

# Alaric's Landing

As you make your way along the major road that has guided you through various landscapes, you suddenly find yourself entering a hamlet that seems almost cocooned by nature. On one side, the endless expanse of a mesmerizing sea stretches out, its waters as blue as sapphire. On the other, the area is bordered by dense, mysterious woods that seem to whisper secrets.

Your eyes are immediately drawn to a bronze statue standing dignified in the central square. It depicts a noble figure, who you can only assume must be of great importance, perhaps even the king you've heard tales about.

Further adding to the hamlet's unique charm are a massive, ancient oak tree at the edge of the square and a well that seems to draw the occasional passerby to its depths. Both carry an air of significance, of unspoken stories and traditions you can't quite put your finger on.

You also notice something rather peculiar—there seem to be an unusual number of identical faces among the locals. It's subtle, but unmistakable once you spot it. You can't help but feel that this small coastal community holds more mysteries than its size would suggest.

Alaric's Landing is a small, intimate hamlet perched on the edge of the Azurean Abyss. A major thoroughway intersects the community, providing an essential link to other coastal areas. Encircled by the mysterious Whisperwood, the village is shrouded in both natural beauty and a quiet sense of seclusion.

The hamlet's peaceful atmosphere has been recently disrupted by unsettling visits from creatures known as thornwalkers. Emerging from the Whisperwood, these plant-like entities have incited fear and caution among the villagers, turning the tranquil setting into a place of watchfulness and concern.

Adding another layer to the community's unique character is an inexplicably high number of twins. This peculiarity has given rise to folklore and superstition, often linked to a notable, ancient oak tree at the village's heart. Known as the Wishing Oak, this local landmark is said to have the power to grant wishes whispered into its hollows. Whether the high incidence of twins is a mystical consequence of wishes made or some other factor is a subject of endless debate among the locals.

Traditional inns are notably absent, but several lodging options offer the party a place to rest. Local families may extend their hospitality, offering straw mattresses in a spare room. Alternatively, Captain Gareth might allow a night's stay on a docked fishing boat.

# Basic Information

Those familiar with Alaric's Landing know the following information.

## Population

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The majority of Alaric's Landing's approximately 60 human residents are of Veramarish descent, with the population leaning toward middle age or older. There are a few young families, but they are relatively rare, particularly given recent threats like the thornwalkers. Occupationally, the village consists primarily of fishermen, small-scale farmers, and craftspeople who specialize in local goods. A couple of small businesses, including Elara Whitethorn's general store, serve as the community's commercial and social hubs. Overall, it's a homogeneous and tightly-knit community, bound together by tradition, occupation, and shared concerns.

## Leadership

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The leadership of Alaric's Landing is informal, anchored around Elara Whitethorn, the middle-aged owner of the village's largest general store. Though lacking an official title, Elara serves as a de facto leader and is deeply respected for her practical wisdom and extensive knowledge of local history and folklore. She acts as a liaison between the village and external entities, such as royal emissaries or neighboring settlements, and coordinates community efforts like defenses against the thornwalkers. Her natural leadership and the trust she commands within the community make her an indispensable figure in village life.

## Defenses

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Alaric's Landing has rudimentary defenses tailored to its small size and recent threats. A makeshift wooden palisade guards key entry points, especially those facing the Whisperwood, and a volunteer-manned watchpoint oversees the major road through the village. A secured shed near Elara Whitethorn's general store houses a modest cache of adapted weapons like fishing spears and hatchets.

## Commerce

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Commerce in Alaric's Landing primarily revolves around fishing and Elara Whitethorn's general store, which stocks essential goods and serves as a social hub. The major road through the village occasionally brings traders and travelers, adding a modest variety of external goods and some influx of coin.

## Notable Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of Alaric's Landing 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—Whitethorn's General Store

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The main commercial hub of the village, it offers a wide range of everyday items. Unique to this store is a small "wishing shelf," where locals leave notes or trinkets, hoping their desires will be fulfilled.

#### Elara Whitethorn

Elara is a middle-aged woman with a calm demeanor and wise eyes. She's deeply respected in Alaric's Landing, serving as the community's de facto leader and spiritual advisor.

#### Buying and Selling

Whitethorn's General Store offers a range of everyday items including basic foodstuffs, fishing gear, medicinal herbs, and handcrafted trinkets. Elara is particularly interested in buying locally sourced herbs, artisan crafts, and any curios or relics that travelers might bring from afar, and is unlikely to purchase weapons, magical items, or exotic goods that don't have immediate or clear utility for the villagers.

#### Quest Hooks

- Elara's supply of medicinal herbs is running low, and she asks the party to gather some from a specific area in the Whisperwood.
- Elara senses something amiss in the village and asks the party to investigate a recent series of petty thefts.
- A rare trinket on the "wishing shelf" has gone missing; Elara fears it has spiritual significance and tasks the party to retrieve it.
- Elara has had visions of thornwalkers attacking the village and requests the party to lay traps or wards in Whisperwood to keep them at bay.

### 2—Wishing Oak

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A large, ancient oak tree located at the village center, the Wishing Oak serves as a spiritual and cultural touchstone for the community.



### 3—Fisherman's Wharf

The primary docking area for the village's small fishing fleet. The wharf boasts an intricately carved wooden mermaid attached to the main piling, believed to protect the fishers at sea; it is called “Mermaid’s Blessing.”

#### Captain Gareth

A grizzled, middle-aged man with a hearty laugh and weathered features, Captain Gareth oversees the Fisherman's Wharf, and is the go-to man for anything related to fishing and boats.

## Quest Hooks

- Gareth needs help fixing some damaged fishing nets and believes materials can be found in a nearby cave.
- Some fishers have gone missing; Gareth suspects they've ventured too close to a dangerous reef and asks the party to search for them.
- The Mermaid's Blessing statue at the wharf has been vandalized. Gareth believes it's a bad omen and asks for repairs.
- Thornwalkers have been spotted near the waters. Gareth wants to ensure they're not disrupting the fish populations and asks the party to investigate.

## 4—Hamlet Square

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This is the village's social and ceremonial space where the road intersects. It features a statue of King Alaric Thalasson. The cobblestones in the square are laid in a complex pattern that villagers believe wards off evil.

### Agnes the Herbalist

An elderly herbalist with a keen understanding of plants and natural remedies, Agnes is often seen at her small stall in the Hamlet Square.

## Quest Hooks

- Agnes needs a particular flower for her remedies that blooms only under the full moon in Whisperwood.
- Agnes has noticed that the pattern of cobblestones in the square has been disturbed and believes this could bring bad luck.
- Agnes is worried about a sick child in the village and needs the party to fetch a rare ingredient for a cure.
- Agnes thinks thornwalkers may be deterred by a certain plant and asks the party to plant them near the Forest Watch Post.

## 5—The Bell Tower

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This modest wooden structure houses the community's warning bells. The tower has a weather vane shaped like a fish, a tribute to the village's primary occupation.

### Tobias the Bellringer

A retired fisherman in his late 50s, Tobias is the unofficial "bell-ringer" and guardian of the bell tower. He is vigilant and takes his job seriously.

## Quest Hooks

- The bell's clapper has cracked, and Tobias needs it repaired or replaced urgently.
- Tobias thinks he has seen a ghost near the bell tower at night and asks the party to investigate.
- An important rope in the bell tower mechanism has frayed. Tobias asks the party to find a replacement.
- Tobias is concerned that the bell tower is the first target for thornwalkers trying to disable the village's alarm system. He asks the party to strengthen its defenses.

## 6—Forest Watch Post

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Located at the edge closest to the Whisperwood, the forest watch post is a recently erected wooden platform to keep an eye out for thornwalkers. The post is adorned with talismans and charms aimed to repel them.

### Helena the Lookout

A keen-eyed young villager in her early 20s, Helena often mans the forest watch post. She is brave and deeply concerned about the thornwalker threat.

## Quest Hooks

- Helena needs the party to deliver a message to a neighboring village, asking for additional lookouts.
- Helena has lost a cherished locket while on duty and asks the party to find it.
- Helena has noticed strange bird activities and wonders if they're related to any Whisperwood anomalies.
- Helena has seen thornwalkers lurking at the edge of the Whisperwood and asks the party to scout the area and assess their numbers.

## Other Important NPCs

Here are some of the other notable characters that the characters may encounter while traveling or staying in Alaric's Landing.

### Mara and Kara

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These young adult twins are inseparable and co-own a bakery near the Hamlet Square. Mara focuses on baking while Kara handles customer service and decoration. The twins are unique in that they claim to share a 'sixth sense,' occasionally finishing each other's sentences or simultaneously coming up with the same new recipe idea.

### Old Man Eamon

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Eamon is an elderly villager often seen whittling intricate figurines near the Wishing Oak. He's a retired sailor with countless tales of sea monsters, lost treasures, and encounters with merfolk. Eamon is known to be a bit gruff but softens up considerably when sharing his stories.

### Lysa

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A young, ambitious woman who has recently taken up the role of a novice healer under Agnes' guidance. Lysa is exceptionally good with children and dreams of leaving Alaric's Landing one day to study advanced healing arts in Thundertop Vale. She's always eager to learn and appreciates any knowledge travelers might share.

### Constable Bran

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In his late 30s, Bran serves as the village's makeshift law enforcement, though his duties are usually more akin to that of a community mediator. He's respected for his fair judgments and is trusted to keep the peace. Interestingly, Bran has a pet raven named "Shadow" that follows him everywhere and is trained to carry messages to specific villagers.

# Random Encounters

Every eight hours the characters are in Alaric's Landing, roll a d20. On a result of 17–20, a random encounter occurs. Choose from or roll a d8 using the list below to determine the nature of the encounter.

## 1—Fishermen's Tales

The party overhears seasoned fishermen trading stories of gigantic sea creatures and haunted ships in the Azurean Abyss while mending their nets on the wharf.

## 2—Village Children's Games

A group of children are engaged in a lively game of tag around the statue of King Alaric Thalasson, laughing and shouting in innocent joy.

## 3—Seagull Shenanigans

A mischievous seagull swoops down to steal a piece of bread from a villager's hand, drawing laughter and light-hearted curses from the crowd.

## 4—Sudden Rainfall

Without warning, a brief but heavy rain shower sweeps through the hamlet, sending people scurrying for cover under porches and makeshift canopies.

## 5—Craftsmen at Work

The sound of hammers and saws fill the air as local carpenters repair a broken fence or work on a new fishing boat, emphasizing the community's reliance on manual labor.

## 6—Wildflowers and Bees

A patch of colorful wildflowers near the edge of the Whisperwood attracts a swarm of bees, symbolizing the delicate balance of beauty and industry in this rural setting.

## 7—Cats on the Prowl

A couple of stray cats hunt for mice near the general store, seemingly unbothered by the presence of humans and serving as unofficial pest control.

## 8—Thornwalker Alert

A sudden cry rings out, signaling a Thornwalker sighting near the edge of the Whisperwood, immediately followed by the villagers arming themselves and rushing to defend their home.