

One-Hour Watch Scenario

Explain: The PCs are a special patrol of the Ankh-Morpork City Watch who get assigned to deal with weird or slightly tricky cases or just used to fill gaps; they're one notch more competent than the run of watchmen (in game terms, 100 vs. 75 character points), and get a couple of dollars extra each month accordingly.

Sort out character assignments (the group may need someone to take Clovis to be in charge) and give a very quick run-through of what the character sheets mean; note especially Shutter's minor magical abilities.

Background

An alchemist named **Dr Gladforge Thurible** has been working on potions that promote animal growth, with mixed success. His concoctions work quite well – on smaller animals, very temporarily, and at the cost of making them tetchy and unpredictable. His experiments weren't helped by the actions of his assistant, **Lunster Dewbury**, who kept extracting samples of the potion and substituting coloured water. Lunster, who doubles as an unsuccessful part-time unlicensed burglar, had seen that the potion worked and saw an opportunity here, if he purloined a few vials of the potion. He set out to use it to help his other job, by creating giant rats that could, say, make holes in walls and then create distractions while he snaffled some valuables.

He's focused this little project on **Dronermongery House**, a block of serviced bachelor apartments let to well-off single tenants. Dronermongery House faces onto **Kings Way**, in **Ankh**, but is conveniently also accessible from an alleyway off **Kedger Pool Circus**, at its back, and even when the fire exits there are locked, there are garbage chute hatches. Lunster inveigled some lumps of potion-enhanced bait in there in the middle of the night, stood back, and then, in the middle of the next night, when the temporarily-expanded rats had finished expanding some rat-holes to human-useful sizes, he slipped in, purloined some valuables, and then left.

Well, that was the plan, and it *mostly* went off okay. However, dosages in a business like this aren't an exact science. Lunster had to leave in some haste when one still-outsize rat saw him and gave chase. (He dumped his last bait packets in his wake in an attempt to distract the creature, so there are now still some giant rats inside the building.) This was observed by one gentleman from an upstairs window, who naturally thought that he was even drunker than he'd previously suspected, and then by a passing beggar, **Limpy Old Pedro**, who rapped the rat on the nose with his crutch, triggering the shrinking process. Pedro now believes himself or his crutch to have magical powers, and set off after Lunster to offer him loan of it at a reasonable price.

Anyway, in the period after the rats too the bait, there was of course some confusion inside Dronermongery House. A number of tenants complained to the building manager, **Mr Parksmith**, that there were a lot of strange noises coming from within the walls, and some of them reported sightings of "big rats". The manager naturally assumed that the latter involved drink-induced wild exaggerations, but there was clearly some evidence of rat problems, so he called in a rat-catcher. Said rat-catcher sent his terrier into the wall-spaces to flush out the rats – and thirty seconds later, it shot back out again and started whimpering in a corner. Then the *chittering* started. So Mr Parksmith sent a message to the Watch.

Meanwhile, Lunster reached home, specifically his room in the attic of Dr Thurible's house on Tonoddy Street. Unfortunately, because Dr Thurible didn't know that the potion works as well as it does, he'd been careless with the stuff, and the house is currently infested by an outsize spider,

which attacked both him and later Lunster, paralysed them with its venomous bite, and left them tied up with webbing for a later snack.

So the PCs are going to have to finish off the rats, track Lunster down with the assistance of assorted incoherent citizens of different social classes, and rescue the people responsible for this mess from the consequences of their own actions.

The Briefing

One morning, our heroes are just providing support for a busy patrol when they are called into Watch HQ on Pseudopolis Yard and issued new orders by **Sergeant Cheery Littlebottom**. The Watch has a report of some kind of trouble over in Ankh; someone at a building called **Dronermongery House**, on King's Way, has sent a clacks message saying they have some kind of pest infestation, which they believe may be supernatural. It's probably nothing, but the Patrol should go and check things over, and either reassure the caller or deal with it as they see fit. The Watch is busy as always, so please try and handle this all by yourselves, you understand? Sergeant Littlebottom would love the next thing she hears about this problem to be "problem solved".

1. Everybody with **Area Knowledge (Ankh-Morpork)** – which is to say, all the PCs except for Loam – knows King's Way; it's a rather grand street leading from the Isle of Gods to the Deosil Gate – not very far from Pseudopolis Yard, actually, and come to think of it, Commander Vimes's place backs onto it. Posh people territory, in other words. The party should perhaps look smart on this job. It's a shame that none of them have Savoir-Faire skill.
2. An **Area Knowledge (Ankh-Morpork)** roll at -2 recognises the name of Dronermongery House. It's a rather grand sort of block of flats for well-off bachelors – a fairly substantial building with quite a lot of money sloshing about. Many a watchman has had to tow a rich young fellow who's been on the wine back there in the small hours.

Well, time to get over there. It's just a few minutes on foot.

Dronermongery House

The building to which our heroes have been directed proves to be solidly built if not showy building facing the street. The building manager, **Mr Parksmith**, is waiting in the lobby, fretting a little; also present is a fellow of low-class appearance and middle age, with a shabby top hat, a small leather pack, and a stout cudgel tucked through his belt. He seems a little distracted; he's talking reassuringly to a scruffy, solid-looking terrier, which is lying under a side-table, whimpering slightly.

Mr Parksmith identifies himself, thanks the Watch for showing up so quickly, and explains his situation; several of the tenants reported odd and disturbing noises coming from the walls of their rooms yesterday, so he naturally guessed that they might have a rat problem. (It's Ankh-Morpork; it happens.) So he called in **Mr Stronk** here (introducing the other NPC), a well-reputed ratcatcher, who was able to attend to the matter first thing this morning.

Mr Stronk takes up the story. He looked around the place briefly, and found a way into the wall-spaces from one of the ground floor storerooms – an easily removed wall panel. **Grinder**, his dog, initially seemed to agree with this idea, sniffing at the access way and growling enthusiastically, then diving in as soon as he got the chance. However, half a minute later, Grinder shot out of the wall-space like the fiends of hell were after him, found a corner, and curled up whimpering. This is categorically **not** like Grinder, who is rarely inclined to back off from anything. Mr Stronk reckons this place is haunted...

Mr Parksmith takes up the story again. He's sure that the building isn't haunted – there's no records of ghosts here, no recent deaths in the building, and the owners even had it checked over by a reputable medium a while ago. On the other hand, the noises in the walls (described as “rustling, thumping, and deep screeching”) have been real – he's now heard some rather disconcerting chattering himself – and several of the tenants have complained of a sense of being watched. He'd appreciate it if the Watch could take a look around.

The PCs should be given a chance to investigate as they think best. The access-way that Mr Stronk discovered is accessible, but only a dwarf (e.g. Constable Ingarsson) can fit through it, though the wall space itself is a bit more accommodating; also, with a lantern borrowed from the house and his Night Vision, he'll at least be able to see what he was doing well enough. He'll soon discover what is clearly a garbage chute at the back of the building (the smell is a clue); the worrying thing is that *something* appears to have broken into the wall space from that, ripping its way through with something sharp-edged. Mr Parksmith will confirm that, yes, of course they have garbage chutes from all the apartments to large bins at the back of the building, and they're nice and solidly built, and designed to be impossible to misuse for access to the building – much too narrow, with vertical shafts with no hand-holds, nice solid bolt-down hatches, and good solid construction. **Criminology** rolls will confirm that these things can indeed be made quite burglar-resistant.

Meanwhile, other successful **Criminology** rolls could tell the watchmen that this might be some kind of mundane dubiousness, and standard Watch procedure at this point would be to interview everyone in the building and see if that turns up any more clues. Most of these people will tend to treat watchmen as mobile furniture, though they'll be off-handedly polite, especially if the PCs have Mr Parksmith along. This leads to a series of encounters with assorted chinless wonders, most of whom won't be much use for anything except confirming the stories of odd noises, but three of them are more interesting:

1. **The Hon. Berthold Volksman**, a resident of a first-floor apartment, will be happy to see someone from the Watch, as his best cufflinks appear to have gone missing, and the Watch find missing things, don't they? If someone could lend him a hand finding them, he'd be much obliged. If anyone asks what these cufflinks look like, he waves his hands and mentions diamonds – “Rather nice, actually. Family heirloom.” Then, if anyone does try to help him look, a successful **Search** roll at +2 doesn't find the cufflinks, but does find something interesting behind the sofa; a hole, just about large enough for a human to get through, ripped open from the wall space in the vicinity of that garbage chute.
2. **Ronald Clunchbury, Esq.**, resident of a second-floor apartment, is in a bad mood, and will initially be obnoxious, saying it's about time somebody did something about the dashed foolishness in this building, and he expects it to be done double-quick, don't they know who he is? But he soon folds in the face of **Intimidation** (he's only Will 9). He then lets slip that he had a visitor last night, and it was shaping up to be a pleasant evening, but then the girl started yelling and screaming about monsters under the bed, and ran off... Checking under his bed discovers another way into the wall spaces (actually chewed open from behind the walls).
3. **Peregrine Golflinger, Esq.**, on the third floor, will wander out onto the landing to see what's going on even before the PCs reach his floor. He has the blinking air of a man getting over a good night's celebration. (A successful **Carousing** roll may enable somebody to fix him the coffee he needs, which is a rapid way to his heart.) He will comment that things seem to be getting all rather colourful round here – why, perhaps what he saw last night wasn't entirely imaginary... If he's asked what that was, he'll explain that just after he got home in the wee

small hours, he was standing by his window, taking some fresh air, when he saw a fellow leap out of rubbish bins down at the back of the building and run down the alleyway, pursued by a “big furry thing”. Then another fellow stepped out of the shadows and rapped the furry thing on the nose with a stick or something, and it just vanished. “Dashed curious, what? Prob’ly some students from the University having a jape...”

Incidentally, examining any of the entrance holes will allow an IQ+2 roll to suggest that they were largely smashed open by brute force, but also started and enlarged by something sharp-edged. A **Naturalist** roll at +3 (which works out as IQ-3) will suggest that this looks like the effects of teeth – probably rodent teeth, but much bigger than any natural rodent. This is probably the moment to have some **giant rats** show up somewhere and attack someone, allowing a demonstration of the combat system. (This may trigger Shutter’s **Danger Sense**; do check the **Surprise** rules and see who has **Combat Reflexes**.) Also, being stalked by fast, vicious, stealthy rats in a cramped space may provide a good excuse to demonstrate the **Fright Check** system.

Giant Rats

ST 9, DX 13, IQ 5, HT 12
HP 9, Will 10, Per 12, FP 13
Speed 6.25, Move 6, Dodge 9
SM -1, DR 1
Night Vision 5, Wild Animal
Brawling-13, Stealth-14
Bite (13), Reach C, 1d-2 cutting

After the battle, anyone who was bitten by a giant rat must make a HT roll or spend some time being treated for nasty infections by Igor.

1: 9	2: 9	3: 9	4: 9
5: 9	6: 9	7: 9	8: 9

Reducing one of these to 0 HP or unconsciousness causes a “*blurrp*” sound effect as it shrinks down to normal rat size. Constable Shutter gets a **Per** roll on first seeing them to notice a few very faint octarine sparks flickering around their whiskers; **Detect Magic** picks up that, yes, there’s some kind of magical effect here. A **Thaumatology** roll at +3 will then tell him that this could be the result of some very fancy Physiomatic magic, or possibly some kind of pathetic fudge like an alchemical potion.

Tracking the Perpetrator

An **Area Knowledge (Ankh-Morpork)** roll will tell a PC that the building must back onto an alleyway off **Kedger Pool Circus**, so PCs could slip round there and start looking for clues or witnesses – or everyone could just pile out of the building’s back entrance.

The only bystanders in the immediate area are a couple of street kids, who might be helpful; allow straight **Reaction** rolls, or people could use **Streetwise** or **Intimidation**. Note Constable Klump’s specific problem with such kids. Anyway, they don’t know anything about giant rats or whatever, but they can say that the only person who might be around here in the middle of the night would be **Limpy Old Pedro**, who’s usually working **Scoone Avenue** this time of day...

Also, anyone searching this area for clues will find a couple of small paper packets lying on the ground, containing what looks like beef jerky with an odd chemical smell to it. **Detect Magic** on that will say that, yes, there’s something supernatural here. Showing it to Mr Stronk will get it identified

as a kind of rat bait, though the smell is odd (and will fortunately put his dog off from eating it). If any PC is deranged enough to sample it, they will suffer a series of random minor size changes over the next few minutes, bursting the straps and fastenings on their armour and leaving their clothes in rags. It will also leave them with Bad Temper (9) for the rest of the day. It doesn't work on trolls – wrong biochemistry.

Slipping through to Scoone Avenue and looking round will soon spot an old-ish-looking beggar with a crutch by his side; this is indeed Limpy Old Pedro. The PCs will need a positive reaction from him, or successful use of **Streetwise** or **Intimidation** as Influence skills. Then he starts trying to sell them his "magic crutch".

He'll explain that he was scavenging for stuff round the bins near Kedger Pool Circus last night when some fellah came tearing down an alley, pursued by a gigantic rat. Then the rat went for Pedro, so he rapped it on the head sharpish, and it shook its head and shrank down to its proper size and ran off squeaking. "So – stands to reason me crutch must be good at getting rid of magic, dunnit?"

(A successful **Thaumatology** roll at +3 suggests that actually, this growth magic may be very unstable; a lucky hit that stuns the rat would ripple through and disrupt the effect. Any kind of examination or test will show that the crutch is totally non-magical.)

Anyhow, the chatty Pedro explains, he tried to explain to the fellow that he had a solution to his problem, but he wouldn't listen; he just ran home and locked his front door. Well, his loss, right?

This should give the PCs the hint that Pedro can guide them to their suspect's front door. He's happy to, especially if offered a bribe; it's not far – just on **Tomnoddy Street...**

The Alchemist's House

When the PCs reach what is a moderately substantial town house they will get no answer to a knock on the door. Asking the neighbours will establish that it belongs to **Dr Gladforge Thurible**, a respectable alchemist; he or his manservant are usually in... Also, the lady who does for them came round earlier that morning, and she couldn't get a reply either...

A Law skill roll at +4 will remind any watchman that they can't generally go barging into private citizens' houses without permission. However, persuading one of the neighbours to express concern could generate adequate justification, and Pedro's story also gives them some cover. The door has DR 4 and 25 HP, and is **Homogenous**; half that damage will permit humans to squeeze through with difficulty.

Inside, it's dark – the shutters are still closed from last night – and quiet. The Darkness is worth -6 to Vision rolls (check for Night Vision). The PCs can look through an apparently unoccupied ground floor and find nothing, but heading upstairs will find a couple of bedrooms, a bathroom, and a well-appointed alchemical laboratory. Oh, and there's a figure stuck to the wall by some sticky webs; a male human of mature years, who's suffered puncture wounds and seems to be in a bad way. This is worth a **Fright Check**.

Once they find the back stairs, from either side, they'll find something apparently stuck to the wall half-way up. Close inspection reveals that it's another living person wrapped in sticky webs and looking very worried indeed – a younger male.

If the PCs start trying to cut either person free, it takes a few minutes, in which time the **Giant Spider** uses **Stealth** to approach along the ceiling with a view to dropping onto the first PC it can get above. If the PCs don't start trying to free its victims immediately, or one or more of them wanders off, it'll

Stealth after the most plausible victim. If it succeeds, that's **Surprise** and a Fright Check at -4; otherwise, its first appearance is worth a Fright Check at -2. If it takes damage from anyone but its chosen victim, it will scurry off along a wall or ceiling, attempting to Stealth after another victim. It's too stupid to give up altogether, though.

Giant Spider

ST 12, DX 14, IQ 3, HT 12

HP 12, Will 10, Per 10, FP 12

Speed 6.50, Move 8, Dodge 9

SM 0, DR 2

360° vision, Spider Climb (Move 6 on walls and ceilings), Wild Animal

Brawling-14, Stealth-14

Grapple (14), Reach C; see pp. 183-184 – gives the victim -4 to DX rolls and DX-based skills and hence -2 to defence rolls, and they can only attack with bare hands or reach C weapons; if they try to Ready anything, they must roll vs. DX or drop it. They can attempt to break free by winning a Quick Contest of ST, but the spider is at +5 due to multiple limbs holding. The spider will attempt to Bite on all subsequent turns.

Bite (14), Reach C, 1d-2 impaling

Venom follow-up to bite: 1d+1 toxic damage, halved by a successful HT roll. Anyone who takes ½ of their HP or more from this sort of damage from this is paralysed for 1d hours, and really needs some medical treatment.

Spider HP: 12

Defeating this beastie allows the PCs to explore the rest of the house.

Wrap-Up

The PCs should have adequate evidence to put Lunster away for larceny, though they may feel just sorry enough for him that they let him off relatively lightly. (Or at least refrain from handing him over to the Thieves' Guild – anyway, Commander Vimes doesn't approve of that.) A **Law** roll will tell any of them that, as a hired assistant to an alchemist, he might be considered to fall under Guild Regulations; of course, given what uses the alchemists might find for such a miscreant, being nailed to the city gates by the Thieves' Guild might actually seem more appealing.