

TALONA'S TOUCH



POISONS OF THE FORGOTTEN REALMS

by **GEORGE KRASHOS**



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TALONA'S TOUCH: POISONS OF THE FORGOTTEN REALMS

In the end, it always outmatched strength of arm or speed of spell. My poisons brought low Athkatla's mighty Goromund "the Lord of the Lanes", the archmage Beltyn, the orc chieftain Rauthgog and a host of others whose names are now lost to memory. A few drops, a speedy strike or the touch of bare flesh was all it ever took to bring them within Talona's embrace. She of the Deadly Kiss drank deeply of my labours and favoured me with her deadly blessings.

Targoth "the Silent" Urthang
Mephitic Musings: Tales of a Master Assassin
Year of the Envenomed Bolt (339 DR)

The annals of the Realms are filled with stories of deadly poisonings and the changes they have wrought to kingdoms and those who dwell within them. Loremasters and sages continue to keep alive the tales of such legendary figures as King Jhaster II of Ammarindar who fell to the poisoned arrows of the orcs of the Blacktusk Horde or the giant chieftain Kormuk of the Lone Mount, slain after partaking of cattle carcasses liberally poisoned by the adventuring band known as the Company of the Stormsword.

The use of poison remains a preserve of the unprincipled or the desperate but as the history of Faerûn has shown time and again, the lands of the Realms holds no lack of such individuals. Many alchemists and apothecaries make a lucrative living from brewing various poisons and the secrets of their making are closely guarded. The complete formula for a well-known poison can be sold for many thousand gold pieces, with prices doubling or even tripling for more rare toxins. Similarly, many ingredients command a premium and adventurers are commonly commissioned to search out those that are rare and/or difficult-to-obtain. Presented here are a number of poisons unique to the Forgotten Realms, which DMs are free to introduce into their campaigns and if so minded, inflict upon their players.

Poisons

Item	Type	Price per Dose
Belpren	Contact	200 gp
Calastra	Inhaled	700 gp
Dwarfbane	Injury	750 gp
Falath	Inhaled	500 gp
Huld	Injury	250 gp
Horel	Injury	350 gp
Inthal	Contact	1,000 gp
Jesseret	Ingested	400 gp
Jeteye	Ingested	150 gp
Lhurdas	Ingested	900 gp
Morilth	Inhaled	550 gp
Nessel	Contact	450 gp
Orvas	Ingested/Injury	350 gp
Prespra	Ingested	300 gp
Razash	Contact	2,000 gp
Saisha	Ingested	150 gp
Srindym	Ingested	2,500 gp
Tharace	Ingested/Injury	600 gp
Ulcrun	Injury	800 gp
Varrakas	Ingested	1,500 gp

Belpren (*Contact*). This luminescent blue, acidic substance was created long ago by the alchemist Urdril of Innarlith and is a favourite of poisoners throughout the Tashalar and the lands around the Lake of Steam, being commonly used in traps. Belpren does not corrode metal, nor does it harm cloth or cured leather. It dries and becomes ineffective if exposed to air, and so cannot be used on weapons.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 24 (7d6) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 hour. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage and isn't poisoned.

Calastra (*Inhaled*). This poisonous vapour is derived from the mixing of ground sulphur, the acid known as "steelbite" and the powdered roots of the cala tuber (an ever rarer staple vegetable that is found throughout the eastern Shaar). It is effective against all creatures and used extensively in the Vilhon Reach and Old Empires. Creatures affected by calastra suffer itching and skin irritation, which gradually turns into large blisters filled with yellow fluid wherever the poison has contacted the skin.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 3 (1d6) poison damage, and must repeat the saving throw at the start of each of its next 3 turns. On a second failed save, the creature takes 7 (2d6) poison damage. On a third failed save, the creature takes 10 (3d6) poison damage. On a fourth failed save, the creature takes 14 (4d6) poison damage. On a successful save, the poison ends.

Dwarfbane (*Injury*). This gummy oil is poisonous only to dwarves and causes pain "like blazing skewers" to all affected creatures. Known to dwarves as "arlathuld" and to orcs and other goblinkin as "kezzartar", the making of dwarfbane is known to require dwarf blood, rael moss and venom from the cave adder, found only in the Spine of the World mountain range. It is well known that use of this poison is met with swift and violent reprisals from vengeful dwarves.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage, and must repeat the saving throw at the start of each of its turns. On each successive failed save, the creature takes 7 (2d6) poison damage. After a successful save, the poison ends. Note that the dwarven resilience racial trait does not apply in relation to the poisonous effects of dwarfbane.

Falath (*Inhaled*). This noxious green vapour was once a secret of the illithid-controlled Black Veil assassins located in the Troll Mountains and destroyed in the Year of the Chevalier (1048 DR) by the all-paladin adventuring company known as the Brotherhood of Tears. The crafting of falath requires several ingredients including powdered green dragon scales and the reagent known as Oltho's Tincture. It is believed that the complete formula can be found at both Candlekeep and the Imperium Archives in Calimport, while the sages Thalovaern of Myratma and Vardarna "the Dark" of Esmeltaran are believed to possess partial recipes.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (4d6) poison damage and is poisoned for 3d6 minutes. The poisoned creature becomes disoriented and has vulnerability to psychic damage. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage and suffers no other ill effects.

Huld (*Injury*). Referred to as "Leap" or "Deathdance" by sages and alchemists in the Realms, this odourless oil causes severe muscle spasms leading to loss of motor control, balance and speech and causing a victim to become helpless as it thrashes and moves about rapidly and wildly. This poison is a favourite of the Fire Knives of

Westgate and it is whispered that the wizard Sandar “Silkenvoice” Kathklan of Daerlun provides huld to unscrupulous Sembians for stiff fees.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or become incapacitated and unable to speak for 1d6 minutes. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Horel (*Injury*). A distillation of the lily pad-like floating freshwater weed called oxhrel and also “halfling’s hand” mixed in particular (and secret) proportions with dried and powdered horseradish, this poison has a greenish hue and causes violent and involuntary convulsions. As poisons go, horel is common in the Heartlands as oxhrel grows profusely in the Marsh of Chelimber. The alchemist Jarion Evengarl of Scornubel is known to have the complete recipe for this poison and his clients include the infamous Cult of the Dragon.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The poisoned creature automatically fails Strength and Dexterity saving throws. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Inthal (*Contact*). An ancient poison of the Old Empires and known to have slain many a tomb robber throughout that region, the creation of inthal is believed to involve belladonna, the venom of the salt scorpion (found in the environs of Azulduth, the Lake of Salt) and oil from the black palm of Asanibis, the Great Vale. The resulting clear oil leaves a faint grey patina on any affected surface, appearing as nothing more than dust (“albeit of a deadlier variety than that more commonly found”, as the master-thief Larhund of Mishtan once commented).

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or take 48 (14d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If a creature is exposed to this poison on more than one occasion before taking a long rest, any subsequent saving throws to avoid its effects have disadvantage.

Jesseret (*Ingested*). Named for the lady thief of Waterdeep who concocted it centuries ago, this prickly-peppery (tongue numbing) purple powder involves boiling at least seven ingredients. One of these is the ridgecone, a venomous sea snail found in the shallows of the Sword Coast North, between Neverwinter and Luskan and the islands of the Trackless Sea west to Ruathym.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage and become poisoned. The poisoned creature must repeat the saving throw every hour, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save. Until this poison ends, the damage the poison deals can’t be healed by any means. After three successful saving throws, the effect ends and the creature can heal normally.

Jeteye (*Ingested*). This glossy (reflective) black liquid causes the pupils of the affected creature’s eyes to go black, although vision is unaffected. The victim feels no pain for jeteye kills all pain and tactile sensation. Known as “derrun” to the Uthgardt tribes of the Elk and Grey Wolf who most commonly use it, its recipe is a closely guarded secret. It is thought that some Harpers know the formula and the evil wizard Marthel is known to have passed on the recipe to the Arcane Brotherhood after spending a year *shapechanged* as a wolf to gain its secrets.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. The creature is immune to any effect that causes it to become incapacitated while poisoned.

Lhurdas (*Ingested*). Also known as “the yellow death” and “Beltyr’s last drink” for its most famous victim, this favourite of poisoners throughout the South has a sharp, dry white-grape flavour and readily mixes with white wine. Lhurdas produces rapid nausea, convulsions and terrific internal cramps and burning pain. The key ingredient in crafting this poison is darnel grass, which has been infected by a particular fungus. Known as “redweed” in Tethyr, this poisonous grass is usually torched on discovery but a few unprincipled farmers cultivate small patches for sale to alchemists and apothecaries.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 42 (12d6) poison damage and is poisoned for 12 hours. The poisoned creature is paralyzed. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage and isn’t poisoned.

Morilth (*Inhaled*). This poison is made from the edible herb of the same name, which can be found throughout the lands of the Easting Reach. Several further ingredients including crushed petals from the rare ologal flower and a few drops of harpy blood are added to it, and then the whole burnt to ashes. The resulting smoke is poisonous and usually captured in glass vials or spheres. It is believed that the Shadowmasters of Telflamm are expert users of morilth, although its ingredients make it a rare and seldom used poison.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 24 hours. The poisoned creature is blinded and deafened.

Nessel (*Contact*). This infamous poison is favoured by the assassin Arigarn “the Faceless” Telaumar who accepts commissions through his contact Lalathra at the Silken Bonds festhall in Saerloon. He discovered the recipe in a mouldering book he retrieved from a Netherese tomb in the shifting sands of Anauroch, which he subsequently sold through intermediaries to the Talontar of the Place of Waiting Death in Westgate. The recipe has enjoyed wider circulation since the individual known as “Nightdagger” (a pseudonym to be sure and believed to be a renegade member of the Night Masks) sold it to the alchemist Partran of Iriaebor, who has disseminated it widely for much gold.

A creature subjected to this poison must make DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. The poisoned creature is affected as if under the effects of the *slow* spell (see *Players Handbook*, p.277). The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Orvas (*Ingested/Injury*). Orvas is a translucent liquid with a green cast and a bittersweet taste. This versatile poison is believed to be the work of the master poisoner Corth who lived in various cities of the Vilhon Reach in the 1200s DR. It is reported that Corth collected his life’s work in a folio that was buried with him in a hidden, trap-laden tomb somewhere in the Cloven Mountains. At least two adventuring companies, the Dragonshields of Arrabar and the Red Wizard-sponsored Ring of Fireswords, have ventured forth to discover the tomb in recent seasons and failed to return.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save it takes 35 (10d6) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 hour. On a successful save, the creature is not poisoned.

Prespra (*Ingested*). Also called “Mother’s Bane”, this odourless, colourless liquid mixes readily with all drinkable liquids except milk and dairy products from which it separates. Known ingredients include belladonna, the venom from the yellow sea asp native to the Nagawater and powdered bone beetle. This poison causes extreme lassitude and feelings of debility.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 17 (5d6) poison damage and become poisoned. The poisoned creature deals only half damage with weapon attacks that use Strength. The poisoned creature can repeat the saving throw after taking a long rest and on a successful one the effect ends.

Razash (*Contact*). First noted in court records of Qysar Shoon IV and a secret of the Imperium until its fall, razash is a colourless oil that has a faint acrid aroma and is distilled from black dragon blood. Rare and deadly, the full recipe for this poison is known to the rulers of Calimshan and it is also recorded in the Royal Library of Tethyr. It is believed by many sages that the ruins of Castle Trinity must hold at least a partial recipe for razash.

A creature subjected to this poison suffers no ill effects until it is the target of magical healing. If the poison is not detected and neutralized before then, the creature must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 38 (11d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The magical healing takes no effect on the creature whether or not the save is successful.

Saisha (*Ingested*). Made from plants including maidbane, monk’s pepper and laburnam, this flavourless, reddish liquid is known as “Hammerlock” for the rigid immobility it causes. It is commonly used by slavers to subdue their prey and is a favourite of the unscrupulous in Sembia, the Moonsea and the Vast. Saisha is a staple of Zhentarim agents and it is known that the Harpers have developed an antidote after many years of falling afoul of it.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 3d4 hours. The poisoned creature is paralyzed.

Srindym (*Ingested*). An iridescent, silver liquid, this poison was created by the elves millennia ago and used by them against “lesser races”. In these times very few elves or anyone else knows how to make srindym so it is rare and expensive. Its making involves elven blood, moonlight, the casting of multiple spells and has always been a closely guarded secret, even among the Fair Folk. The use of srindym is a common signature in the nefarious activities of the Eldreth Veluuthra.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 20 Constitution Saving Throw. On a failed save, it takes 42 (12d6) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 hour. The poisoned creature is incapacitated. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage and is stunned for 1 minute.

Tharace (*Ingested/Injury*). This brownish powder is created from a precise and secret mixture of the powdered roots of the talltuft and marath grasses, the streambank plant lurteasel and a groundvine known as “blood-drops” or “bloodfall” for its tiny,

red berry clusters. Commonly added to food, pine gum and various tree saps can also “bind” powdery tharace to metallic weapons without altering its toxicity.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) poison damage on a failed save. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature takes 42 (12d6) poison damage. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage.

Ulcrun (*Injury*). A milky, white viscous liquid that is used by orcs and ogres throughout the Moonsea North, the secrets of ulcrun are believed to have been taught to those savage tribes by Malimshaer, one of the nycaloths of the Trio Nefarious. Its widespread use during the Weeping War means that to this day, elves will hunt down and slay anyone associated with the creation or use of this poison. Due to its unique nature, ulcrun has no effect on ogres, orcs, hobgoblins or goblins.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (4d6) poison damage and become poisoned. The poisoned creature has vulnerability to piercing and slashing damage. The poisoned creature must repeat the saving throw every hour, taking 3 (1d6) poison damage on a failed save and remaining poisoned. On a successful save, the creature takes no damage and isn't poisoned.

Varrakas (*Ingested*). This black, thick syrup has a slightly oily taste but no strong flavour. It is commonly hidden in sauces and gravies. A favourite poison of the Zhentarim, it is often used by the five assassins known as the Black Moons, successors to the Three. Their recent victims include the merchant “lord” Garlane Nothtower of Yhaunn, the mercenary Orbos of the Five Banners and the wizard Perendil “the Artflame” Brinhan, all at the Feast of Ravens at Midsummer in Ordulin. The Sembian authorities are currently keen to discover how the Black Moons managed to bring such a volume of varrakas into the realm, right under their noses.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 3 (1d6) poison damage and become poisoned for 5 minutes. The poisoned creature must repeat the saving throw every minute, taking 7 (2d6) poison damage on a second failed save, 10 (3d6) poison damage on a third failed save and so on. Until this poison ends, the damage the poison deals can't be healed by any means. On a successful save, or after 5 minutes, the creature is no longer poisoned. Any creature that has imbibed alcohol within an hour of being exposed to varrakas has disadvantage on any saving throws to avoid its effects.