

# Rapids

As you approach the settlement, the distant rumble of water crescendos into a near-roar, the wild torrent flowing powerfully alongside the western edge of the community. Wooden buildings with thatched roofs stand in a rustic array, their simple charm contrasting sharply with the formidable backdrop of distant mountains and foothills. In the heart of the settlement, a bustling marketplace fills the air with the shouts of haggling over freshly caught fish, the noise competing with the tumult of the nearby river. At the far end, a sturdy stone building looms quietly beside a well-kept graveyard, surrounded by a low, wrought-iron fence. A tall steeple rises above the stone building, reaching skyward as if in prayer.

Nestled beside a raging river, the village of Rapids presents a tableau of rustic charm offset by a sense of constant movement. Thatched-roof cottages and wooden buildings line the dusty roads, their inhabitants going about their daily chores with a sense of urgency that matches the river's ceaseless flow. The village is a waypoint along Alaric's Path, a major thoroughfare that leads to the capital city of Thundertop Vale. This adds a layer of diversity to the populace, as travelers, traders, and messengers frequently pass through, adding their own tempo to the village's bustling rhythms.

Recently, however, the village has been troubled by more than the river's roar. Residents speak in hushed tones about the kobolds that have been pilfering from the outskirts of the settlement. Livestock and belongings have gone missing, and guards have been posted, putting the whole community on edge. This issue compounds the growing concern about the sudden decrease in fish in the river, which has hit the heart of the village's livelihood—the bustling fish market. Once a thriving nexus of commerce, the market now holds an air of desperation as fishermen return with meager catches.

To the east end of the community, a large stone chapel known as the Whitewater Temple stands beside a well-maintained graveyard, its steeple reaching high as though in silent prayer for better days. Unbeknownst to the villagers, the temple's high priest, Father Eamon, is secretly a necromancer who has been conducting vile experiments in the tombs below.

## Basic Information

Those familiar with Rapids know the following information.

### Population

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The population of Rapids is a mix of around 150 hardworking individuals, predominantly human, with a small minority of dwarves and elves. The community is close-knit but welcoming to outsiders, particularly given its position on the busy Alaric's Path. The majority are fishermen or tradespeople, their livelihoods intricately tied to the river and the road. There is also a small contingent of soldiers and guards, whose numbers have increased due to the recent kobold incursions. Adding to this are the transient populations: traders, travelers, and pilgrims who pass through on their way to Thundertop Vale, enriching the village with a patchwork of cultures and stories.

### Leadership

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In the village of Rapids, the leadership is a triad consisting of Mayor Ivelda Greenthumb, Constable Mira, and High Priest Althorn Eamon of the Whitewater Temple. While Mayor Greenthumb and Constable Mira focus on the village's governance and security, Althorn Eamon serves as the spiritual guide.

### Defenses

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Rapids has a modest defense system comprising a small contingent of local militia led by Constable Mira. Guard towers are strategically placed along the village perimeter, mainly facing the southern region where kobold incursions have been frequent. The river itself acts as a natural barrier on the western side, with only a few secure crossing points. Fish traps and alarm bells are set up near these points to alert the militia of any unauthorized crossings.

### Commerce

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Rapids relies heavily on its fishing industry, the lifeblood of the local economy. Fishermen sell their daily catch at the bustling central market, which attracts traders and travelers alike. Aside from fish, other craftspeople and merchants deal in woodworking, leather goods, and some agricultural products like grains and vegetables. Recently, however, the inexplicable decline in fish population has put a damper on trade, causing concern among villagers.

## Notable Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of Rapids as shown on the facing page. Each location description notes an important NPC that can usually be found there, along with four adventure hooks.

### 1—Whitewater Chapel

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Whitewater Chapel stands as a monumental edifice of both spirituality and architecture at the eastern end of the village. The chapel houses an intricately designed stained glass window that depicts the river god in a magnificent display of color and light.

#### High Priest Leo Eamon

Leo Eamon is the head of the Whitewater Chapel and widely respected in the community for his wisdom and spiritual guidance. Tall and imposing, with a carefully groomed beard, he exudes an air of authority. However, what no one knows is that he is secretly a necromancer, conducting vile experiments in the tombs below the chapel. The owner of the Old Mill Inn, Althorn, is Leo's half-brother.

#### Quest Hooks

- Eamon sends the characters on a mission to retrieve an artifact from an ancient crypt, claiming it will help protect the village.
- Eamon tasks the characters with rooting out a supposed "heretic" in town, diverting attention from his activities.
- Eamon commissions the players to bring back "sacred" herbs that are, in reality, for his dark rituals.
- Characters are sent by another NPC to investigate strange occurrences in the graveyard, leading them to uncover Eamon's dark secret.

### Fisherman's Bounty

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Fisherman's Bounty is the village's thriving fish market, situated at the very heart of Rapids. The market is home to a peculiar, cobblestone mosaic in the shape of a fish that locals touch for luck before heading out to fish.

#### Maris the Fishmonger

Maris is the seasoned fishmonger who runs Fisherman's Bounty. With skin weathered from years at sea and a hearty laugh, Maris is as much a fixture of Rapids as the river itself. She has a knack for reading the water and predicting where the best catches will be.



## Quest Hooks

- Maris hires the characters to investigate why the fish are disappearing from the river.
- She asks the adventurers to protect the next fishing expedition from kobold thieves.
- Characters are sent to fetch a special fishing lure from a far-off cave said to guarantee a catch.
- Maris points the characters towards a shipwreck upstream, hoping to salvage lost goods and finding something darker instead.

## Riverside Forge

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Riverside Forge is located just a stone's throw from the roaring river. The master blacksmith, Torald, produces high-quality metalwork, from tools to weapons, which are sold to the Rapidsfolk as well as travelers.

### Torald the Smith

The gruff but talented blacksmith Torald runs the Riverside Forge. Built like an anvil and just as hard, he's known for his skill in metallurgy. A combat veteran, he's stashed away a collection of special weapons for "the right occasion."

### Quest Hooks

- Torald needs a rare metal ore to craft a special weapon and sends the characters to retrieve it.
- Torald suspects a competitor of foul play and hires the adventurers to investigate.
- Torald asks the characters to test one of his new weapons on a dangerous creature.
- A specially-crafted weapon was stolen, and he wants the characters to track it down, leading them to discover it's been stolen by kobolds.

## The Old Mill Inn

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The Old Mill Inn is a rustic, welcoming abode where both locals and travelers come to find rest and sustenance. Althorn Eamon, the innkeeper, takes pride in providing excellent service and comfort. A notable feature of this inn is its massive fireplace, built with stones from the river, which serves as the gathering spot for storytelling and socializing.

### Althorn Eamon the Innkeeper

The innkeeper of the Old Mill Inn is friendly, robust, and always full of stories. Little do people know, he's also an accomplished bard and keeps a hidden stash of arcane scrolls beneath a floorboard. Leo, the High Priest of Whitewater Chapel, is Althorn's half-brother.

### Quest Hooks

- Althorn hears about mysterious happenings in the Whisperwood and sends the characters to Alaric's Landing to investigate.
- Althorn hires the characters to find out why caravans have been late or disappearing altogether.

- Althorn tasks the adventurers with finding a rare musical instrument said to be in a hidden location.
- Althorn hires the adventurers to put on a performance to draw more people to the inn, but they end up attracting unwanted mystical attention.

## Mistmantle Apothecary

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Mistmantle Apothecary is the place to find both common and rare remedies. Run by the skilled herbalist, Iris, the shop is a treasure trove of medical and magical supplies. In the back of the store is an enchanted herb garden, in which plants grow regardless of the season, a feature that many attribute to Iris's mystical skills.

### Iris the Herbalist

Iris is the intelligent, mysterious herbalist of Mistmantle Apothecary. She wears long robes and a cowl, and is always accompanied by a raven. She's known to have prophetic dreams but keeps this a closely guarded secret.

### Quest Hooks

- Iris sends the characters to find a rare herb in a dangerous part of the Whisperwood, known as the Fey Glade.
- Iris asks the characters to deliver a delicate potion to a sick villager, but it turns out the potion has other effects.
- Iris hires the adventurers to bring back samples from magical creatures for her research.
- Iris dreams have warned her of an impending disaster involving the kobolds, and she sends the adventurers to stop it.

## Rapidfall Watchtower

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Rapidfall Watchtower serves as the key point for the village's rudimentary defense system. Constable Mira works from this location, keeping an eye out for any dangers that may approach from the river or the surrounding lands. The watchtower houses a set of powerful looking glasses that can see far off into the distance, a crucial asset in monitoring the village's security.

### Constable Mira

Stern but fair, Constable Mira is responsible for the security of the village and operates from the Rapidfall Watchtower. She has a keen eye and an

unparalleled mastery of the longbow. Unbeknownst to the villagers, Mira is actually from a lineage of elven rangers and is in Rapids on a long-term reconnaissance mission.

## Quest Hooks

- Mira hires the characters to assist in dealing with a kobold raiding party.
- Mira sends the adventurers to investigate strange sightings near the watchtower.
- The characters are tasked by Mira with finding a lost child in the wilderness.
- Mira asks the adventurers to recover an elven artifact she believes is hidden in the Whisperwood, revealing her true heritage.

## Other Important NPCs

Here are some of the other notable characters that the characters may encounter while traveling or staying in Rapids.

### Mayor Ivelda Greenthumb

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Ivelda is the pragmatic and shrewd mayor of Rapids, whose primary concerns are the welfare of her constituents and the prosperity of the village. She's a short, stout woman in her fifties with a penchant for wearing elaborate hats. Behind her warm smiles and political savvy, Ivelda is secretly trying to strike a delicate alliance with some fey creatures to help against the kobold incursions, a move that could have unpredictable consequences.

### Zephyr Windwhistle

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Zephyr is the charming barmaid at The Old Mill Inn who has an uncanny knack for remembering faces and stories. Her red hair and infectious laugh make her a popular figure in the village. Zephyr is also a skilled wind mage in secret and uses her magic sparingly to amuse patrons with small tricks like floating mugs.

### Kilian "The Hawk"

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Kilian is an older, grizzled fisherman who is always seen with a hawk perched on his shoulder, thus his nickname. He's a staple of the Fisherman's Bounty and widely respected as the best angler in Rapids. He's been exploring the river for decades and knows about a hidden cavern filled with dangerous creatures and treasures.