

# TALISMAN OF THE DARK SORROW

## *A FORGOTTEN REALMS ADVENTURE IN EASTING*

**Introduction:** A nice relaxing stop in the small town of Easting to restock your equipment, eat one of the famous lunches at the Dragon Horse Inn and rest a little bit before going further into the Western Heartlands for adventure. It all sounded good until the bloody and battered Dwarves stumbled into town.

*A STARTER ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO FIVE LEVEL 2 CHARACTERS*

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*Some live in the darkness of their minds until one day all they know is sorrow. Others search for the light, finding the best joy is a talisman of hope.*

—Aquefyre Igenaxx, Wizard from Suzail

## AREA INFORMATION

**Easting** is a small town on the **Trader's Road** east of **Iriaebor**. With the **High Road** intersecting here, a lot of traveling merchants pass through this town. There are a lot of Dwarves that come here to meet and trade goods and services or travel on to **Iriaebor** for a bigger clientele. Some of the finest horses around the **Western Heartlands** are bred here and one can find a decent bargain if one looks hard enough.

## PARTY ARRIVAL

The party of adventurers are enthralled by the opportunities here in the **Western Heartlands** for exploring and hopefully filling their backpacks with some coin.

The party has elected to stay the night at the **Dragon Horse Inn** to recuperate from their journey before they head on to **Iriaebor** where they hope to find gainful adventure awaiting them.

## DRAGON HORSE INN

The **Dragon Horse Inn** is nothing spectacular compared to the multitude of inns one finds in the realms. The appearance outside reflects the boarding could use a good cleaning and painting again. A large oak post bears a sign reading its name "**dragon Horse Inn**" with a faded depiction of a large black horse rearing up.

GM NOTE:(the "d" on the sign was mistakenly painted in lower case many years ago and was never corrected.)

Once one steps inside the appearance changes to a well-kept interior and signs of cheer brighten the inn from the various customers inside either enjoying a drink or food.

Depending on the time, the inn maintains a fairly healthy crowd of patrons. If one finds themselves here at lunch, every seat is apparently taken. The owner has several outdoor tables at the back he escorts potential customers to if needed and the weather is pleasant enough.

The evening business starts out slowly and crescendos into a lively crowd before closing time. **Matthias Armanie**, the local bard can be seen here some nights playing until the last customer leaves.

Lunch specials are served as follows: roll 1d6

- |   |
|---|
| 1. A plate of stewed mutton and beer bread                  |
| 2. Onion & Oxen Stew with owlbear biscuits                  |
| 3. A plate of Roast Beef with honey carrots and beer bread  |
| 4. Pork & Blue Goblin soup with owlbear biscuits            |
| 5. A plate of Baked Hare & Water veggies and onion bread    |
| 6. Grilled Owlbear steaks, blackened taters, and beer bread |

And of course the most recent rumors can be heard throughout the crowd here. Roll 1d6 or choose.

## RUMORS

1. **Jerrold Tearlas**, a local horse breeder is funding money to the **Zhentarim** for them to raid caravans along the Trader's Road. (**False**)..actually some Zhentarim agents visited him and he refused to sell his good stock to them. A local gossip saw the Zhentarim leave his farm and construed this story.
2. The new Dwarf smith, **Gromli Frostmail** is using magic to incorporate into his suits of armor. (**True**) Gromli has an old gem that gives his armor a +1 bonus. Therefore, his prices are steep.
3. The **Zhentarim** have become more active on the Trader's Road and fear is they will attack more caravans soon. (**Partial Truth**).The Zhentarim are more active here lately but they are working on another project besides standard caravan raids.
4. A local farm reports seeing a hooded figure at night prowling around their livestock attempting to steal one. (**Partially False**).it is actually the farmer's daughter meeting her boyfriend for late night star gazing.
5. Word from **Suzail** tells of a war coming for the Dwarven mines in foothills of the **Sunset Mountains**. And the **Zhentarim** are behind this trouble. (**False**). The Dwarven mines are active and well-guarded currently.
6. An old man's body was found west of town a few days ago and his eyes were missing. The body has yet to be identified. (**True**).this ties into the adventure.



The key to the rumors heard is to implicate that the **Zhentarim** is somehow involved in this adventure and are the main culprits. But, they are actually innocent this time.

**Arles “Tiny” Hyley** is the current owner of **Dragon Horse Inn**. He is anything but tiny. He is an upper-middle aged human male who stands about 6’3 and weighs over 300. A jovial person who takes pride in his staff and serving one of the best lunches east of the big city of **Iriaebor**. He greets all customers and swiftly welcomes them before returning to the many duties maintaining a productive flow for his business.

He isn't much for the rumors passed around here and doesn't comment on them. He only replies:  
*“Rumors are like owlbear cubs; cute but potentially deadly”.*

## ADVENTURE BEGINS

Depending on the time of when the party arrives, the adventure begins one of two ways. 1. Lunch time: A local boy runs into the inn saying something about injured Dwarves arriving and bandits. 2. Evening time: A bloody and bruised Dwarf comes through the door and collapses to the floor. He is conscious but weak. His companion follows, stammering something about Zhentarim bandits.

Either scenario, the party learns that the Dwarf, **Magnus Bendergran** was coming from **Elversult** and had traveled through **Priapurl**. He and his one companion, **Thulnak Deepaxe** were on the lonely stretch of the **Trader's Road** east of town and were attacked by bandits.

**Magnus** tells only partial of his story. He is a gem dealer and was traveling to **Iriaebor** to meet a potential buyer of some rare malachite gems that **Magnus** had acquired through his business.

**Thulnak** is a very old Dwarf fighter and his best years are behind him. He grumbles about the bandits and states over and over they were **Zhentarim** due to him recognizing their symbol on some of the riders clothing.

Have the party either approach **Magnus** or have him notice them and inquire into enlisting their aid in locating the bandits and retrieving the gems.

**Thulnak** after resting up and taking a hot meal and cold drink will lead the party to the attack site. If the party needs an extra player, the DM can use **Thulnak** as a **NPC**. If not, he returns to **Easting**.

## TRADER'S ROAD

The party arrives at the attack location and discovers some blood and a lot of horse and human footprints. **Thulnak** says he wounded one of the bandits with his crossbow as they fled. The trail is fairly easy to follow leading into the **Lightning Steppes** going north from the road.

The party needs to start their tracking in late evening or early night so they arrive at the bandit camp during the night.

The bandits have a rather large campfire going and no guards are posted. They are confident in their actions and believe there's no way someone would come looking for them.

If the party is stealthy enough, they can get a surprise round on the bandits.

There are 5 bandits in the camp, with one of them severely wounded from **Thulnak's** bolt. He is moaning and in a lot of pain and is unable to participate in the combat.

The party should hopefully elect to capture one of the bandits (*injured bandit*) who tells the party all he knows.

They were hired to attack the two Dwarves and take a pouch of gems from them. They would then travel to the warlock's camp to meet their leader who had went on with the gems first to receive payment.

This is crucial for the party to go on to the final part of the adventure. If the party kills all of the bandits, you can have a note and map on one of the them showing where they were headed. The injured bandit will willingly ride with them to the location though.

Searching the bandits or talking to the captured one, its revealed they were to wear insignia on themselves to indicate they were **Zhentarim** agents, however they are not officially aligned with that faction. With the recent activity of the **Zhentarim** in this area, they were hoping to lay blame on them.

ENCOUNTER: Bandits (5)

## INTO THE HILLS

The captured bandit or map leads the party into the small hills northeast of the camp.

They arrive at a large tent constructed and observe two horses tied outside. There are no signs of activity.

As soon as the first character reaches the tent opening, they set off an undetectable trap and are engulfed by a 5 foot radius gaseous cloud of poison, and anyone in that radius needs to make a **DC 12 CON** saving throw or takes **3** (1d6) poison damage. On a successful save, damage is negated.

As soon as this occurs, two humans appear from the back of the party. They were invisible up to this point. One is wearing armor with a great sword and the other is wearing a robe over padded armor and holding a wand.

The warlock had a ward around the camp and knew someone was coming, so he made himself and the bandit leader invisible until they knew who it was that arrived.

The warlock tells the party they have one chance to leave here alive. If they refuse, he attacks with his wand first. If successful, his second attack is also with the wand. He then proceeds to use a spell. The armored bandit leader on his first action in combat kills the captured bandit calling him "*Traitor filth*". He then will attack the "fighter type" of the party.

Both the bandit leader and warlock fight to the death.

### ENCOUNTER: 1 Bandit Leader & 1 Warlock

A search of the tent reveals a book of scribbled and half-finished notes of the warlock. The party can determine he was trying to conjure some type of spell of transformation to make him immortal. A set of human eyeballs are in a jar of greenish liquid on the table inside the tent. (*these are from the body mentioned in rumor 6.*) There is no evidence to indicate, but the wizard was the "buyer" from **Iriaebor**. He obtained enough details from **Magnus** and how and when he would be traveling, that he then hired the bandits to steal the gems and meet him in the hills where they would be rewarded. The wizard tried using the eyeballs for his spell but since they didn't work, he discovered notes that indicated the green gem malachite was known as being a "stone of transformation" and was sure these would grant him immortality once the spell ritual was completed.

### Treasure:

210 gold (bandit's payment)  
Wand of Poison (see appendix A)  
Gems recovered to return to **Magnus**

## BACK TO EASTING

The party returns to **Easting** with the gems and returns them to the rightful owner, **Magnus**.

He happily pays them 40 gold each (party of four or more) and tells them if they are ever in **Elversult** to come by his shop and he will make them a great deal on a gem.

Everyone then sat down to a wonderful meal before going on to the next adventure.

## APPENDIX A: ITEMS

### Wand of Poison

Wand, common, (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

The wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast a form of poison spray on one creature within 10 feet. The creature must make a **CON** saving throw (caster's spell DC) or take **3** (1d6) poison damage. A successful save negates the effects. The wand regains 1d6+1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

## APPENDIX B: CREATURES

### Bandit

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

**Armor Class:** 12 (leather armor)

**Hit Points:** 11 (2d8+2)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Senses:** passive Perception 10

**Languages:** Common

**Challenge:** 1/8 (25 XP)

### ACTIONS:

**Scimitar:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit: **4** (1d6+1) slashing damage.

**Dagger:** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: **3** (1d4+1) piercing damage.



## Bandit Leader

Medium humanoid (human) lawful evil

**Armor Class:** 14 (studded leather armor)

**Hit Points:** 22 (4d8+4)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

**Saving Throws:** STR +4, CON +3

**Skills:** Athletics +4, Intimidation + 2,

**Senses:** passive Perception 10

**Languages:** Common, Dwarvish

**Challenge:** 1 (200XP)

**Multiattack:** The bandit leader makes two melee attacks each turn.

### ACTIONS:

**Great Sword:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit: **8** (2d6+2) slashing damage.

**Handaxe:** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., or range 20/60 one target. Hit: **5** (1d6+2) slashing damage.

## Thulnak Deepaxe

Medium humanoid (dwarf) lawful good

**Armor Class:** 16 (chain mail armor)

**Hit Points:** 27 (5d8+5)

**Speed:** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws:** STR +4, CON +3

**Skills:** Athletics +4, Intimidation + 2, Survival +3

**Senses:** passive Perception 10

**Languages:** Common, Dwarvish

**Challenge:** 1 (200XP)

### ACTIONS:

**Battleaxe:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit: **6** (1d8+2) slashing damage or versatile **8** (1d10+2) slashing damage.

**Handaxe:** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., or range 20/60 one target. Hit: **5** (1d6+2) slashing damage.

## Warlock

Medium humanoid (human) chaotic evil

**Armor Class:** 12 (padded armor)

**Hit Points:** 19 (3d8+6)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws:** WIS +2, CHA +5

**Skills:** Deception +5, Arcana + 3, Religion +3

**Senses:** passive Perception 10

**Languages:** Common, Dwarvish

**Challenge:** 1 (200XP)

**Eldritch Invocations:** The warlock has the following invocations:

*Eye of the Rune Keeper*

*Mask of Many Faces*

**Spellcasting:** The warlock is a 2<sup>nd</sup> level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The warlock has the following spells prepared:

**Cantrips:** *Minor Illusion, Poison Spray*

**1<sup>st</sup> Level (2 slots):** *Charm Person, Hex, Witch Bolt*

### ACTIONS:

**Wand of Poison:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. Hit: **3** (1d6) poison damage. (see appendix A)

**Handaxe:** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5ft., or range 20/60 one target. Hit: **4** (1d6+1) slashing damage.

## APPENDIX C: MISC.

**GM NOTES:** The general information of the area and adventure encounters are described. Feel free to add, delete, and edit as you desire. I believe each DM should add their own flavor in their own way to challenge their players in how they determine is best.