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AND LINDA ANTONSSON



## THE RISE OF THE DRAGON

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF  
THE TARGARYEN DYNASTY

VOLUME ONE

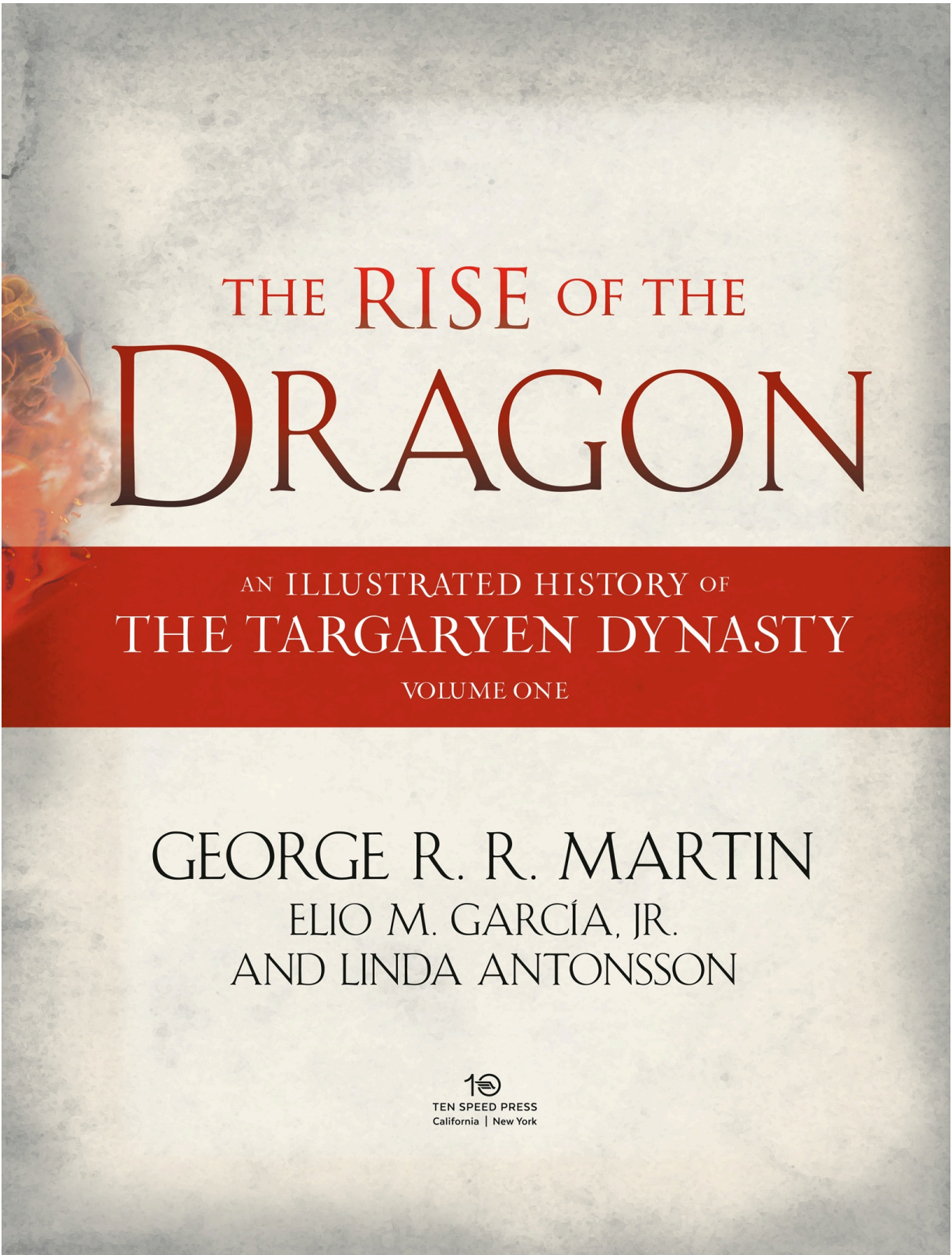












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TEN SPEED PRESS  
California | New York



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Published in the United States by Ten Speed Press, an imprint of Random House, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York.

[TenSpeedPress.com](http://TenSpeedPress.com)

[RandomHouseBooks.com](http://RandomHouseBooks.com)

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Print typefaces: Adobe's Briosio, Adobe's Trajan, Fountain's Incognito, P22 Type Foundry's Civilite No30 Modern, P22 Type Foundry's Morris Golden, AURUS Design's AU Bauer Initials

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is on file with the publisher.

Hardcover ISBN 9781984859259

Ebook ISBN 9781984859266

Acquiring editors: Anne Groell and Kaitlin Ketchum

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Publicists: David Moench and Lauren Kretzschmar

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Ebook production manager: Eric Sailer

rhid\_prh\_6.0\_141619437\_c0\_r0



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**THE HISTORY OF** Westeros stretches back thousands of years, but the period in which House Targaryen unified the various realms into the Seven Kingdoms as we know them covers less than three hundred. The history of the family goes back further than that, however, to its beginnings in the Freehold of Valyria. The Targaryens were an ancient and noble lineage—dragonlords who bred and rode the great beasts that had extended the Freehold’s power across western Essos—yet they were still a relatively minor family among the great Valyrian houses. When Aenar Targaryen sold his lands and properties and moved his entire family and their dragons to Valyria’s westernmost outpost, the isle called Dragonstone in the narrow sea, his rivals thought him a coward. Little did they know that his daughter, Daenys the Dreamer, had foretold the Doom of Valyria. Twelve years later, the Freehold was destroyed in a cataclysm when the volcanic Fourteen Flames erupted, shattering the Valyrian peninsula and the empire along with it. In the chaos that followed, all the dragonlords of Valyria perished, along with their dragons...apart from the Targaryens on their rocky isle of Dragonstone.

What follows in this book is a guide to the first half of that period, beginning with Aegon's Conquest through the end of the regency of Aegon III Dragonbane.







The Field of Fire.





A map of Westeros.





# The Seven Kingdoms

**BEGINNING IN THE** year 2 BC (Before the Conquest), Aegon Targaryen and his sisters launched their invasion of Westeros with the intention of unifying the entire continent under their rule. Opposing them were seven individual kingdoms, each with a unique history stretching back thousands of years. Before discussing the events of the conquest, it seems prudent to take a moment to examine each of these varying realms, and their rulers, as they existed at the time.

## The Stormlands

The stormlands are centered around the rainwood—the heavily forested southeastern region of Westeros—and are bordered to the north by the Blackwater River, to the south by the Dornish Marches, and to the west by the Reach. Legends claim that the first Storm King was Durran Godsgrief, who gained the enmity of the gods of wind and sea when he won the love of their daughter, Elenei. Durran raised a succession of castles for himself and



his Elenei that the gods then repeatedly destroyed, until a young boy helped Durran raise a seventh castle. Due to its massive curtain walls and drum tower, this castle could withstand the gods' fury, and was ever after known as Storm's End. The boy would become Bran the Builder, and House Durrandon ruled for thousands of years from its seat at Storm's End.

The Storm King Arlan III expanded the realm by conquering the riverlands some four hundred years before the Conquest, stretching the domain of House Durrandon from the narrow sea to the Sunset Sea. Yet three centuries later, the Storm King Arrec lost the riverlands to Harwyn Hoare, a king of the Iron Islands. Arrec's two subsequent attempts to regain the riverlands failed, and a third attempt—under Arrec's son, Arlan V—ended in Arlan's death. Arlan V's successor was his young son Argilac, later known as Argilac the Arrogant, who would be the last of the Storm Kings.

As a boy, Argilac turned back an attempted Dornish invasion, and his reputation only grew from there. He joined an alliance with several of the Free Cities against Volantis and killed King Garse VII Gardener at the Battle

of Summerfield. His only heir at the time of the Conquest was his daughter, Argella.



Argilac the Arrogant.

## The Kingdom of the Isles and the Rivers

Although the histories of Westeros seem certain that the Iron Islands were settled by the First Men, the priests of the Drowned God on the Iron Islands claim that the ironborn are a people apart, created in the image of their god.

Whatever the truth, the Iron Islands have a long history of maritime activity, fishing the rich waters, trading tin and iron ore, and sending reavers and pirates to pillage and make war on the “greenlands.”

The archipelago contains thirty-one islands, of which there are seven major inhabited ones. Legends claim that the Grey King ruled the isles in the Age of Heroes, but any details of his reign are lost to the mists of time. What is more certain is that each isle had a salt king and a rock king, each elected to these offices, until the priest Galon Whitestaff convinced the ironborn to unify by electing a High King at the first ever kingsmoot.

The centuries-long era of these High Kings—called the driftwood kings for their wooden crowns—brought the Iron Islands to the apex of their power. During the reign of Qhored the Cruel, the ironborn held much of the western shore of Westeros under their dominion. These gains were slowly lost, however—especially after Urron Greyiron and his supporters slaughtered his rivals at the last kingsmoot, establishing the first hereditary high kingship. The turmoil that followed on the Iron Islands made it easier for the mainland kingdoms to drive out the ironborn, until the great Kingdom of the Isles and the Rivers was reduced once more to just the Iron Islands.

It would take centuries, and House Hoare succeeding the Greyirons as kings, for the ironborn to begin to reclaim their lost ground in the riverlands. Most notably, King Harwyn Hoare, known as Hardhand, launched an invasion of the riverlands, driving out the Storm Kings who then controlled the Trident. Harwyn’s grandson, Harren the Black, would rule the united Kingdom of the Isles and the Rivers until the Conquest, beggaring the riverlords by erecting an enormous castle by the Gods Eye. This castle, Harrenhal, took forty years to complete—and the histories say



that the massive fortress was finished on the very day that Aegon Targaryen and his sisters set foot on Westeros at the start of the Conquest.

## The Reach

The most fertile and populous region in the Seven Kingdoms, the Reach, is also one of the largest (though dwarfed by the size of the North). It dominates the southwestern portion of the continent, bordered by the foothills of the westerlands to its north, the Red Mountains of Dorne to the south, and the marches of the stormlands to the east. The Kingdom of the Reach claims an ancient connection to the first High King of all the First Men, Garth Greenhand. Powerful and potent, Garth allegedly fathered scores of children from whom many houses of the Reach claim descent. The most notable of these was House Gardener, who established their seat at Highgarden beside the mighty river known as the Mander. Over the centuries, the Gardeners would expand their domain beyond the central plains of the Reach, stretching from the shores of the Sunset Sea in the west to the stormlands in the east, and from the foothills of the westerlands and the Blackwater in the north to the Red Mountains of Dorne in the south.

The Gardener kings ruled their Green Realm for millennia, weathering the arrival of the Andals by adopting their ways and making the Reach the birthplace of chivalry and knighthood in Westeros. Mern IX was the latest in a long line of kings (and one queen) to rule the Reach when the Targaryens first appeared in Westeros. The future of House Gardener seemed secure against this latest invasion, however, as Mern commanded the greatest army

in Westeros, as well as having sons and grandsons to spare to secure his succession—and many other male kinsmen besides.



King Mern IX, King Loren I, and their armies.

## The Westerlands

A land of rugged hills in the west of the continent, the westerlands at the time of the Conquest stretched from the shores of the Sunset Sea in the west to the foothills from which the rivers Tumblestone and Red Fork issue in the east, and were bounded to the north by Ironman's Bay, while the lands of the Reach bordered them to the south. In ancient times, the First Men discovered plentiful gold and silver in the rugged hills and rolling plains of the westerlands.

The Casterlys were among the most powerful lords of the west, secure at Casterly Rock: the huge stone hill riddled with seemingly endless gold mines beneath it. But legends hold that Lann the Clever tricked the Casterlys out of control of their castle. His descendants were plentiful, but chief among these were the Lannisters, who would carve out a kingdom from their seat at Casterly Rock. When the Andals arrived, the Lannisters initially made war against them, but soon began to use them as mercenaries

and allies in order to expand their realm. Before long, the Lannisters controlled the whole of the westerlands instead of just the port city of Lannisport and the lands around the Rock.

Many wars wracked the Seven Kingdoms before the Conquest and the Kings of the Rock were frequently at the center of these conflicts. They regularly battled the kings of the riverlands, the Iron Islands, and the Reach. Sometimes, however, these kings formed shifting alliances, uniting against a common enemy.

At the time Aegon Targaryen was turning his attention to Westeros, the King of the Rock was Loren I, who oversaw a brief period of peace with the Kingdom of the Reach.

## The Vale

When the Andals invaded Westeros, it was in the Vale that they first settled. The fertile valley surrounded by the Mountains of the Moon would soon come to be ruled by House Arryn, considered the oldest and purest line of Andal nobility. The founder of the dynasty was Ser Artys Arryn, who in later centuries would often be confused with the legendary Artys Arryn, the Winged Knight, of the Age of Heroes. Ser Artys defeated the existing High King of the Vale, Robar II Royce—who had attempted to expel the Andals—at the Battle of Seven Stars and became Artys I, King of Mountain and Vale. The First Men that survived the battle and did not submit to Artys's rule fled into the Mountains of the Moon, becoming the ancestors of the lawless clans that still call the mountains their home.

Over time, Artys and his descendants extended their rule beyond the Vale and the Fingers, seeking control over various nearby isles both great and small. Most notably, the Arryns spent centuries fighting the northmen for



control of the Three Sisters—and ultimately succeeded in incorporating the islands into their domain.

At the time of the Conquest, the wearer of the Falcon Crown of the Vale was Ronnel Arryn, a mere boy. He was the eldest son of Sharra Arryn, who ruled as Queen Regent in her son's name.



Torrhen Stark.

## The North

The North is—and always has been—the largest region of the Seven Kingdoms, stretching unbroken from the swamps of the Neck all the way to the Wall, and from the Sunset Sea to the narrow sea. Though continuously inhabited since the arrival of the First Men, the North remains the least

populous of the Seven Kingdoms, due to the harshness of its climate and its often deadly winters.

Many lords and petty kings have claimed dominion over patches of the North, but it was the Starks of Winterfell—claiming descent from the legendary Bran the Builder—who succeeded in unifying the region through both alliances and warfare. They conquered the Barrow Kings in the Thousand Years War, and also the Warg King, the Marsh Kings, the Red Kings of House Bolton, and the barbarous men of the island of Skagos. Under the rule of the legendary Theon Stark, the North was the only realm of First Men to survive the coming of the Andals—not only throwing them back, but even launching their own attacks on Andalos, according to legend.

The Starks would be known thereafter as the Kings in the North and the Kings of Winter. Their chief enemies were the ever-present reavers from the Iron Islands and the wildling raiders from beyond the Wall. At one time they also fought the War Across the Water—a conflict of several generations in which the Starks attempted to seize control of the Three Sisters while the Kings of Mountain and Vale opposed them—but the Starks ultimately withdrew from that conflict. The King in the North prior to the Conquest was Torrhen Stark.

## Dorne

As the southernmost region of Westeros, Dorne is a harsh land of wide deserts, dangerous coasts, and high red mountains. Much of the land is parched, save for the more temperate regions in the mountains and those watered by the rivers Greenblood, Vaith, and Scourge. The histories say that the First Men first came to Dorne over the land bridge that connected Essos to Westeros—a bridge that the children of the forest, according to legend,

then destroyed with their magic to stem the tide of the invaders. The Broken Arm, as it became known, formed the easternmost part of the region, which then stretched all the way west to the Sunset Sea, and north to the Marches. Like the First Men, the Andals made incursions into Dorne as well, though they also never gained dominion.

Unlike the other regions of Westeros, Dorne remained a patchwork of petty kingdoms for thousands of years, with many royal houses rising and falling. The strangest such kingship was the confederation that formed along the Greenblood, where a dozen noble houses would elect a High King from among their number—though this kingdom eventually fell into warfare, fracturing into lesser petty realms.

Some seven hundred years prior to the arrival of Aegon Targaryen, Dorne eventually coalesced under the rule of Nymeria—a Rhoynish princess who led her people (mostly women, old men, and youths) out of Essos following the Valyrian destruction of both the Rhoynar cities and army. Wedding herself to Lord Mors Martell—an ambitious nobleman in the south of Dorne—Nymeria and her people joined with the Martell forces and set about subduing rival lords and kings, unifying Dorne under their rule. Forever after, women have been included in the Dornish laws of inheritance, holding equal status to men.

In the centuries after, the Martells maintained their rule over Dorne, warring with the Storm Kings and the Kings of the Reach across the Dornish Marches. At the time Aegon Targaryen's gaze fell on Westeros, the Princess of Dorne was Meria Martell: an aged, fat woman derisively called “the Yellow Toad” by her rivals.





Meria Martell.





Dragonstone.