

Finally, a few words about Zarta Dralneen: We understand that she has tastes and peccadilloes that some find offensive. But, unlike the Silver Crusade, the Dark Archive is not founded or defined in terms of its present leader. Not one word in the Dark Archives' founding documents or mission is related in any way to Zarta's personal hobbies.

We also understand that the history of Zarta and the unfortunate nation of Cheliox has colored impressions of the Dark Archives, and remind you that the Dark Archives are not Cheliox.

Cheliox is an historic special case of a nation held in prison to slavery. With so many slaves doing so much work that as civilization came to Cheliox it became harder to safely free slaves. To paraphrase another, through slavery Cheliox has the wolf by the ears, and dares not let go.

The Chelish have taken a key step forward – they started to replace their humanoid slaves with devils. As devils are born evil, surely it is better to use them as slaves than it is to use halflings. Though we do hold that any being capable of choice is capable of redemption, we do recognize that the use of diabolic labor is a step toward freedom for humanoid slaves in the region. And we certainly believe that making creatures which have done evil repay society – and possibly even redeem themselves and cleanse their hearts – is better than simply destroying them.

We hope that you will consider working for the right and the good through the Dark Archive.

The Dark Archive mission:

Maintain order in the Vaults beneath the Grand Lodge of Absalom. Seek out other dangerous relics, and retrieve them for proper storage and research in the Dark Archive. Study and understand hazardous phenomena.



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PADA: Paladins for the Advancement of the Dark Archives



With the shake-up of factions and the dissolution of geographically-based factions, it can be hard for a Pathfinder to know where to turn for support. This guide is here to present some facts to help you see what faction is fighting for your values.

Is it more important to sound righteous, or to be righteous? More and more well-meaning Pathfinder are asking themselves this. And this question is the right starting point for those who want a better world.

There is a widespread belief that the Dark Archive was deliberately set up by Zarta Dralneen and The Ten as a direct response to the popularity of the Silver Crusade. There is little question that the Silver Crusade is wildly popular with those who want to do good in the world. But a deeper look suggests that more good can be done through the Dark Archive.

Consider the founding material about the Silver Crusade: “Led by the retired Pathfinder Ollysta Zadrian, paladin of Sarenrae, this faction seeks to be more than just adventurers doing the bidding of the Decemvirate and the venture-captains. While other factions, such as The Exchange, may use the Society for personal gain, the Silver Crusade attempts to transform the Society into an organization that aids the weak, destroys evil, and makes the world a better place.” Let us consider these words line by line.

- “Led by the retired Pathfinder Ollysta Zadrian, paladin of Sarenrae.” The founding documents for the Dark Archives do not define the faction in terms of personality or who it's leader is, but only in terms of philosophy. But Ollysta is attempting to form an army loyal not to an ideal, but loyal to her. Also consider that Miss Zadrian – a woman who we hold in high esteem, but who we believe is mis-guided in her methods – defines herself in terms of her relationship to Sarenrae; consider the deep and divisive conflicts which rage across Golorion over the worship of Sarenrae, and ask yourself if an organization defined around Sarenrae can play a major part in peacemaking across Golorion.
- “This faction seeks to be more than just adventurers doing the bidding of the Decemvirate and the venture-captains.” Here, we applaud the Silver Crusade. We are glad that Ollysta defines her faction in terms of the good she hopes to accomplish.

- “While other factions, such as The Exchange, may use the Society for personal gain . . . ” We do not understand Ollysta's hostility to trade, or her desire to turn her faction against the Exchange. The Exchange does no use armies to force goods on people; they break down monopolies and the power of Princes over the persons and property of individual people. We applaud the Exchange for holding that trade by definition only takes place between two willing participants who each expect to gain by the trade. We don't understand why Ollysta is opposed to people making life better for their communities and families by providing for the needs of other communities and families, but we suspect that it's because trade rarely figures in heroic statues.
- “The Silver Crusade attempts to transform the Society into an organization that aids the weak.” And here we come to our chief concerns about this cult of personality. Why does Ollysta not say “help the weak become strong?” An organization that defines itself by its superiority (in arms, wealth, ethics or force) is destined to keep others in servitude. We understand the impulse of Miss Zadrian to be at the head of parades and always be seen riding in on a white horse to save the unfortunate (she actually does have a white horse, for just such occasions); but the unfortunate are served better through the power to help themselves.

- “[The Silver Crusade] destroys evil.” Why focus the energy of a group on destruction rather than on transformation? There are great resources in the hands of those who do evil – should we challenge people to spill blood when all that will remain is a smoking ruin, or should we challenge them to find good and productive uses for those things which had been used for evil

We are also concerned that Ollysta, and by extension her faction, is prone to judge others not by their crimes or by their potential, but by the lazy and inadequate means of “detecting” or “smiting” evil. Many have evil in their hearts, but with respect and the recognition that their own lives are made better through good acts, that evil can be shed – we do not like seeing intelligent beings punished for what they think. The tendency of the Silver Crusade to burn books has spilled over into a tendency on their part to burn those who think thoughts not in concert with Ollysta's vision of Sarenrae.

- “[The Silver Crusade] makes the world a better place.” Our concern is that her vague aims of “making the world a better place” simply mean putting herself and like-minded persons in control of society.

The Dark Archives believe in helping build a better world, using all the tools at our disposal. It is important to collect and understand how the forces of evil function in order to adequately combat them.