and then kicked out of the pack.

FLECKWELL. You suggest this thing isn't full grown but—

CONK. But old enough to leave the family and fight its way into another pack...

FLECKWELL. Hmm. Wouldn't call it a strong theory—

CONK. A young, lone wolf. Man. Man-wolf-juvenile—

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FLECKWELL. But the theory has modest potential—

CONK. Creature on its own.

FLECKWELL. So it hunts cats, dogs—

CONK. Ferrets. It grows an inch or two—

FLECKWELL. I hit my growth spurt at fourteen—

CONK. Fifteen for me.

FLECKWELL. Grows a couple inches, gains some muscle mass and now it can take down a llama.

CONK. Another inch. Some more muscle...

FLECKWELL. It can take down a man. I wouldn't call it a strong theory—

CONK. Yes, you said that before....what do I smell?

FLECKWELL. No idea.

CONK. It's like...

FLECKWELL. Conk, I'll take your theory into consideration.

CONK. Good. Thanks.

FLECKWELL. Of course it will be hard to tell without a reliable footprint or two.

CONK. Agreed. Wonder what Milligan's theory would be.

FLECKWELL. Hmm. Let's see. This creature is a seventeenth-century Scottish lord?

CONK. Bitten by a man/wolf one night?

FLECKWELL. While crying by his late wife's grave.

CONK. She had been murdered.

FLECKWELL. Of course. So he was attacked—

CONK. Bitten—

FLECKWELL. And cursed.

CONK. Lived as long as he could in secrecy. Hunting at night for blind beggars and highwaymen.

FLECKWELL. But the villagers got wind of his secret.

CONK. Torched his estate.

FLECKWELL. And he had to escape. Came over on the Mayflower.

CONK. Yep.

FLECKWELL. Yep. *(After a moment.)* Glad you're here, Conk.

CONK. Thanks.

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FLECKWELL. Are you glad to be here?

CONK. Very. I think we're on the edge of something, Fleckwell.

FLECKWELL. Yeah, just because...

CONK. What?

FLECKWELL. Just didn't know if you really wanted to join up or if you were just doing it...y'know, as a favor.

CONK. I'm going to check the dummy.

FLECKWELL. Yes, good. *(Recording.)* This is Fleckwell from the observation post. Conk is preparing to check the decoy dummy. And?

CONK. Nothing. Dummy is untouched. Rope is slack.

FLECKWELL. Over and out for now. *(Fleckwell sets the recorder down without turning it off. Fleckwell stands and stretches. A moment passes.)*
So...ninety-one.

CONK. Sorry?

FLECKWELL. Your grandmother. Turning ninety-one.

CONK. Oh. Yep.

FLECKWELL. Ninety-one. It's really an achievement.

CONK. Isn't it?

FLECKWELL. I hope I live to see it.

CONK. Yeah.

FLECKWELL. She must be pretty excited.

CONK. Well...sure.

FLECKWELL. How excited?

CONK. Well...I don't know.

FLECKWELL. No?

CONK. Well...she doesn't like people to fuss over things and parties so she's pretending to be annoyed with all the preparations and stuff.

FLECKWELL. But it's ninety-one! It has to be big, right?

CONK. Well...that's what *we* all said.

FLECKWELL. What's planned?

CONK. Oh, I dunno.

FLECKWELL. Come on.

CONK. I mean she's old so it has to be low key.

FLECKWELL. When I turn ninety-one, I want to get wheeled out of a plane and parachute like over like the Grand Canyon or something.

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CONK. Yeah but—

FLECKWELL. So you're just going to sit there staring at each other?

CONK. No...well, we are going to have dinner.

FLECKWELL. What ya having?

CONK. Um...roast and bean casserole...crescent rolls.

FLECKWELL. And?

CONK. My...my younger cousin plays oboe and she really wants to...showcase a song she's been working on.

FLECKWELL. That sounds nice.

CONK. I think so.

FLECKWELL. *(After a moment.)* Hey, Daniel?

CONK. Yeah?

FLECKWELL. Remember a couple days ago when I went to get the camouflage scarves for tonight?

CONK. Yeah?

FLECKWELL. I was driving home. Took a shortcut through your grandmother's neighborhood and—

CONK. You took a shortcut—

FLECKWELL. And there she was...filling the bird feeder.

CONK. She...loves her bird feeder...

FLECKWELL. Yeah there she was, so I had to say hello...

CONK. I don't see how going out to get camouflage—

FLECKWELL. We got to talking.

CONK. She gets confused sometimes—

FLECKWELL. Imagine my surprise when I wished her a happy birthday....and she said it wouldn't be for another six months.

CONK. *(After a moment.)* I'd rather you didn't bother my grandmother.

FLECKWELL. Another six months.

CONK. She gets confused sometimes.

FLECKWELL. You're a liar, Daniel.

CONK. And I don't like the tone I'm receiving—

FLECKWELL. A liar.

CONK. You manipulated an old woman, behind my back—

FLECKWELL. And so I've asked myself—the last few days—what else has he lied about? I repeat: lied about?

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CONK. I'm not going to venture into this kind of discussion.

FLECKWELL. And I began to wonder just what in our partnership is real. My goodness, do we even have a partnership?

CONK. Of course we do. Stop this.

FLECKWELL. I mean what else could he have lied about?

CONK. I shouldn't have to manufacture excuses for—

FLECKWELL. What is it, Daniel? What is more important than, than...this?

CONK. It's not more important, it's just—

FLECKWELL. Answer me.

CONK. Well...Milligan...

FLECKWELL. Milligan...

CONK. He...he is going to take the team to investigate the...

FLECKWELL. Just say it.

CONK. The covered bridge...where the girl was murdered, y'know in—

FLECKWELL. I know the ghost story, Daniel.

CONK. So...

FLECKWELL. I see.

CONK. He asked me if I would come along. He said I'm a good photographer so...

FLECKWELL. I see. And the rest of the group is going too.

CONK. Yes.

FLECKWELL. It all sounds very exciting. Will you be roasting marshmallows?

CONK. Fleckwell—

FLECKWELL. Let's just leave it—I hope your ghost hunting trip is a success.

CONK. Fleckwell—

FLECKWELL. A massive betrayal, Daniel. And now it's officially on tape.

CONK. You're recording this?

FLECKWELL. I'd like to use it as a reminder—

CONK. Oh don't be ridiculous!

FLECKWELL. A reminder of your true dedication. You'll excuse me if I end this discussion and get back to work.

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CONK. Please don't question my dedication.

FLECKWELL. Shouldn't you be meeting Milligan and the others at the mall or something?

CONK. Don't question my dedication—

FLECKWELL. You'll only find science here, sir—

CONK. Don't question my dedication—I made fucking SANDWICHES, Jonathan!

FLECKWELL. *(After a moment.)* Why, Daniel?

CONK. I don't know.

FLECKWELL. Mmm.

CONK. Milligan's research equipment is...exceptional.

FLECKWELL. Exceptionally phony.

CONK. Exceptional. You can't deny it.

FLECKWELL. You're just like Milligan, you know. It's always the theatrics with you. I imagine you've been scribbling notes for a cheesy web series all along.

CONK. Please.

FLECKWELL. If my words are harsh it's because they're born of pain.

CONK. I'm sorry.

FLECKWELL. It's fine.

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