



Council of Thieves

PLAYER'S GUIDE

Council of Thieves

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Thrown into chaos after the death of the god Aroden, Cheliox found a new spiritual guide to help tame the resulting lawlessness and destruction—Asmodeus. Dominated today by the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune, Cheliox is a land of inflexible order, like a rigid steel blade tempered in the fires of Hell. It is a land where nobility and virtue take second place to a ruthlessly imposed harmony. It is a place where talks of past glories are only whispered in the dark, where heroic ambitions are kept to oneself, and where normal people strive to blend into the safe anonymity of the crowd. It is here, in the country's former capital of Westcrown, that the Council of Thieves Adventure Path takes shape.



In this Adventure Path, you and your fellow adventurers help restore the crumbling honor of Westcrown, fight against a decades-old curse, and do battle with an enemy far more deadly than any simple fiend, all in the hopes of returning a measure of splendor to this long-beset metropolis. But before you set off on this quest, this guide will prepare you for the challenges you and your companions will surely face. Pay close attention to the wisdom contained herein, for it may save not only your life, but your very soul.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Aside from introducing the Council of Thieves Adventure Path, this guide is intended to aid players in the creation of characters native to Cheliox. The information presented herein is common knowledge, especially to characters who call Cheliox home. This guide is organized to help root characters in the area in and around Westcrown—the focal point of this entire Adventure Path. While any character can take part in the Council of Thieves, those created and using this guide are likely to have more personal motivation as the events of the Adventure Path unfold. As the first adventure, “The Bastards of Erebus” in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #25, begins in Westcrown, characters should consider being local to that community or have a reason for a long-term visit to the area. If you choose to create a character from beyond Cheliox's borders, work with your GM to establish a reason for being in Westcrown.

If this guide whets your appetite for more information about Cheliox, be sure to check out the *Pathfinder Chronicles* supplement *Cheliox: Empire of Devils*, which explores the country in detail and gives a player-friendly overview of the city of Westcrown. In addition, a comprehensive article on Westcrown aimed at GMs can be found in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #25. An additional GM's Guide was at one point planned to hold information expanding

the Westcrown region, but that content now makes up the Westcrown Environs section of this supplement, adding even more information for both players and GMs. Beyond that, check out the *Pathfinder* website (paizo.com/pathfinder) and each subsequent volume for more character ideas, discussions, and revelations about Westcrown, this Adventure Path, and the surrounding world. Rest assured, this guide is merely the first glimpse, and your adventures in Cheliox are just beginning!

ADVENTURERS

Cheliox is a land of deception and intrigue, backstabbing and bluffs. Westcrown in particular labors under a cursed history, with all manner of loosely moraled individuals populating its many shadowed streets. A flame shines all the brighter in the dim Westcrown, though, and adventurers of courage and principle find their services greatly needed, and the ability to make a difference draws heroes from all over the land. The Wiscrani (as citizens of Westcrown are known) often live hard lives, yet they carry themselves with pride nevertheless.

The following section presents information on the most common races and classes that might rise to glory during the course of the Council of Thieves Adventure Path. For additional information about the races and classes of Golarion, consult the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*.

RACES

Cheliox is primarily a country of humans, but other humanoids of any type can be found in Westcrown and the other large cities. Unlike most of Golarion, Cheliox is also noted for an unusually large tiefling population, and as such, this fiend-blooded race is included. Check with your GM for permission to play a tiefling character before you start, though, as tieflings are slightly more powerful than the base races.

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Dwarves

Westcrown and other large Chelish cities do a brisk business in recovered relics and salvaged goods from abandoned noble estates, and dwarven traders often frequent Cheliox because of these rare items. Most Chelish cities have ruined areas where entire estates collapsed due to neglect and abandonment; many dwarven adventurers enjoy spelunking in these “urban ruins.”

Some dwarves come to Cheliox as emissaries from their homelands, here to do business with wealthy houses. Rumor holds that in some dwarven communities, mining operations have provoked skirmishes with fiends who live under the earth. Dwarven emissaries may be in Cheliox seeking better methods for fighting these fiends—or they might seek out such techniques for their own personal benefit.

Elves

The Barrowood, just north of Westcrown, holds a small elven settlement. In the last few decades, some elves have drifted from the woods. A few left the country altogether, while others settled in small communities within Westcrown and other Chelish cities.

Elven communities tend to be insular and mistrustful of humans and tieflings entering their districts; humanoids of other types are met with less hostility. In particular, elves are greatly suspicious of human nobility in Cheliox, for it is here that the devotion (be it legitimate or lip-service) to Asmodeus and diabolism are most common. As a result, elves in Cheliox are more likely to be found dwelling among the poorer folk rather than amid the higher classes.

Gnomes

Gnomes with a flair for summoning magic sometimes gravitate to Cheliox in the hopes of learning ways to summon and bind powerful devils. Gnome wizards sometimes garner sponsorship from noble houses, but later may find it difficult to extricate themselves from such agreements. Most prefer to hire out their services on a case-by-case basis and use their fee to finance expeditions into abandoned estates that might hold ancient texts.

Gnomes in an advanced state of bleaching, in search for the most extravagant experiences available, might come to Cheliox to flirt with the danger of diabolists and treachery. Such work is easy to come by, but hard to forget. Those that do so come away revitalized, but their experiences color them in some way, with soot-black hair, flame-tinted eyes, or extra-long nails.

Halflings

Decadent noble houses require many servants to keep the estate running. Halflings in Cheliox—as elsewhere—are favored as slaves due to their stamina and their amenable

natures. Even better, at half the size they take up half the room when it comes to providing housing. Over the years, many halfling slaves have found themselves abandoned when their employers died or fled the country, and halflings in Westcrown and other large cities are often descended from these freed slaves.

Halflings are ubiquitous in Chelish cities, and some make good use of their ability to go unnoticed. A halfling servant may secretly act as a spy for another house or for a guild, secret organization, or even an adventuring party. Halflings are part of many different city affairs, from housekeeping in noble estates to scribing in courthouses, and when information is needed, one usually finds a halfling in the know.

Half-Elves

Westcrown has something of a reputation in Cheliox as being a place where society's leftovers live, and as a result, half-elves often find themselves drawn to the city. Most arrive from other lands and settle in Westcrown for personal reasons, but enjoy the fact that little is made of their mixed heritage—tieflings take the brunt of the racism normally reserved for half-elves here. In fact, Tieflings with minor fiendish features sometimes attempt to pass themselves off as half-elves. Unfortunately for both races, this tactic is well known and often leads to innate mistrust of half-elves. Half-elves may even be required to prove they are what they appear to be before entering certain areas.

Half-Orcs

Half-orcs can live a comfortable existence in a city like Westcrown. The presence of tieflings and diabolists makes half-orcs seem less of a threat, even pedestrian. The countless political games in progress often require hired muscle, and noble estates are always hiring more guards. Some half-orcs take offense at being taken for mere thugs, but many find security in such jobs. Some half-orcs find it so comfortable in the cosmopolitan streets of Westcrown or Egorian that they make permanent homes there. Others plan to stay in Cheliox only as long as it remains profitable and then move on to grander adventures elsewhere.

Humans

Most of Cheliox's citizens are humans, and most humans belong to some sort of noble line. Those that don't tend to act as if they do—in reality, the House of Thrune officially recognizes some 250 noble families. Many more claim nobility or pretend to relate to one of the legitimate houses. Lineage and standing are currencies almost as valuable as gold in some circles.

Ethnic Chelaxians amount to around three-quarters of the human population in Cheliox. Azlanti and Taldans

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make up most other humans in the country. Many ethnic Chelaxians claim a bloodline descended from Old Azlant, and some even portray themselves as genuine Azlanti (no one has ever been able to prove pure Azlanti heritage, though). Taldans get along well with Chelish nobility, finding it easy to enter and make an impression in high society. Taldan women are notorious trend-setters in Chelish society, always on the cusp of the latest fashion and ready to fiercely admonish those who fail to follow their lead. Taldan men have caused many troubles for Chelish noble houses over the years with their interest in attractive, young noble ladies.

Traders from more distant lands are common, as are visitors on a particular mission. Cheliah's ability to produce magic items and masterwork weapons draws traders from many different areas. Criminals on the run sometimes see Cheliah as an easy place to live a shady life but underestimate the rigid order of Chelish guilds.

Tieflings

Tieflings enjoy an unusual status in Cheliah, though perhaps "enjoy" is the wrong word. Chelish diabolists view tieflings as subordinate to humans. Tieflings are seen as lesser beings, born of human fallibility or devilish trickery. Noble houses hide tiefling heirs away, ashamed of their very existence, or reluctantly allow them some control over the family business (usually if there is no other reliable heir available).

Because of this tarnished history, most tieflings in Cheliah carry around hatred and resentment in their hearts. Some strive for greatness as a way to prove their worth and show up those who failed to appreciate their talents. Others embrace their heritage and become fiends in mortal form, running illegal operations, thieving, murdering, or worse. Most fall somewhere between these extremes, struggling to find their path among the shadowed streets.

CLASSES

While some classes are more strongly represented in Cheliah, all 11 standard character classes exist and thrive within the complicated country. Cheliah was once a mighty empire, spanning many modern nations, but though Cheliah's borders have receded, its cosmopolitan history allows for many different types of heroes.

Barbarians

A few barbarians make their way to Cheliah. On occasion, an exiled Shoanti or a few lone survivors from a massacred tribe settle in Cheliah. At other times, a barbarian might be an exotic slave recently released from his duties and made a free man or woman. Such individuals tend to be haunted by some past tragedy, sullen loners who seek out dangerous

Playing Tieflings

Since tieflings are slightly more powerful than the base races, check with your GM before you create a tiefling character. The difference in power is slight enough that some GMs won't mind letting you play a tiefling, but the following requirements can help to mitigate the disparity between the races—your GM may require one of the following from you (or a similar restriction) if you play a tiefling. Work with your GM to find a solution that pleases your entire group.

XP Debt: Before you gain actual XP to progress in level, you must "work off" an XP debt equal to half what you normally need to reach 2nd level. This puts you slightly behind other characters in the party, who will reach higher levels more quickly than your character, but as you gain levels, this gap narrows.

NPC Class: Your GM might require you to begin a tiefling character as a commoner, expert, adept, or warrior at 1st level.

Tiefling Trait: If your GM allows bonus traits, he might require your tiefling character to take the "Infernal Bastard" trait (see page 9); this trait is designed to "depower" the basic tiefling race to bring it more in line with the power afforded to a typical PC race.

PC Boons: Your GM can simply give the other PCs a boon to bring their races up in level to equal the slightly increased power afforded to the tiefling. Allowing a non-tiefling PC to gain an additional +2 bonus to an ability score that doesn't already have a racial bonus applied to it is one solution, as is increasing a non-tiefling's starting cash by 500 gp.

work and decadent distractions. Half-orc barbarians who could not find a place in their home tribes also appear in Cheliah. Grunt work—as bodyguards, enforcers, gladiators, thugs—is available for barbarians who wish to find jobs in Westcrown or other major cities. Employers are reluctant to trust barbarians with important guard work, though, due to their frenzied and chaotic fighting style; in a lawful country like Cheliah, barbarians make most people nervous.

Bards

Bards enjoy great popularity in the plush drawing rooms of the noble houses. A certain flair for the dark and twisted serves bards well in Cheliah; many in the upper-class enjoy a tale of horror more than a simple love story, and muddled morals can make it difficult to agree on what constitutes a happy ending. Acrobats, jugglers, and musicians are always in high demand for parties and ceremonies. Historians, too, are drawn to Cheliah. Yet it is the actor who typically

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achieves the greatest fame in Westcrown itself; a bard who makes sure to take skill ranks in Perform (act) has a significant advantage over others in the city of Westcrown. The country holds such a rich and disturbing history, full of tragedy and lost information, that it seems a veritable treasure trove to those interested in the past. Bards with a strong knowledge of genealogy and blood histories find much work in tracing family lines, but they must beware of uncovering the wrong information.

Clerics

Although the nobility of Cheliah openly pays lip service to Asmodeus, the majority of the nation's people are little different from those found in other lands—only more oppressed and guarded about their actual faith. With the same hopes and goals as their neighbors, Chelish folk find appeal in the same deities as other common folk, though many do so under the burning eye of Asmodeus's faithful. Thus, adherents of any faith might be found in Cheliah, though they tend to keep their convictions subtle in the face of rampant diabolism. Clerics of all religions practice in the country, though the numbers of non-lawful deities are significantly fewer, usually being little more than traveling priests. Westcrown was once an epicenter of Aroden worship, but in the century since his death actual worshipers of this dead god have all but vanished, even if his shrines still stand. In most cases, clerics of Iomedae have taken up the mantle of honoring Aroden's legacy.

Small temples to Erastil, Abadar, and in particular to Iomedae do exist in Westcrown, the former mostly in rural communities, the others in larger cities. Where Iomedae's faith exists, it tends to emphasize her aspects of rulership and justice over honor and fairness. This may be the influence of the rigid noble hierarchy in Cheliah, or the power of the infernal faiths of the aristocracy, or it may be a survival mechanism; to preach too openly on goodness and fair play in the streets of Westcrown could mean trouble for the church.

Clerics and worshipers of all other gods exist in Cheliah, but most keep their activities hidden, or at least private. No worship is outright forbidden in Cheliah, but going against tradition can draw unwanted attention. The exception to this is the church of Shelyn. Her followers openly maintain shrines and conduct colorful, beautiful ceremonies in public (usually involving acrobats and musicians). For the darkness pervasive throughout Cheliah, even the decadent nobles can't resist the appeal and entertainments of the goddess of beauty.

Druids

In rural areas of Cheliah, druids often assist settlements with agricultural pursuits, animal husbandry, and

weather-related issues. Villagers may not recognize the wise old hermit or hedge witch as a druid, but their services are generally welcome, if not fully understood. Yet even in cities like Westcrown, druids are not unknown. As a port city, druids with particular focus on water and weather are often sought out for advice or aid. Druids who help control some of Westcrown's problems with pests like rats, ravens, and other animals, and who serve to ease the clash between civilization and nature, are always welcome in Cheliah. The sight of a druid walking the streets of Westcrown with an animal companion at her side is not uncommon—most Wiscrani druids have badger, bird, dog, horse, pony, or wolf companions, but in such a city where exotic delights are much sought after as distractions from daily life, stranger companions like apes or dinosaurs or snakes are not unheard of.

In cities, some druids assist the church of Shelyn in creating urban parks and gardens for all to enjoy. Others are simply loners looking for ways to stop the encroachment of urban centers on the surrounding wildlife, or methods to introduce more wild elements into cities. The influence of diabolism and shadow magic in large cities can sometimes warp local wildlife, and some druids go to great lengths to uncover the sources of this corruption and end them.

Fighters

Fighters rarely lack employment opportunity in any area of Golarion. In Chelish cities, fighters are always in demand as bodyguards, estate guards, captains of private security details, and muscle for hire. Many noble houses hire fighters as personal trainers for their heirs. City guards, of course, are always looking for trained fighters. A fighter's adaptability and experience make him an asset to Chelish nobility. Trustworthy fighters may be granted particularly important missions, such as guarding valuable magic items, family treasures, or noble heirs. Such work carries a risk, however; should a fighter triumph in his mission, he must be on guard for employers who would rather kill their hireling than leave sensitive information in his grasp.

Monks

Many Chelaxians see the benefit of expertise in unarmed combat. Most political dealings and secret conclaves ban weapons, so monks are exceptionally valuable to locals. Noble houses consider it prudent to arm their heirs with the ability to defend themselves, even weaponless. A monk forced to abandon his order for any number of reasons can often find work as a trainer in Cheliah.

Paladins

Paladins face many of the same challenges clerics do in Cheliah. Worshipers of Asmodeus openly walk the streets, protected by the sadistic but nonetheless legitimate House

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of Thrune. A paladin in Cheliah, particularly a major city such as Westcrown or Egorian, must take care to rein in her righteous impulses and work with the existing law rather than attempting to barge through it. A well-intentioned strike against evil could result in brutal government-sanctioned retaliation, and an imprisoned paladin combats evil far less effectively than a free one. Yet for all the corruption of the country's rulers, there are many more evils to face within the country, and a paladin might work great deeds in the eyes of Cheliah's people by combating subtler and potentially even more destructive evils. Paladins of Abadar, Iomedae, and Shelyn most often find their way to Cheliah, their devotion to order typically being well satisfied within the rigid society even as they crusade to make the land a better place for its people.

Rangers

Rangers find many reasons to wander Cheliah. Many twisted beasts not seen elsewhere exist in the empire of devils, fascinating to rangers who seek to hunt or tame particularly rare species. Rangers with a particular bent toward tracking and destroying creatures often find employ even in major cities, as even after centuries of rule the country holds many wildernesses. Thugs and brigands of every stripe cause havoc throughout the country, and a ranger adept at hunting humanoids can be an asset to city guards and noble houses alike. In the ancient and often ruined streets of Chelish cities, restless spirits can linger, guarding the treasure living adventurers now seek. Of course, in a country ruled by diabolists, rangers with a penchant for hunting the fiend-blooded prove extremely valuable—and extremely dangerous.

A ranger's best choices for favored enemies in Council of Thieves are (listed alphabetically): humanoid (human), outsider (lawful), outsider (evil), outsider (native), undead. Good secondary choices include aberration, animal, construct, fey, humanoid (giant), magical beast, and monstrous humanoid. Opportunities to fight all monster types occur in the Adventure Path, but the ones listed above are most common.

A ranger's best choice for favored terrains are urban and underground. Good secondary choices include forest, mountain/hills, swamp, or water. Other favored terrain choices are poor selections for the Council of Thieves Adventure Path.

Rogues

Despite its devious denizens and dark reputation, Cheliah has a strong love for law and order. Their bond with devils and innate desire for control influences Chelaxians to conduct their affairs with a certain respect for legality. Even those nobles most committed to maintaining an orderly and controlled city, though, can always find use

Hellknights

The lawful orders of Hellknights are very much a part of Westcrown. The closest Hellknight fortress, Citadel Rivad (see page 10), houses the oldest of the Hellknight orders—the Order of the Rack. During the Adventure Path, the Order of the Rack may take on a relatively adversarial role, and a PC who wants to become a Hellknight should not associate himself with this order. The *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting* provides more information about other Hellknight orders, and *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #27 will contain extensive information about these orders, including a prestige class that characters can aspire to take. In particular, the Order of the Scourge is an excellent choice for a PC Hellknight, as this order is (among other things) quite keen on opposing organized crime.

Although details of that prestige class are not presented here, the requirements your character needs to fulfill before taking the 15-level Hellknight prestige class are as follows:

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Weapon Proficiency: You must be proficient with all martial weapons.

Armor Proficiency: You must be proficient with heavy armor.

Alignment: Any lawful.

Special: You must defeat a devil as part of a special ceremony witnessed by another Hellknight. More details on this ritual are presented in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #27, but this information is not necessary for you to worry about too much during character creation or your first few levels of experience.

for a skilled rogue. The strict laws and watchful guards of Chelish cities create a fascinating dichotomy, ending most upstart gangs and lawless ventures before they begin, while practically encouraging the efforts of subtler and more organized criminal ventures. Both Egorian and Westcrown have fertile rumor mills concerning pervasive criminal organizations, though the rulers of both cities deny the existence of such.

Noble houses also make frequent use of spies and infiltrators. Thieves are rarely used to steal items or money from rival houses—doing so is viewed as tasteless and vulgar. Assassination, however, is a respected and time-honored tradition among the nobility, and assassins, kidnappers, and spies rarely have trouble finding work in Cheliah.

A rogue (or, indeed, any character with a large amount of skills) would do well to consider spending skill ranks on the following skill choices in particular for Council of Thieves: Bluff, Diplomacy, Disable Device, Disguise, Knowledge (all), Linguistics, Perception, Perform (act), Sense Motive, Spellcraft, Stealth, and Use Magic Device.

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Sorcerers

It comes as no surprise that most sorcerers native to Cheliah trace their unusual powers to infernal ancestry. Tieflings often manifest sorcerous powers thanks to their muddled bloodline; sorcerers in general are thus viewed with some suspicion thanks to their cultural association with tieflings. Sorcerers are also seen as chaotic and uncontrolled compared to disciplined wizards, and thus garner more suspicion from the orderly populace. Upon occasion, sorcerers from outside of Cheliah, ones who believe their powers come from an infernal bloodline, come to Chelish cities in search of their heritage. These seekers believe the truth of their family line lies buried in a crumbling estate or inked into a history book in some noble library. Uncovering the information can take months, even years—if the information even exists at all.

While most Chelish sorcerers have an infernal bloodline, all bloodlines are represented to some degree in Westcrown. Abyssal is perhaps the rarest, though.

Wizards

Wizards are respected as scholars and disciplined students of the arcane. Wizards who specialize in summoning and binding fiends are, of course, common in Cheliah and their services are often sought after. Wizards from other lands who wish to learn about summoning find no better place to do so than Cheliah. Many wizards apprentice to noble houses, exchanging their services for sponsorship and access to ancient libraries. Some find this alliance contains hidden prices, however, and spend a long time performing tasks for their sponsors to pay off their debt.

Solitary wizards without interest in working for a sponsor find ample opportunity to set up laboratories for themselves in the various ruined areas of Westcrown and other cities. Wizards beholden to a particular fascination for necromancy and shadow magic find it easy to research such subjects in the ancient, crumbling towers of the cities.

Wizards (and sorcerers) who gain familiars should consider focusing on those that give bonuses to the skills listed under “Rogue” above, making cats, hawks, owls, and vipers excellent choices. Rats, toads, and weasels are also popular choices in Westcrown.

In addition, the sewers of Westcrown are infested with strange, gelatinous vermin called torbles, or “ooze bugs.” Torbles are detailed in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #25’s bestiary; if you’re curious about them and would like to take a torble as a familiar, ask your GM for more details—a torble familiar grants a +2 bonus on Craft (alchemy) checks (a lower bonus than most familiars grant, but the wily torble’s acidic bite and its strange physiology make it a bit more hearty of a creature than other, more common familiars).

COUNCIL OF THIEVES CAMPAIGN TRAITS

All manner of people make up Westcrown’s populace: the heroes, scoundrels, diabolists, saints, and everything in between. The traits presented in this guide, *Pathfinder Companion: Cheliah, Empire of Devils*, and in the Pathfinder Character Traits Web Enhancement—recently updated to the Pathfinder RPG Rules and available at paizo.com—are designed to add customization to your character, allowing you to individualize your character and further distinguish him from your standard class, as well as provide a means to help further flesh out his history. Presented here are a number of Campaign Traits specifically themed to characters playing in the Council of Thieves Adventure Path.

Campaign Traits

Campaign traits are tailored to a specific Adventure Path, and give your character a built-in reason to begin the first adventure in a new campaign. Some campaign traits also grant teamwork benefits if you choose to begin a campaign with your character having a preexisting relationship with another PC.

Campaign traits assume a lot more about your character’s backstory than other traits do, and those assumptions are mostly about very recent events in your history rather than formative childhood events. You have a certain amount of leeway in adjusting or changing a campaign trait’s expected backstory once you’ve selected which trait is right for you, but get your GM’s approval before you run with a modified backstory.

All of the following traits revolve around elements that are important to the Council of Thieves Adventure Path. You can look at these traits to get a general, spoiler-free idea about the types of foes and problems your character might face at some point during the Adventure Path—this is by design. Knowing that there are going to be elements such as thieves, shadow monsters, devils, and the like should help you build a character that fits more organically in the campaign you’re about to join. The following traits are geared toward your character teaming up with a ragtag group of adventurers, mercenaries, freed slaves, guards, and rascallions under the watchful eye of a man named

Child of Infamy: Your family has long been in show business. Perhaps it was your parents, or an older sibling, or an uncle or aunt—whatever the case, one of your close relatives is, or was, a well-known and well-loved actor or actress. That this relation died in some compromising and embarrassing way has done little to alter your family’s name and fame—if anything, the unfortunate death has increased it. When folk learn your last name, they are quick to assume you live a wild life like your ill-fated relative, and whether you bask in this notoriety or do your best to

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hide your heritage, the years of association with the acting scene have had their effect. You've certainly inherited your relative's talents, and are a larger-than-life figure, a melodramatic attention-hound, or a sly manipulator of emotions. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Perform (act) skill checks, and the skill is always considered a class skill for you. Furthermore, you've inherited some of your relative's funds, and begin play with a nest egg of 300 gp that you can spend however you wish.

Conspiracy Hunter: You've long heard rumors of dark deeds afoot in Westcrown. Shipments of valuable cargo that go missing with nary a trace or question asked. People who disappear as though they never existed. Lords of business and nobles who speak in veiled references and accidental slips of masters even they must obey. What lords rule the Westcrown underworld? Do the tales of far-reaching criminal organizations hold a hint of truth? Could the fabled Council of Thieves, said to have been purged from the city ages ago, have somehow survived or reformed? And what hold do they hold over the city today? You don't know, but you're determined to find out! Choose one of the following skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Knowledge (local), Perception, Sense Motive, or Stealth. You gain a +1 trait bonus on this skill and it is always considered a class skill for you.

Diabolist Raised: All your life you've lived within the grip of devil-possessed Cheliah. You care little for the religion of your country, but that is the way of life in the most magnificent empire in the world, and who are you to question the faith of the empire's rulers? Certainly not a fool like some of your more idealistic acquaintances, possessed of bizarre ideals about personal freedoms and egalitarian rulership—who can say whatever happened to them? You know of Hell and the rigidity of its grim rulers, you've seen devils and how they might be employed to the betterment of those with the might to control them, and you know of the dark faith of your country. You might not be a devil worshiper yourself, but there are realities to living in Cheliah, and it's always good to know what's really going on behind the scenes. Your knowledge of diabolism grants you a +1 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks made against Westcrown's nobility, and a +1 bonus on all saving throws made against mind-affecting attacks from devils.

Infernal Bastard: You are a tiefling. You might be an escaped slave, a hidden shame, or a homeless vagabond, but whatever your upbringing, life has been particularly hard on you. You have suffered greatly, nearly starving to death one winter, nearly being beaten to death by racist sailors one summer, and so on. Whether or not these experiences have made you a bitter and cynical scoundrel or a pious and hopeful optimist is up to you, but one thing is certain—you are something less than even your tiefling

kin. Perhaps it is a result of your hard life, or perhaps it is due to some fault in your fiendish heritage, but you lack a tiefling's standard resistances to cold, electricity, and fire—instead, you merely have a +2 bonus on all saving throws made against these effects. Likewise, you do not have the ability to use darkness as a spell-like ability once per day—instead, you may choose any one 0-level spell that you can instead use at will as a spell-like ability.

Shadow Child: Westcrown has long suffered under a peculiar curse, a blight that rises every night, bringing with it fell beasts that hunt the shadows. No one can say from whence these night-horrors come—though some blame the mysterious wizards of Nidal, other claim that it's some curse laid by fallen Aroden, while still others suggest some shadowy mastermind manipulates an elven brood from the depths of Westcrown's northern ruins. Whatever the case, the people of Westcrown have long feared the night, but not you. Your goal is to reclaim the darkness from the beasts that hide within. You've acclimated yourself to the dark, and thus act with greater precision in the shadow than most. When attacking targets in areas of dim light, you do not suffer the standard 20% miss chance on attack rolls for being in the poorly lit area.

The Pathfinder's Exile: Westcrown's dilapidated Pathfinder lodge of Delvehaven has long excited your imagination. Forcibly closed by the order of the city's diabolical rulers, the Pathfinders of Westcrown were exiled, forcing them to leave behind untold knowledge and the treasures of countless expeditions. Today, Delvehaven lies under the pale of fearful rumors and dark magic, and bureaucratic red tape has prevented trespass on the lodge's well-protected grounds. Having secretly and illegally contacted agents of the Pathfinders, you've expressed your interest in aiding their ventures in Cheliah—with a particular eye toward investigating Delvehaven, the source of your long-standing adventuresome interests. To your surprise, some days ago you received a message back from an unnamed Pathfinder operating underground in the country. Along with encouraging you to investigate the lodge and report your findings to the Grand Lodge in Absalom, he's sent along a battered and tarnished, yet still functional *wayfinder*. You've promised yourself to pay back your unknown contact the 500 gp cost of the item someday, but until then, it's yours to use. A *wayfinder* is a magical compass that grants you a +2 circumstance bonus on Survival checks to avoid becoming lost, and can be commanded to emit *light* as the spell (CL 5th) as a standard action. Further details on the Pathfinder Society and *wayfinders* can be found in the *Pathfinder Campaign Setting* or *Pathfinder Chronicles: Seekers of Secrets*.

Westcrown Firebrand: There's something very wrong with the world. Spouses were not meant to huddle at their windows hoping and fearing day after day that their

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loved ones returned from work safely. Parents were not meant to hush their children when questioned about what happened to their neighbors. Citizens were not meant to avert their eyes and hurry by as guardsmen beat old friends in the street. The people of Westcrown have suffered long enough! It's time for a change. But how? You've heard rumors of bands of free-thinking individuals meeting after the citywide curfew. Perhaps they might share your ideals? You are quick to react to opportunity, both physically and mentally, and know that it is with sudden and swift action that many conflicts are best resolved. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Initiative checks, and if you act in a surprise round, you gain a +1 trait bonus on all attack rolls.

Westcrown Environs

Westcrown lies as the last vestige of the old order, where the reluctant nobility sulked away after the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune subjugated the rest of the country under its new, diabolical rule. Like the fading warmth of twilight, Westcrown remains but a specter of its former glory, its ancient and eclectic architecture dominated by a crumbling northern quarter filled with an unseen menaces and its nights haunted by a twilit plague of deadly shadows.

This is the setting for the Council of Thieves Adventure Path. While a complete GM-focused article about Westcrown can be found in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #25, the following information is designed as an overview of region around that shining metropolis, land rife with tiny communities and homesteads from where all manner of heroes might arise, having been raised just outside the sight of the land's infernal aristocracy. PCs interested in making characters native to Westcrown should consult *Pathfinder Companion: Cheliah, Empire of Devils* for a player-focused summary of the city.

The Westcrown Region

Many sites important to the daily life of Westcrown that are not situated within the city walls or directly on its waters. Many Wiscrani power players draw their influence or use the effects of these places or structures to increase their influence or hold over others. In addition, the geography and environs of the South Adivian region affect all those who live therein and those who rule over them. Among the many places of interest or influence are the following.

Adivian Bridge: The Hellknight Order of the Rack garrisons the Adivian Bridge a mile west-northwest of the city. The Chelish-made bridge arches more than 30 feet above the Dhaenflow's surface, its dual gatehouses

on both ends of the bridge each manned by a score of Hellknights, at least four Signifiers, and a Paralictor in command. The double-portcullis in each gatehouse allows defenders to let travelers in and trap them between the gates, leaving them at the mercy of the murderholes overhead.

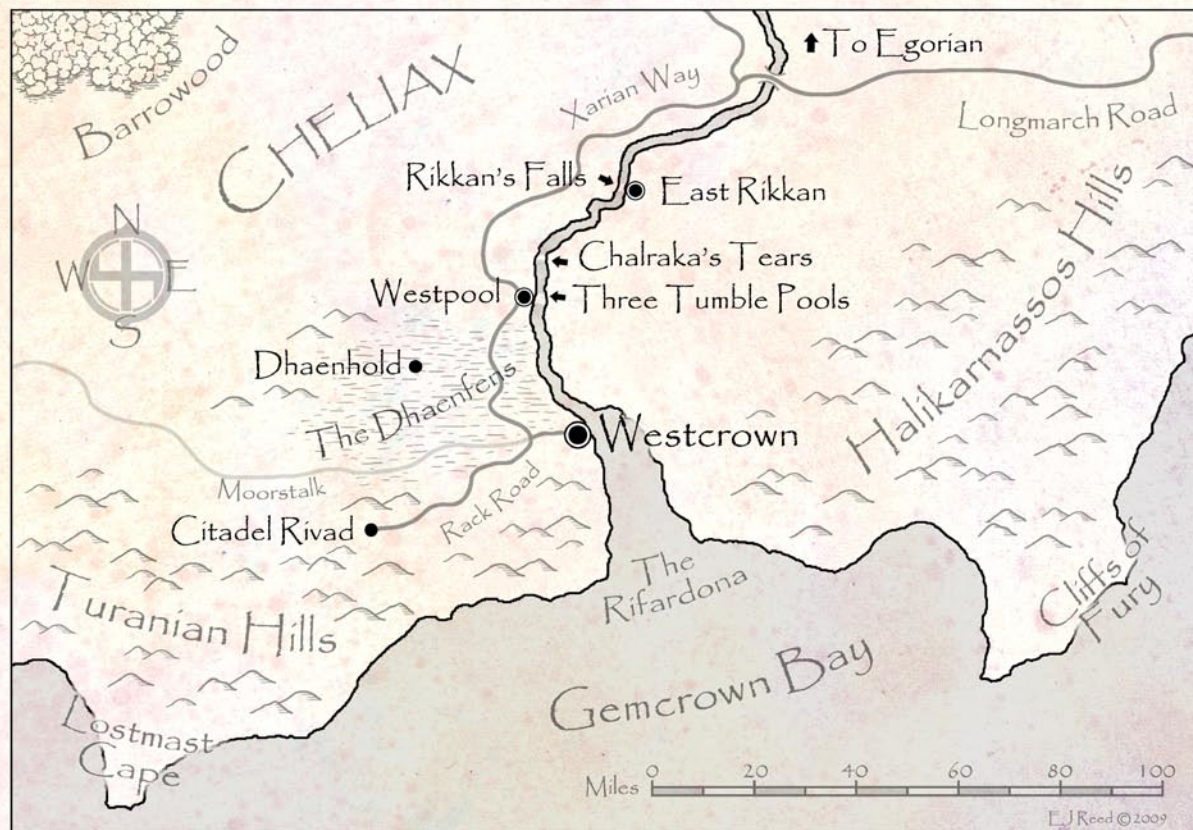
Barrowood: Far to the north beyond Lake Sorrow lies the Barrowood, a place with more stories than truths. What folk do know is the trees that grow therein are worth much to traders and craftsmen downriver or in lands east. Barroak, in the hands of Wiscrani shipwrights, becomes sleek dark craft of uncommon maneuverability and strength without added weight. Wizards talk of the even rarer shade maple, a strong wood very easily enchanted as wands or staves. While nearly 300 miles out of Westcrown, the Barrowood figures prominently among Wiscrani trades- and craftsmen. Deep within the woods, rumors of small settlements of elves persist, but they tend to keep to themselves and avoid travelers.

Citadel Rivad: Nestled among the hills less than a day's ride west of the City of Twilight is one of Cheliah's most forbidding sites—the hilltop stronghold that spawned the Order of the Rack, the first of the original Hellknights. Citadel Rivad, once the estate of a long-exiled Andoren noble, is now a sinister walled enclosure, its two gates and surrounding battlements bristling with iron spikes. The dark, three-towered fortress provides soldiers with a commanding view of their surroundings. Seven buildings within the enclosure quarter 150 of the order's soldiers, attendant slaves, and sundry servants and administrators. As the greatest holding of the first Hellknight Order, Citadel Rivad is a sought-after prestigious post for many Hellknights.

The Dhaenfens: This title refers to the collective scores of small streams, shallow pools, meres, and bogs within a ridge of hills where the Upper Adivian ends more than 25 miles west-northwest of the City of Twilights. Within these waterlogged lowlands live many types of undead, hags, will-o-wisps, and shrieks of harpies.

Dhaenhold: This long-abandoned castle rots and crumbles amid the overgrowth and wildlife of the Dhaenfens. Rumors mention treasures long held by the Mad Larquessa Olara Dhaen and her father, the insane Larquess Roakar Dhaen. They and their kin held enough power to flee Wiscrani enemies here deep in the swamps and build a three-storied castle from stones pulled from the murk. Stories say too that those fell magics eventually turned every servant, soldier, and son into rotting undead monsters, while the daughters became shrieking haunts throughout the swamp. Scores of adventurers have entered the Dhaenfens hoping to leave with Olara's treasures or diabolical knowledge. Few in Westcrown have ever heard of anyone returning from such quests.

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The Rikkan Ports: Due to more problems traveling up and downstream, two small port towns have grown up on the shores of the lake—Westpool and East Rikkan. Both hold many taverns, inns, and places for folk to relax. Both also provide any number of merchants looking to buy goods and take them upriver themselves or a vast potential of hiring or slave porters to move one's own goods. Due to the Great Stavian Arch, Westpool developed a larger community and now actually spreads up alongside the falls. East Rikkan, on the other hand, rests below the falls and has more fishermen and more accessible docks for travelers. Since 4674 AR, Imperial forces frequently occupy Westpool seeking rebels and traitors to House Thrune's rule, as many believe those who destroyed the Great Stavian Arch remain in the area, fomenting dissent against the glory of the Infernal Majestrix. Westpool's mayor, Tibalt Khrocini, gained much power and favor (and the title of Vismargrave of Adivian Falling) by press-ganging and forcibly enslaving ships and crews of enemies of certain families at court. This move also allowed him to maintain the flow of goods (if not ships) up and onto Westpolitan adels for transport to Lake Sorrow and Egorian.

The Rifardona: Despite its name, the "Reef of Aroden" is actually a massive sandbar reinforced and built up by mud

and debris flowing down the Adivian. The slightly arced barrier is more than 12 miles long, rises to within 5 feet of the surface in some places, and shelters the river's mouth against the worst sea tides and Westcrown from direct assault by naval traffic. Scores of sunken ships lie beneath the waves against the southern slopes of the Rifardona, victims of overbold explorers and arrogant pilots or simply navigators distracted by the sight of Aroden's great statue in the northern harbor. The hundreds of shipwrecks suggest why the city remained "unknown" for so long to powers in the east. Seagoing vessels must tack along the Gemcrown Cliffs at the eastern or western edges of the bay and turn along the northern cliffs within 2 miles to safely enter the brackish waters where the sea and the river mix. Between the sheltering Gemcrown Bay and the Rifardona, the City of Twilight suffers very little grief from the tides or sea storms.

The River Adivian: The massive South Adivian challenges even the mighty Sellen River of the east for strength of current, depth of both mystery and water in places, and its importance to the region's trade and travel. Much of the river is wide and slow moving, but it becomes more powerful as its waters approach Gemcrown Bay. Much to the chagrin of early explorers and some traders

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Westcrown's Foundations

Some wonder about Westcrown's islands and her western shores, but most pay the city little mind. After all, the Order of the Rack's proximity makes it prudent not to dwell on "the confusions of the past over the clarity of today." Hidden in various pockets around Westcrown are fragments of history for those with the eyes to see them. The most obvious are the sewers and channels beneath the city's streets and the extant canals of the Parego Regicon. More examples and pieces of Andoren, Taldan, and even Jistkan architecture can be found the deeper one delves beneath the city.

Those who've dared the undercity know there are sluice gates and diversionary pipes for waters in the sewers built not by Chelish hands but by previous settlers centuries ago. The sewers developed over time, having once been natural the flood channels or canals of earlier settlements when there were far more (but smaller) islands on the surface. The western shores also expanded beyond the original banks, many fallen or sunken buildings and roads filling in the muddy shallows among the islands. The consolidation and completion of the peninsular Spara occurred only within the last millennium as part of the Chelish projects to honor Aroden upon his return to the mortal world.

Those who dive into the waters or holes beneath the city risk much, for many Chelish nobles still adhere to the Oath of Adivus IV—"Where my family's blood falls, our claim to the lands burn hot from lightning's source to the deepest cavern beneath us!" Thus, their landholding includes the air above and any earth (or subterranean findings) beneath them. Meandering around the stale-aired pockets of "the lost city" is considered trespassing at best, stealing or sabotage at worst, and any caught by officials here often die without question.

still today, the Adivian proves impassable by larger vessels 80 miles upriver from Westcrown for various reasons. For 2 weeks in late Gozran, snowmelt out of the Menador Mountains floods Lake Sorrow and its rivers, increasing its depth (and its relative flow) by up to 2 feet (and widening the river by as much as a half-mile in places). In addition, the riverbed varies in many places and hides rocky shoals that have sunk many vessels. Searching for lost goods or treasures in the river or the bay remains a career for a foolhardy many in western Cheliox.

The Stavian Arches: Then Emperor Stavian I of Taldor, in his impatient fury at failing to sail up the River Adivian on his first official visit, ordered his engineers and wizards to find ways to "allow your emperor to conquer this river as he has all obstacles in his path."

They built arches near the river, first of wood and later of stone, and dug at the river's edge to craft smooth, paved side channels with gentler slopes than the falls. By 3850 AR, smaller boats could be pulled up beside the falls by pulleys and ropes (and the obligatory teams of slaves, many of whom live in small villages next to the arches); by 4100 AR, the great stone arches meant even medium-sized vessels could traverse the Adivian to Lake Rikkan. Completed in 4085 AR, the Third Stavian Arch—the massive span on the western shore of the Rikkan Falls—allowed even the largest ships to be hauled upriver for access to Lake Sorrow (provided enough slaves were on hand to successfully pull the craft and its goods up its channel ramp). The worst treason since the end of the Chelish Civil War was the destruction of the Third Stavian Arch in 4660 AR, as this again prevented larger boats and forces easy access to the capital of Cheliox. Even attempts to rebuild the arch failed due to assassinations of Imperial overseers and either the wholesale slaughter or freeing of the slave workers (both of which cause problems for House Throne).

The Three Falls: Between Lake Sorrow and Gemcrown Bay, the South Adivian descends 900 feet in elevation, and there are many rapids and three sets of waterfalls along the river. The shallows and rocks beneath all of these falls keep the river from being passable by any craft without a shallow draft like a barge or a very small boat capable of riding the rapids. Because of this, the bulk of river traffic consists of cargo barges or wide "adels" (a Chelish barge used as a personal transport instead of landed coaches). Since 3875 AR, systems of pulleys and ropes haul even fully loaded barges up all but the Rikkorn Falls, which requires portaging of goods and barges along the shores. From Westcrown heading north, the first met 26 miles upriver are the Three Tumble Pools, a staggered trio of 5-foot plummets (the greatest danger being the very shallow pools between the second and third falls). Next are Chalkraka's Tears, where a massive boulder juts out of the riverbed break to split the river into two distinct falls 33 miles north of Westcrown. Unknown hands carved the boulder's downriver side as a mourning Azlanti woman's face. The narrower western flow drops 7 feet into a deep pool very close to 15-foot-high canyon walls. The eastern falls plummet only 4 feet onto a shallow, rocky slope that equally guides boats against the eastern canyon walls or onto rocks just beneath the surface along the eastern river. Seventeen miles north lie the third and most famous falls. Rikkan's Falls, 15-foot-high horseshoe falls with a 4-mile-wide lake at the base of them, gained their name from the Andoren author of *Travels on the Far Frontier*, who first drew these falls in 1896 AR and published his journals in Almas almost 40 years later.

Turanian Hills: The coastal lands for miles around Westcrown undulate with the rolling Turanian Hills. Olives, grapes, and various other berries and food trees blanket the hills, making this a rich land for many trade goods. In addition, the Adivian River and the many creeks and streams that feed it cut into those hills, exposing clay deposits. While nut-brown in color around Lake Sorrow, clay deposits along the Adivian exhibit a peculiar reddish hue. When fired, the clay becomes a unique scarlet pottery found nowhere else. The clay found between the Three Tumble Pools and the Rikkian Falls produces especially vibrant reds, often referred to as “blood-clay,” since the spring floods make some canyon walls appear to bleed.

Valignus: “The Burning Dell” rests a bowshot southeast of Citadel Rivad and north of the Rack Road as it winds up toward the Lictor’s Gate. Many boots over the centuries have worn the slopes of the dell into an uneven natural stadium. At the bottom of Valignus, massive charred stumps as wide as a man is tall provide mute evidence of Lictor Almensor’s monthly “clarity pyres” (book burnings). The cluster of stumps or the ground around them smolders for at least 5 days after each dusk-to-dawn burning of confiscated “troublesome materials.”

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The River Edicts

Those who ply the waters in and around Westcrown understand and know the Laws of Travel, also called the River Edicts. No one—not even Imperial troops—can halt the water travel of anyone from the Rikkorn Falls south to the open sea. (To do so without Imperial seals and orders can bring charges from unlawful impediment to piracy.) No Wiscrani canals can be blocked or closed save by those given said authority by the Duxotar, the Regidottari’s Durotar, or the city’s imperial naval commander. Unauthorized encroachment of Imperial waters—always a 50-foot perimeter around any moving Imperial craft or 100 feet of moored craft—is punishable by immediate attack and potential death. Attacks from shore to craft are allowed only in the defense of city property. Understanding the River Edicts is simple, and finding ways around them has also been a long pastime. Common sidesteps of the law include the following. There are no mandatory berths for anyone traveling the river or into port save those on official Imperial business. (Anyone can refuse a boat’s docking if they control the dock, temporarily or otherwise. Those who don’t charge outrageous fees for docking might add on charges to guard a berthed craft.)

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