

# Tyranny of Dragons: Phlan

## *Season 1 Narrative*

Built in 367 DR, PHLAN represents the perseverance of humans and their tenacity to bring civilization to the savage wilderness. Since its founding, it has been razed repeatedly by inhuman creatures from the north but continually rose, like the phoenix, from the ashes of its own destruction. The city's ruler, LORD PROTECTOR ANIVAR DAORAN is dead, and the city in disorder. The Lord Reagent, KNIGHT COMMANDER ECTOR BRAHMS, and greedy NOBLE HOUSES and LABOR GUILDS vie for control of the city. From the shadows, the WELCOMERS--a criminal organization turned vigilante group--work against them and for their trouble, are hunted by the remnants of the KNIGHTS OF THE BLACK FIST, the militia that struggles in vain to keep the city's peace.

Phlan has grown rich from trade with the untamed wilds to the north of the MOONSEA. Those seeking their fortunes flock to Phlan before adventuring out into the enchanted QUIVERING FOREST, the mysterious SORCERER'S ISLE, and the orc, goblin and dragon-infested DRAGONSPINE MOUNTAINS. But even the city itself has its share of dangers and secrets. Deep beneath the city, the POOL OF RADIANCE lies dormant; at least for now. The CULT OF THE DRAGON and their allies, the RED WIZARDS have sent agents far and wide in search of the DRAGON MASKS and other resources to assist them in their agenda. And somewhere within Phlan, the depths of the sleeping Pool, and the surrounding wilderness, the Cult may find just what it is that they need.

## *The Setting for Season 1 of D&D Adventurers League Expeditions*

by Travis Woodall



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# Tyranny of Dragons: Phlan

## Glossary

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**CULT OF THE DRAGON:** Covert and secretive, the cult was once devoted to the creation and proliferation of dracoliches, but now seeks to free Tiamat from her imprisonment in the Nine Hells. Unfortunately for them, this shift in ideals has created rifts from within.

**DRAGON MASKS:** Five ancient masks cast in the likeness of each of the five types of chromatic dragons which the Cult of the Dragon believes will grant unto them the power to free Tiamat from her infernal prison.

**DRAGONSPINE MOUNTAINS:** The peaks of this mountain range to the west is populated by red and white dragons while goblins, orcs and other inhuman creatures dwell in the lowlands and valleys.

**KNIGHT COMMANDER ECTOR BRAHMS:** Now acting as the Lord Regent of Phlan, Ector Brahms is an stoic, merciless man who is beginning to show the stresses of the burden of leadership.

**KNIGHTS OF THE BLACK FIST:** During this period of martial law, the Black Fist act as judge, jury and executioner, but is not above a little bribery, provided Lord Regent Ector Brahms does not find out.

**LABOR GUILDS:** The constant construction in Phlan has made the four most powerful guilds of Phlan (the Stonewrights, the Carpenters, the Ironhanded, and the Merchants) a political force of their own and they desire control over the city's sizeable coffers.

**LORD PROTECTOR ANIVAR DAORAN:** The now-deceased grandson of the conqueror of Phlan was a pampered, corrupt ruler whose contempt for his subjects was seconded only by the responsibilities of his rule.

**MOONSEA:** This region in North Faerûn is a wild frontier, dominated by a large sea and until relatively recently, the Zhentarim.

**NOBLE HOUSES:** Though few, the remaining noble houses see opportunity in the chaos following the Lord Protector's death and seek to establish control of the trade routes that once brought riches and influence to the city.

**PHLAN:** This frontier city has been destroyed and rebuilt more times than can be remembered, but has left its people tough and determined.

**POOL OF RADIANCE:** An open wound in the Weave, the Pool of Radiance was a powerful, but dangerous, font of raw magic.

**QUIVERING FOREST:** Planted by elves as protection against the ogres of Thar, the enchanted forest is populated by wild elves and other fey creatures.

**RED WIZARDS:** Ruled by the lich Szass Tam, this organization of is peopled with wizards, demonologists and slavers.

**SORCERER'S ISLE:** This small island in the Stojanow River was the home to Yarash, a mad wizard who filled the river with mutated creatures; the detritus of his insane experiments.

**WELCOMERS:** The city's thieves' guild once preyed on visitors and well-to-dos but now lashes out at the Black Fist and any others who might try to eradicate them.

## Themes

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Each adventure must be attached to one or both of the themes below.

- **A Struggle for Peace (Phlan).** Control of the city by day is in the hands of the corrupt and merciless Black Fist, but by night, a pitched battle between the establishment and the undesirable elements of society commences. The Harpers wish to clean the corruption from the establishment, the Lords' Alliance supports stability or finding a compromise amongst the establishment and the criminals, the Emerald Enclave wants a more representative assembly to govern, the Order of the Gauntlet wants to protect the civilians caught in the machinations of the conflict, and the Zhentarim want to bring the Welcomers into their sphere of influence.
- **Race for Power (Storyline).** The Cult of the Dragon sees the Pool of Radiance as the key to obtaining dominance in the region, believing they can harness the magic of the Pool. First however, they know they must find a way to interact with the Pool without succumbing to its maddening qualities. While they search for those answers, all the factions seek to stop them from attaining this knowledge and accessing the Pool's gifts.

# Phlan

**Themes:** Corruption, Martial Law

**Population:** 18,000 (plus 2,000 in outlying farms and homesteads)

## The Beginnings

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Phlan was founded in 367 DR, about ten years after Northkeep was established. However, whereas Northkeep was destroyed and ultimately sunk into the sea, Phlan was merely leveled. The residents of Phlan simply brushed themselves off and rebuilt. This would be a recurring theme with Phlan. More often than not, new construction would be performed atop old. This was the unfortunate effect of a number of sinkholes and collapsed structures, but more than one hidden chamber has been discovered in the ruins of Old Phlan; sometimes with buried riches and sometimes with things of a more wicked disposition.

## Recent History

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In 1306 DR, a dragon invasion known as the Dragon Run swept out of the Moonsea North and fell upon Phlan. Due in part to the Moonsea war, none of the other Moonsea cities came to Phlan's aid. As a result, Phlan was once again laid to waste. As always, Phlan rebuilt.

Decades prior to this, an entity known as Tyranthraxus corrupted and possessed a bronze dragon named Srossar after convincing it to bathe in a Pool of Radiance buried beneath the ruins of Castle Valjevo. Tyranthraxus would later be discovered and subsequently defeated by a group of adventurers. Tyranthraxus, in his flight, turned the Pool of Radiance into a pool of non-magical water.

After the defeat of Tyranthraxus, work began on rebuilding Phlan. Progress was slow, but steady. Phlan would know over ten years of peace before the Flight of Dragons in 1356 DR. In the ensuing attacks, Phlan was decimated and its ruins occupied by a great wyrm. The wyrm was later slain and the city reclaimed by Zhentil Keep in 1375 DR, and within half a decade, the city's previous system of rule was replaced by the tyranny of Zhentarim Hatemaster Cvaal Daoran. Daoran's ascension as the Lord Protector of Phlan may have saved the city, however. During the Shadowbane War of 1383 DR, Daoran's alliance with fey from the Quivering Forest spared it from the fate of Zhentil Keep; which, along with the nearby Citadel of the Raven, would be ultimately destroyed by the Netherese.

In 1480 DR, barbarian attacks in the north led to an influx of refugees into Phlan. By then, Lord Protector Daoran's grandson, Anivar Daoran, had inherited the Cinnabar Throne. Lord Protector Anivar Daoran was a cowardly and pampered noble, and a paranoid and ineffective ruler; his concern for the responsibilities of his rule was only slightly less than that for his subjects.

## Phlan Today

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In 1488 DR, Lord Protector Anivar Daoran died unexpectedly in what, for all intents and purposes seemed nothing more than a construction accident during renovations on Castle Valjevo. The Lord Protector left no heir, so Knight Commander Ector Brahms was declared the Lord Regent of the Cinnabar Throne. The Knight Commander's grasp on the throne is tenuous at best, however. The Lord Regent still acts as the Knight Commander of the shrinking Black Fist and has declared martial law upon the city.

For now, the citizens are kept in line if by nothing but fear. The chaos is barely contained by the diminishing forces of the Black Watch. Shortly after Daoran's death, the Lyceum of the Black Lord was looted and burned. A blackened husk remains, and was rededicated and is currently being renovated by an up-and-coming lay cleric of Lathander. She does what she is able to provide a place of solace and refuge from the tumultuous city.

Trade has all but stopped in Phlan. The guilds now vie for control over the city to compensate for their lost incomes. Wages have plummeted, prices of goods and services have skyrocketed, and worst of all—construction has stopped. The Welcomers have shifted their goals, and now lash out against the guilds who, in their greed, have abandoned the citizenry. In turn, they have been declared outlaws by the Black Fist, and any person with a missing ear is imprisoned, tried and hung. Each day, more bodies swing from the Stojanow Gate.

Phlan is a lawless, shabby remnant of what it once stood for. For over a millennia it has endured decimation at the hands of its enemies; it is decidedly ironic that it now stands on the brink of ruin by its own hand.

## Organizations

The following are Phlan-specific organizations that possess a noticeable degree of influence in the city, along with the names and brief descriptions of noteworthy NPCs.

### The Labor Guilds

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One of the benefits of being a guild of laborers in Phlan is that the constant construction means plenty of work. And work means money. And as everyone knows, money is power. And power the guilds have in spades. They use their influence to pad their organization's coffers. While the guilds as a whole work together to increase their collective foothold in Phlan, each of the guilds has their own individual wants and aspirations.

- **Bardin Klen:** Male dwarf, The Stonewrights
- **Ishin Sorba:** Female half-elf, The Carpenters
- **Filpin Ironmitt:** Male gnome, The Ironhands
- **Bronze Yorik:** Male human, The Merchants

### The Black Fist

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**Heraldry:** A field of green with a black clenched, gauntleted fist.

**Location:** The Stojanow Gate

Commanded by the Ector Brahms, the Lord Regent of Phlan, the remnants of the Black Fist are charged with maintaining order and discipline in Phlan; a task they are not succeeding at. In the void of the leadership of the Cinnabar Throne, the Knights of the Black Fist have been empowered to act as judge, jury and executioner of the Lord Regent's will. They dispense justice quickly and harshly and are both feared and reviled by the citizenry of Phlan. The lower ranks of the order are rife with corruption and the acceptance of bribes is common place. While rooted in the clergy of Bane, the Black Fist severed all formal ties decades ago; they still pay lip service, however.

- **Lord Reagent Ector Brahms (ECK-tore BRAMM):** The Lord Reagent has served as the Knight Commander of the Black Fist for the last two Lords Protector; both of whom died suspiciously. He is a stubbornly-honorable, coarse, and stoic man and the burden of leadership weighs heavily on his shoulders. He is 64 years old with a meticulously groomed beard and long, grey hair which he wears in a ponytail. He is seldom seen in public not wearing his badge of office, an enchanted suit of black-enameled full plate armor, and the full-length crimson cape indicative of his position as the Lord Reagent of the Cinnabar

Throne. He deals with reports of bribery harshly; and a guardsman seldom survives more than one verifiable complaint.

- **Knight Lieutenant Cron Bolver (KRONE BOWL-vurr):** While still young, Lieutenant Bolver is a formidable leader. He is a charismatic half-elf and inspires confidence in his underlings. However, he is used to the trappings of wealth and knows that his position is an excellent means of getting rich. He is charged with the daily operation of the Black Fist and works from his well-appointed quarters within the Stojanow Gate. Lt Bolver's brown hair is typically tousled (which adds to his rakish charm), and he is clean shaven. He usually wears a suit of black-enameled chainmail under a black tunic, slashed with silver.
- **Typical Black Fist Guardsman:** The racial demographic of the Black Fist is diverse with a majority of the members being human, dwarves or half-elves; while there are a few elves, half-orcs and halflings, they are fairly uncommon. Most wear a suit of scale armor with a half-helm--enameled black--and carry a sword, a truncheon and a kite shield emblazoned with the heraldry of the Black Fist. Most guardsmen abuse their authority and accept bribes without hesitation.

### The Welcomers

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In previous years, the Welcomers were a band of simple thieves who preyed on the good fortune of those who visited Phlan. Because they frequently assisted in defending the city, they were allowed to exist openly, and the members identified themselves by cutting off their left ear. With the death of the Lord Protector and the turmoil that has followed, the Lord Reagent has declared open season on the Welcomers and his Black Fist hunts them mercilessly. Now the Welcomers act from the shadows and lash out against their oppressors and those who would deny them their due; guards or guildsmen alike.

- **Xaxy Freyn (ZAH-zee FRAY-n):** A wickedly-smart female half-drow who values money above all else. The guild itself owes its survival to her adaptability and cunning. While she is personable and likeable, she is also manipulative and is able to play on the wants and desires of others with unrivaled skill.
- **Sralin Gori (SHRAY-lin GORE-ull):** Sralin is a middle-aged human male with blonde hair and brown eyes though—being an accomplished illusionist—he frequently disguises himself using magic. While he plays the role of friendly advisor

to Xaxy, he secretly plans on killing Xaxy and assuming control of the Welcomers for himself.

- **Typical Welcomer:** The Welcomers run a number of rackets, from protection, housebreaking, laundering and assassination. Because of this, their membership runs the gamut. Thugs, cutpurses, burglars and cold blooded murderers bear the title. And due to the Lord Reagent's crusade to eradicate the guild, the Welcomers have become masters at escaping scrutiny.

## The Quiet Faithful of Lathander

**Location:** The Ruined Lyceum

Previously housed in the comparatively small shrine to Lathander in New Phlan, Peony now resides in what was formerly the Lyceum of the Black Lord. In the chaos that immediately followed the Lord Protector's death, the Lyceum was looted, its clergy slain and the temple burned. The Lyceum is still little more than a charred ruin, but has sufficient space to house nearly a hundred people comfortably.

- **Peony Loamsdown (PAY-oh-nee LOHMS-down):** Peony is a young and relatively inexperienced short, female halfling with a sunny disposition that matches her short-cropped yellow-blonde hair and blue eyes. She simply showed up at the Lord Reagent's door one day and asked for permission to occupy the ruined Lyceum. When he refused, she went ahead and did it anyway. She had already taken in more than a dozen people by the time the Black Fist had arrived to remove her from the premises, so the Lord Reagent granted her request. Though she will never admit to such, she is a lay devotee of Lathander; devoid of any particular power save for her own wiles, charms, and skills as a healer. Unbeknownst to her, Lathander has returned to Faerûn and in time, her abilities will truly blossom. When that happens, the clerics of Amaunator that reside within the town are likely to disapprove.
- **Roag (ROHG):** Previously an adventurer by trade, Roag credits Peony with saving his life. Because of this, he has sworn his life to protect her; a job made difficult by her naivety and tendency to underestimate the dishonesty and treachery of others. He is large--even by half-orc standards--with long, unkempt black hair and small black eyes that always seem to be darting around, wary of trouble. He and his greataxe are always at Peony's side and they make quite the spectacle when they are seen walking around town together.

## The Faithful of Kelemvor

**Location:** Valhingen Graveyard

Lord Protector Cvaal Daoran gave the graveyard to a small contingent of Kelemvor faithful shortly after his assumption of power in 1380 DR. With some assistance from local druids, the once-overgrown cemetery is now a meticulously groomed--albeit somber--resting place for the people of Phlan.

Though small, the clergy work dutifully and efficiently, providing interment services for the city and are consulted in any dealings with undead in the general area of Phlan. The members of the Order remain impartial to the city's conflicts that have arisen in the last year, and provide their services for free. They are beholden only to their Order and operate independent of financial assistance from the Cinnabar Throne. They tend their own garden and livestock, so are seldom seen in town; save for the rare trip to obtain supplies they are not able to provide themselves.

- **Doomguide Yovir Glandon (YOE-veer):** Yovir is a human male of approximately 50 years of age. He is the ranking representative of the Most Solemn Order of the Silent Shroud in the area. He is a humorless, stoic man with a shaved head and a well-groomed beard. He feels that tending to the cemetery is an important part of his faith, so he is typically seen with grass-stained robes and a sickle in hand. He maintains a small office on the grounds but it is generally used only for sleeping.
- **Sir Geran Kelt (JARE-uhn KELT):** A paladin and member of the Eternal Order of renown, Sir Geran is wholly devoted to the teachings of Kelemvor, but stands in stark contrast to the taciturn demeanor of his colleagues. When not in the graveyard (which is more often than not), he can be found at one of the many inns in Phlan, drinking boisterously and telling stories. He is a tall and oafish man; clean shaven with short and wiry black hair. The thumb on his shield hand was bitten off by an ogre; a story that he is more than happy to share over a pint; although the size of the ogre changes depending on how many drinks he's had.
- **Typical Cleric of Kelemvor:** There are only a dozen clerics of Kelemvor in the graveyard, including Yovir and Sir Geran. For the most part, the lower-ranking clerics are reserved as would be expected and dress in simple, rough-spun grey robes. Despite the name of their order, they do not swear a vow of silence, but are typically too busy to for casual conversation.



# Phlan and Its Surrounds

## Locations within Phlan

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### Valjevo Castle

The largest structure in Phlan is home of the Cinnabar Throne—the seat of power in the city—currently occupied by Lord Reagent Ector Brahms, and his family. The castle has undergone numerous renovations in the years following the Zhentarim’s assumption of power. The castle is huge; with majestic marble and granite walls and awe-inspiring turrets. Deep, in the layers of ruins beneath it, the fabled Pool of Radiance lay dormant...for now.

### Stojanow Gate

Rumored to have been built by fire giants, this immense gate is the headquarters for the Knights of the Black Fist and is the sole means of egress to Valjevo Castle. Its walls are immense—60 feet tall and half as wide—and stretch for a hundred feet to either side of the massive, iron-bound doors, which are closed only in times of war. Criminals apprehended in Phlan are imprisoned within (and most eventually hung from) the Stojanow Gate.

### Valhingen Graveyard

On the opposite shore of the Stojanow River, Phlan’s graveyard is a statuesque garden of flowering plants and trees. One of Cvaal Daoran’s first acts was appointing a small contingent of Kelemvor faithful to clear the graveyard of undead. They perform mortuary and interment services for the city. Since falling under their care, there has been no undead activity in the graveyard. The graveyard is the resting place of Miltiades; an undead paladin of legend.

### Kuto’s Well

This unremarkable, albeit large, well within Old Phlan was once a means of entrance into the vast underground portions of Phlan. The Lord Reagent ordered the well sealed in 1489 DR under the auspices of protecting the city from the creatures that dwelled beneath the city. In actuality, it was ordered sealed because it was a means of egress into Castle Valjevo. The well was used in such a way in the defeat of Tyranthraxus.

## Inns & Taverns

There are a number of inns and taverns within the city of varying quality. Among these are:

- The Laughing Goblin (inn)
- The Cracked Crown (Inn)
- Nay Wyler’s Bell (tavern)
- The Bitter Blade (inn)
- The Velvet Doublet (festhall)

## The Ruined Lyceum

This large temple was once dedicated to Bane, but in the riots following the Lord Protector’s death, it was looted and burned and its clergy slain. Shortly thereafter, Peony and Roag petitioned the Lord Reagent for permission to use the grounds as a refuge for those in need of healing or even a hot meal.

## The Bitch Queen’s Shack

This small shrine to Umberlee is little more than a small dockside shanty. The shrine is attended by a single eccentric cleric who browbeats sailors for donations; waving a moldering, wooden bowl at them until they toss in a penny or two--offering portents of watery doom all the while. The cleric is more than he seems, however; he is also a member of the Kraken Society and, more secret still, a member of the Cult of the Crushing Wave.

## The Shrine of the Frostmaiden

This small shrine dedicated to Auril is not usually staffed by the faithful. It is located in an alley off of Podol Plaza and decorated only with the Frostmaiden’s symbol and a chipped, stone bowl. The bowl usually has a handful of various coins, as most wise people fear Auril’s wrath too much to be tempted to steal from her.

## The Dawn Fane

Amaunator’s shrine within Phlan stands in contrast to that of Auril. Occupying a modestly-sized building in Podol Plaza, the shrine is typically attended by one or two of the Yellow God’s faithful. It is decorated with bright, inspiring tapestries and has room for a dozen worshippers to come and pay their respects. A large and highly polished golden goblet sits beside the altar for donations.

## Podol Plaza

Once a bustling open-air market, this plaza now usually houses only a handful merchant carts; their awnings faded and tattered. Trade is at an all-time low in Phlan and the market shows it. The few merchants and farmers who do come to peddle their goods typically have a hired sword at their side ready to shake down anyone who might be desperate enough to steal.

- Scholar's Square
- Mantor's Library

## Denlor's Tower

Once home to a powerful wizard (who was actually a covert Red Wizard of Thay), the Lord Sage of Phlan now controls the tower though it is uninhabitable. Previously home to a powerful wizard who was actually a Red Wizard spy. Before the tower was abandoned, heavy wards were placed throughout. Lord Sage now searches for a means to deactivate the wards.

## Locations Outside of Phlan

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### Quivering Forest

This vast enchanted forest was planted by wild elves long ago as a defense against the hordes of Thar. Among other things, the enchantment accelerates the forest's regrowth. Within two years of being completely cut down, the forest resembles a light wood, and within a human's lifetime is a deep and shadowed forest.

A powerful hag, Jeny Greenteeth, and other dark fey of the forest struck a pact with the Cinnabar Throne shortly after the Zhentarim came to power in Phlan and forever decreed that the forest would be off-limits to traffic and the woodsman's axe. This pact bore fruit during the Shadowbane War of 1383 DR when the forest prevented Phlan's destruction at the hands of the Netherese. Since then, the pact has been broken only once when the second Lord Protector disappeared after venturing into the forest.

### Sorcerer's Isle

This small island in the Stojanow River is featureless save for a large, silver pyramid. 120 feet tall and ninety feet wide on a side. This mysterious structure was the home to the mad wizard Yarash. Yarash conducted experiments on the local flora and fauna; mutating them into hideous creatures. Travel into, within, and out of the pyramid is accomplished via

magic teleportation. Monstrous creatures, magical traps and treasures beyond imagination are rumored to exist within the pyramid, although everyone who has gone in to search for them has never returned. The pyramid is currently occupied by a tribe of mutated lizardfolk descended from some of Yarash's experiments.