

If the characters attempt to sort the case of mistaken identity out, Jim tells them Omin is unavailable, and concedes that they don't have to take the job. He points out that the characters are welcome to leave Acq Inc and never come back. But Omin might want to have words with them later about the dastardly way they misrepresented themselves.

After finishing up at Acquisitions Incorporated Head Office, the adventurers can set off to perform their appointed mission.

DOCK WARD

Omin's assignment takes the characters to Dock Ward in Waterdeep, a maze of seedy tenements, rough streets, and even rougher alleyways. If the characters have spent time in the city, they might have heard that much of this ward is set up as safe houses, meeting places, and fronts for a variety of criminal organizations, including the Xanathar Guild and the Zhentarim. None of these groups are particularly happy right now, since the sinkhole caused by the earthquake opened up smack dab in the middle of their territory. The sinkhole also brought the Waterdeep City Watch to the ward, a move welcomed by no one—least of all the members of the Watch, who must now stand guard over the site until it can be investigated and closed.

A character whose background entails knowledge of the ward knows the general layout of its streets and alleys, but finding Jolly's Lamp Emporium and the abandoned warehouse requires asking for directions at some point. Use the following encounters as a general setup, but you can add additional encounters as the characters make their way through the ward as you see fit.

MAPS AND POSHUNS

As the adventurers make their way through the streets of Dock Ward, they come upon an unlikely commercial venture.

A ramshackle stall set up along the street bears a sign that reads: "Maps and Poshuns." Working the stall is a filthy but cheerful gnome urchin. Several pieces of parchment are on display in the stall, with six small ceramic pots placed next to them.

The rapscaillon is Jerronimus "Jerr" Burntberry (CN male gnome **commoner**) who is quite a bit older than he looks. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check tips the characters off that the adult gnome is disguised to look like a youngster. Jerr hopes to join the Zhentarim one day, but he needs a little more experience. In the meantime, he makes a living by scribbling on pieces of parchment he scrounges from garbage heaps, selling them as maps to unwitting fools searching for places in Dock Ward. He also collects fetid rainwater in small, red clay pots, which leach out just enough color that he can pass the water off as *potions of healing*.

The potions have a faintly fruity aroma. A *detect magic* spell shows that they are indeed magical, though that magic is of the transmutation school rather than con-

juration. Each day, a kindly druid who thinks Jerr is an honest soul gives the gnome a goodberry for his health. Rather than eat the berry, Jerr crushes it up and adds a drop of juice to each pot. Jerr sells maps for 1 gp and the potions for 10 gp. He also tries to sell other useless or counterfeit objects at your discretion.

If the adventurers ask Jerr to be a guide, he happily takes the job for 1 gp. He then leads the characters straight into an ambush by a gang working for the Zhentarim (see the "Skeleton Crew" encounter below). A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check is needed to see through the skilled lies of the gnome.

If you wish, Jerr can become a recurring character in the campaign. He might keep tabs on the characters as they grow famous, showing up in cities where they travel, trying to sell more useless goods, or eventually spying on them for the Zhentarim. Or if paid and treated well, he could become a valuable source of information for the characters when they need someone to infiltrate tough areas.

SKELETON CREW

As the characters make their way farther into Dock Ward, they encounter street thugs growing increasingly resentful of the presence of the City Watch. These thugs need to earn some quick coin, then lay low until the Watch leaves the ward. And mugging the next group of distracted strangers to wander down the wrong street seems like just the ticket.

The four **bandit** members of the crew are run-of-the-mill criminals looking to get ahead in the world through treachery. Their leader, Jelayne, was similar ... until she was killed a year before. Jelayne wasn't one to let death keep her down, however, and she continues to lead the group as an unusual **skeleton** with these changes:

- She has Intelligence and Charisma scores of 14 (+2).
- She can speak Common.

Jelayne isn't aware that she's undead. Even though the last of her flesh is constantly sloughing off her, she dismisses that effect as "allergies." The rest of the crew don't know what to do, since Jelayne has kept her intellect, knowledge, and personality. They have always followed her and done fine for themselves, so why let death interfere with a good thing?

When the encounter begins, read:

A figure stands in the alleyway, its luminous eyes glowing beneath a dark hood. As the hood is pulled away to reveal a skeletal face, the figure unexpectedly speaks. "Your money or your life!"

The other members of the crew hide in adjacent alleyways or on the rooftop of a nearby building. They enter the fray if the characters don't surrender their valuables immediately.

If the adventurers defeat the crew and study Jelayne, a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check confirms that she was raised as undead by a unique ritual that allowed her to keep her intellect and ability to speak. This has no bearing on the encounter,