

"Thank you for answering my call so quickly. When the earthquake struck the city two days ago, damage was limited, but a sinkhole opened up a fissure beneath an abandoned warehouse in Dock Ward. Two City Watch guards entered the fissure to investigate, but never came out. They're now feared dead, and the City Watch has asked me to take over the investigation. But my schedule is complicated at the moment, so I'm delegating that job to you. As an experienced adventuring group, I have no doubt that you can handle the task."

Before you have any chance to respond, Omin drops a hefty bag of coins onto the table. "The pay is 500 gold dragons for the group, with a 20 percent commission going to Acquisitions Incorporated as the broker. Go to the warehouse next to Jolly's Lamp Emporium down by the docks. Tell the City Watch guards stationed there that I sent you. Explore the fissure, learn the fate of the guards who went missing, and then come back to me with the signed City Watch papers confirming your completed work."

Then without another word, Omin Dran turns and leaves the room.

Through a crazy and never-to-be-explained misunderstanding, Omin believes that the characters are a group of experienced adventurers that he put out a call for just the day before. If the characters attempt to correct this misunderstanding, he ignores them. The CEO of Acquisitions Incorporated has important business to deal with, and can't be bothered with such trifles.

### JIM DARKMAGIC SETS THINGS STRAIGHT

With absolutely no idea what they're meant to do or how they got into this position, the characters might try to seek out assistance before they leave Head Office. Or they might just wander around lost for a bit. Either way, Jim Darkmagic approaches the group with some words of ... well, let's call it wisdom. When it's time for Jim to make his appearance, read or paraphrase the following:

A puff of smoke erupts out of nowhere. As the haze disperses, a handsome figure steps forward. It's Jim Darkmagic of the New Hampshire Darkmagics! Except he's wearing a set of glasses that he apparently thinks is an effective disguise as he bows before you.

"I'm no one you know," he says. "But I couldn't help but notice that you seem a little flustered. I believe Omin just offered you work. And I also have a feeling you might not be the adventurers he thinks you are."

Jim Darkmagic is ... uh ... How do I put this? He's, uh ... hmm. Let me get back to you.

—Omin Dran



JIM DARKMAGIC

Jim looks around to make sure no one else is listening in, then leans forward to deliver a conspiratorial whisper. "You want my advice? Do the job. If you can pull it off, Omin will be so impressed that you'll have a leg up on everybody else trying to gain footing with the company. You've heard the phrase "opportunity knocks?" Well, opportunity is heading right at your door with a battering ram. Stand in that doorway, friends. Let opportunity smash its way in."

Jim's reasons for interceding with the characters are left to your determination. He might have intercepted the experienced adventurers Omin called for, then sent them off on a secret personal mission on his own behalf. Or he might have accidentally set them on fire when they arrived at Acquisitions Incorporated Head Office. Whatever the case, he needs the players' group to attempt Omin's mission, and he's keen to get them on their way.

If the characters have any questions about the assignment, Jim can be the vessel through which you answer. Those who appear enthusiastic, appreciative, and deferential to Jim might even be gifted a *spell scroll* of Jim's *magic missile*. However, before an arcane caster can use the *spell scroll* or copy it into a spellbook, they need to understand the new royalty component for spells. See "New Spells" in chapter 3 for more information.