

THE LEWTON BUS

A DARK CONSPIRACY SCENARIO BY LEE WILLIAMS

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THE LEWTON BUS IS A DARKCONSPIRACY.THERPG.INFO EXCLUSIVE SCENARIO. PLEASE VISIT OUR SITE FOR MORE DARK CONSPIRACY GAMING MATERIAL.

I NEVER WAS MUCH OF A FLYER MYSELF,
PREFERRING TO DRIVE DESPITE THE CRAPPY
STATE OF THE HIGHWAYS AND THE HIGHER RISK
FACTOR. AT LEAST IF YOU'RE ON THE GROUND, YOU
CAN TRY TO RUN AWAY, RIGHT?

THIS TIME WE HAD TO GET THERE SOON-AS, SO IT
HAD TO BE A PLANE RIDE. WHEN THE PILOT
ANNOUNCED WE HAD TO MAKE AN UNEXPECTED
NIGHT-TIME STOPOVER DUE TO "UNFORESEEN
ISSUES", I WAS GLAD TO GET MY FEET BACK ON THE
SWEET EARTH FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
LOOKING BACK, MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO
DAMN HAPPY ABOUT THAT...

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

This adventure is designed to be slotted into an existing campaign, as the player-characters will need to have at least a little understanding of the Dark threat to our world. While taking a break during a long journey, they happen across Darkling activity that could lay waste to the population of a small town neighbouring an industrial area.

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

The player-characters are on route to a far-off destination, too far to drive under normal circumstances (or whatever passes for normal in Dark Conspiracy). They have standard-class tickets for a trans-continental night flight across North America, as these are the only seats available to their destination. The journey will start and continue normally, with the other passengers and the crew going about their business. Eventually, most of the passengers should doze off.

Around halfway through the flight, the plane will make a short series of sudden moves, awakening some of the passengers. If any of the player-characters happen to be stretching their legs at this time have them make a Difficult: Agility test. If failed, they will trip and receive one point of damage to a leg. One of the cabin crew will go forward to the cockpit with a standard medkit, and return to her station in the galley a few seconds later looking somewhat preoccupied.

Shortly afterwards, the pilot makes the following announcement:

"Ladies and gentlemen, do not be alarmed. We have encountered some turbulence, which has given rise to unforeseen operational issues. To ensure your continued safety, we are putting down at the closest airport to allow inspection of the aircraft. You will be placed in local accommodation until the morning, when the flight should resume as normal. We apologise for any inconvenience this delay might cause."

The plane then begins its descent, and the seatbelt signs turn on. The crew will not answer any questions directly, but busy themselves ensuring the passengers are comfortable and secure as the pilot makes his approach to an unknown airport in the pitch darkness. (Play this up if

you wish, and make it seem like disaster is clearly about to strike the plane).

After a slightly bumpy descent, the plane touches down with hardly a bounce and taxis slowly to a stop. As the passengers begin to unbuckle seatbelts and collect their hand luggage, a glance through a window shows an open stretch of tarmac with a single-storey terminal building that looks to be made of prefabricated concrete slabs, lit by jury-rigged spotlights connected up to a diesel generator. It is a fairly safe bet that this airstrip doesn't have to deal with many night flights. A faded sign on the building's roof bears the name "LEWTON REFINERY".

The passengers are all directed to the exits towards the rear of the aircraft. As the player-characters walk down the steps, the reason becomes clear: the co-pilot is being lifted down from the forward exit on a stretcher. A military-surplus Humvee ambulance waits nearby to take him to hospital. If anyone inspects the plane, a **Difficult: Observation** check reveals no obvious damage.

The plane's crew gather the passengers together in the terminal building, and the captain explains that as soon as a replacement co-pilot can be found the journey will resume. This will not be until morning however. For the remainder of the night, the passengers are to be given accommodation at a small hotel just on the edge of the local town. If questioned about the co-pilot, the captain will say that he was out of his seat when the plane hit turbulence and hurt himself as he fell. Nothing serious, but regulations state there must be two pilots fit for duty.

A bus pulls up at the side of the terminal as the captain is speaking, and with the help of a bored security guard the passengers and their luggage are installed for the short journey to the hotel.

WELCOME TO LEWTON

The airfield serves the Lewton Refinery, which is located just beyond the Chiwaukee metroplex. The only hotel in the area is the optimistically-named Imperial House. The town, the airstrip and the hotel were all built during the 1940s and 1950s to serve the processing plant, which was bought out some years ago by GloboChem. The Imperial House was originally a "palace of entertainment" for thirsty workers, seeking to blow off steam and enjoy some "companionship" on payday weekends.

ABDUCTION!

The driver is the victim of an abduction attempt by three Morlocks (see the *Friends and Neighbors* section below for details). Make a **Difficult: Agility** check for each Morlock, and if any of them succeed the driver is yanked out and carted off down the tunnel. If they are unsuccessful, have them grab a random item of equipment from the player-characters luggage, which is now strewn across the tunnel floor after the crash, and make off into the darkness. The Morlocks are there and gone too quickly for the player-characters to react usefully.

The aging Roadrunner bus wheezes and jolts its way along the access road from the airfield down to the single-lane highway, turning right towards the hotel. The other passengers chat amongst themselves as the bus traverses the dark and deserted landscape. Occasionally, the rusting hulks of abandoned machinery can be glimpsed in the weeds at the roadside. Recycling does not seem to have been a priority for the refinery

After a couple of miles, the bus brakes hard and suddenly lurches sideways with a metallic screech followed by a horrendous crash, and comes to rest on its left side. The other passengers start to scream and cry from shock, or relief, when the bus lurches once again and then drops what feels like a short distance before settling with another huge crash. Anyone looking upwards through the windows will see walls of earth with a rectangle of seemingly distant black sky at the top. The bus is clearly at the bottom of some sort of pitfall or cave-in below the road surface. An **Average: Observation** check will put the depth at about 12 to 15 metres. The loose soil makes climbing out without the use of climbing gear difficult, but not necessarily impossible.

While the player-characters and other passengers are deciding what to do next, the stunned but otherwise uninjured bus driver begins kicking out the remnants of the windshield to allow escape. Just as the rubber seal finally gives way, the driver screams. Strange mutterings and shrieks shatter the silence as gnarled, ape-like hands snatch at his ankles and try to carry him off.

DECISIONS

Now is the time for decision. Realistic options for the PCs are as follows:

- Get all the passengers off the bus and help them to escape the pit, and then escort them the remaining distance to the hotel or back to the airstrip.
- Go after the Morlocks. A subterranean excursion through unknown dark tunnels dug through relatively loose ground will not appeal to the other passengers at all.
- Attempt to secure the bus and wait until daybreak and the possibility of eventual rescue.
- Help the passengers out of the pit, point them towards Lewton, then return to the tunnels and follow the Morlocks.

Whichever option is decided upon, there will be no time to implement it. A couple of minutes after the decision, a slight vibration is felt through the earth. This continues for a few seconds, getting louder, until the wall of the tunnel bursts open directly next to the bus and a horrendous bloated form is glimpsed. Its gaping, pincer-maw looms through the smashed window and scoops up one of the passengers. Fortunately, the creature's pale and lumpen body is too large to reach far enough inside the wreck to grab anyone else, and it retreats back into the earth. The shouts of the helpless victim are heard for several seconds afterwards, fading off into the distance before silence descends. If any damage is done to the creature with small arms or melee weapons, it will spit a vile but harmless glob of goo at its attackers before retreating.

This is the first view that the player-characters will have of the Insectoid ET grub that has been adopted by the Morlock clan. Details of this are given in the *Friends & Neighbours* section below along with stats for the Grub.

DOWN THE TUBES

The PCs should now be concerned about ensuring the safety of the remaining passengers. Most of the players will want to leave the hole at this point. Of course some will want to follow the Insectoid ET (whether they know what it is or not) immediately. Depending on what course of action the PCs take, will determine what occurs next.

If they decide to rescue the remaining passengers, Climbing tests will be necessary to escape the hole the bus has fallen into. By this time the other passengers should be in a panic and demanding someone help them out and away to safety all the while blaming anyone taking a leadership role, and the airlines and the weather while making unreasonable demands. While a few might be advocating following and saving the taken victims or victims, they will point to any firearms the PCs brandish as proof they should go and rescue the poor victims. The PCs have one choice to make at this time - what to do. Either escape the hole, sit and wait for more help, go and attempt a rescue. Each path will lead to particular circumstances happening so allow them to make up their mind, but remind the players of the darkness, the weather, emphasize the conditions, etc.

1. If they chose to escape the hole and rescue the remaining passengers
2. If they chose to sit and wait till daylight or until help arrives
3. If they chose to follow the Morlocks and Insectoid on their own

Each choice will have different consequences, as detailed below.

1) If they chose to escape the hole and rescue the remaining passengers

At this time **Average:Climb** rolls will need to be made for each PC attempting the ascent. Once at the top they can attempt to assist the other passengers up to the street and then decide what to do at that point, per the previous realistic options section. At that point it will take a few hours to negotiate the streets until the bedraggled PCs and NPCs reach the shelter of the Imperial Palace. Once there the two missing people will be listed as dead in the accident and the hotel will apologize and the rest of the night passes in calm and peace. Eventually several medical personnel will arrive and check for injuries, tend to any bruises or scrapes that occurred and distribute sleeping aids to all that desire them.

Otherwise about mid-day, several smaller busses will arrive to shuttle the survivors back to the airport to be flown on to their destination. If questioned the Air Line will deny the existence of the missing passengers, travel manifests will have been altered

since the rescue and no records will exist of the dead or missing people. Once in the air the rest of the trip passes in stunned silence until the plane lands and the PCs can continue with their lives.

2) If they chose to sit and wait till daylight or until help arrives

At this point they can hunker down and wait out the hours until daylight. During the night a group of at least three Morlocks will make at least one kidnapping attempt. **Difficult Observation** checks will be needed to spot the attempts. If combat occurs and a gunfight happens no further attacks by Morlocks will take place until about an hour before dawn. After gathering forces they will make one final assault. The Morlocks will outnumber the total number of passengers & PCs by about 5 or 6 striving to overwhelm the defenders and then make off with the passengers for their dining arrangements in later days. This should be a massive battle, with 20 to 25% of the passengers disappearing no matter what precautions are taken by PCs. Once the Morlocks take about 10 % casualties or bright lights or flares are brought into play, they will retreat with what victims they were able to get. No matter how long or short that takes, a good number of the passengers will be gone with no trace.

Once daylight comes a search party will arrive from the airport and equipped with ropes will pull all the passengers to safety and then several industrial sized tow-trucks will bodily haul the bus to safety. At this time alternate transportation will take all the survivors to the hotel to be checked out by several medical personnel. Anyone that attempts to describe the attacks will be quietly moved off to the side and sequestered pending psychological examination and possible incarceration. This is not a wise choice to make, and one which could land the PCs into issues with the local government as well as an extended stay in a poorly run psychiatric care facility.

Otherwise about mid-day, several smaller busses will arrive to shuttle the survivors back to the airport to be flown on to their destination. If questioned the Air Line will deny the existence of the missing passengers, travel manifests will have been altered since the rescue and no records will exist of the dead

or missing people. Once in the air the rest of the trip passes in stunned silence until the plane lands and the other portion of the adventure can continue.

3) If they chose to follow the Morlocks and Insectoid on their own

There are two choices to follow, the Morlock Tunnel or the Grub Tunnel. Either option leads back to the same tunnel complex, where the Morlocks and the Grub are working. This is a distance of about three miles, give or take, leading directly under the old refinery. See the map below for a rough guide to the tunnel complex. Consisting of the lower levels of the refinery along with glistening acid bored smooth tunnels (Made by the Grub) intermixed with rough reinforced tunnels cut out of the dirt for several levels below the basement sections. Overall it covers about 5 levels descending below ground and hidden from sight. This should be a nightmarish location filled with human and Morlock bones cracked for marrow and chewed on along with altered machinery grafted with Insectoid ET devices to control them. All along the tunnels are channels filled with toxic runoff, which is mutating all that are down there. At this point stealth is paramount as the PCs could be easily overrun if discovered.

Whichever option is decided upon, if the Players wind up in the tunnels, the Morlocks will lead them into an ambush. Working their way deeper into the darkness, the Players will feel a slight vibration under their feet for a few seconds that suddenly gets louder, until the wall of the tunnel bursts open directly next to the rear of the group and a horrendous bloated form is once again glimpsed. Its gaping, pincer maw attempts to scoop up the closest Player-Character (**Difficult Dexterity** to escape). Fortunately, the creatures' pale and lumpen body is too inflexible in the confined space to reach anyone else, so it retreats back into the earth.

If the Grub is successful, the shouts of the helpless victim are heard for several seconds afterwards, fading off into the distance before silence descends. If any damage is done to the creature with small arms or melee weapons, it will spit a vile but harmless glob of goo at its attackers before retreating.

FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

Noted below are the statistics for Darklings encountered in this scenario.

MUTATED INSECTOID ET GRUB

Appear: 1 Initiative: 3 Agility: 3

Attack: 70% Strength: 50 Skill/Damage: 8/10/100

Move: 10/50 Constitution: 50 Hits: 300/600

This hideous creature is about 10 meters long, with a thick blubbery skin covering the whole body save the head. The skin gives an Armor Value of 1. Its chitinous mandibles are permanently moving, and will shred any living thing into small enough chunks to be readily digested. The Grub can tunnel through normal soil at some speed, though reinforced concrete will slow it down to a crawl.

This particular Grub has been transformed by exposure to the toxic waste dump, and will not mature into an adult Insectoid ET. Instead, it will remain in its savage immature state and continue to devour any and all live creatures that it encounters to feed its accelerated growth rate, unless it is killed. Its huge Hit Capacity is due to its sheer size, and it has a limited ability to feel pain.

Should the Player-characters and other passengers make their escape without finishing off the Grub, it will hunt down and devour any remaining Morlocks.

MORLOCKS

Strength: 5 Education: 3 Move: 3/8/12/20

Constitution: 3 Charisma: 4 Skill/Damage: 5/10/6

Agility: 5 Empathy: 6 Hits: 12/24

Intelligence: 7 Initiative: 3 # Appear: 406

Special: Blind, but excellent senses of smell and hearing.

From the Dark Conspiracy 1st Edition rulebook

In *The Time Machine*, H. G. Wells wrote of a far future in which the descendants of humanity had split into two separate races. One lived an idyllic, carefree life on the Earth's surface. The other race hid underground and cared for the first - because they used the surface dwellers as cattle. Wells called that cannibalistic, subterranean race the Morlocks. But he wasn't just writing fiction; the Morlocks actually exist. They are short, pallid humanoids with incredibly developed senses of hearing and smell. Their eyes have completely atrophied, however, leaving nothing but smooth brow between their snow-white hair and their wide, quivering noses. Their jawbones are much smaller than are humans', which makes their pale, fleshy

lips seem even more oversized, and their teeth are small and very pointed. Morlocks are primarily meat eaters, their diet consisting mainly of worms, grubs, and raw cave fish. On the rare occasions when they can find warm meat, such as moles, mice, or bats, they go into a frenzy of ecstasy. But more than anything else, they prefer raw human flesh, torn with their teeth from a living victim.

The problem for the Morlocks has been that humans are bigger and more technologically advanced than they are. Also, humans

tend to stay above ground, where their sight gives them a long-range advantage over the blind Morlocks. Below ground, however, it is a much different story. In the Stygian darkness of subterranean caves, humans panic without their sight advantage, and the Morlocks can attack them en-masse. It is a terrifying thing to be lost in the darkness and hear the patter of scores of bare feet approaching.

With the worldwide chaos that the Dark Minions have brought to Earth, humans have become somewhat more vulnerable to Morlock attacks. There have been many recent news stories of entire populations of isolated villages disappearing overnight. The only clues as to their



whereabouts are fresh tunnels dug into basements and cellars. Few people have been brave enough to explore those tunnels afterward, and even fewer of those who were have ever returned. Particularly frightening is the fact that firearms and other equipment have disappeared into those holes. All indications are that the Morlocks are completely capable of learning to use human technology.