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PIERCE
BROWN

DARK AGE



A RED RISING NOVEL

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Dedication

Acknowledgments

By Pierce Brown

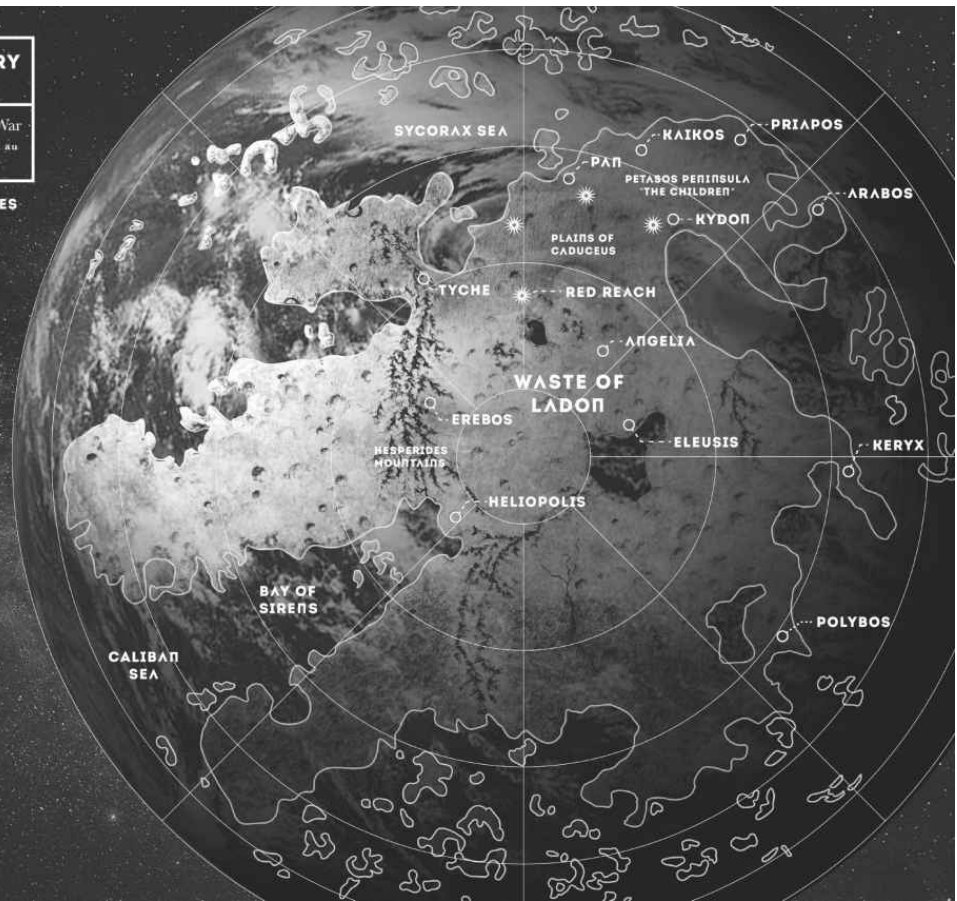
About the Author

THE PLANET MERCURY
CONTINENT OF HELIOS

In the eleventh year of the Solar War
Commissioned by Sovereign Virginia au
Augustus, 754 PCE

○ CITIES

✱ BASES



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE SOLAR REPUBLIC

DARROW OF LYKOS/THE REAPER Former ArchImperator of the Solar Republic, husband to Virginia, a Red

VIRGINIA AU AUGUSTUS/MUSTANG Reigning Sovereign of the Solar Republic, wife to Darrow, Primus of House Augustus, sister to the Jackal of Mars, a Gold

PAX Son of Darrow and Virginia, a Gold

KIERAN OF LYKOS Brother to Darrow, Howler, a Red

RHONNA Niece of Darrow, daughter of Kieran, lancer, Pup Two, a Red

DEANNA Mother to Darrow, a Red

SEVRO AU BARCA/THE GOBLIN Imperator of the Republic, husband to Victra, Howler, a Gold

VICTRA AU BARCA Wife to Sevro, née Victra au Julii, a Gold

ELECTRA AU BARCA Daughter of Sevro and Victra, a Gold

DANCER/SENATOR O'FARAN Senator, former Sons of Ares lieutenant, husband to Deanna, Tribune of the Red bloc, a Red

KAVAX AU TELEMANUS Primus of House Telemachus, client of House Augustus, a Gold

NIOBE AU TELEMANUS Wife to Kavax, client of House Augustus, a Gold

DAXO AU TELEMANUS Heir of House Telemachus, son of Kavax and Niobe, senator, Tribune of the Gold bloc, a Gold

THRAXA AU TELEMANUS Praetor of the Free Legions, daughter of Kavax and Niobe, Howler, a Gold

ALEXANDAR AU ARCOS Eldest grandson of Lorn au Arcos, heir to House Arcos, allied to House Augustus, lancer, Pup One, a Gold

CADUS HARNASSUS Imperator of the Republic, second in command of the Free Legions, an Orange

ORION XE AQUARI Navarch of the Republic, Imperator of the White Fleet, a Blue

COLLOWAY XE CHAR A pilot, reigning kill-leader of the Republic Navy, Howler, a Blue

GLIRASTES THE MASTER MAKER Architect and inventor, an Orange

HOLIDAY TI NAKAMURA Dux of Virginia's Lionguard, sister to Trigg, client of House Augustus, Centurion of the Pegasus Legion, a Gray

QUICKSILVER/REGULUS AG SUN Richest man in the Republic, head of Sun Industries, a Silver

PUBLIUS CU CARAVAL Tribune of the Copper bloc, senator, a Copper

THEODORA Leader of the Splinter operatives, client of House Augustus, a Rose Pink

ZAN ArchImperator of the Republic following Darrow's removal, commander of Luna's defense fleet, a Blue

CLOWN Howler, client of House Barca, a Gold

PEBBLE Howler, client of House Barca, a Gold

MIN-MIN Howler, sniper and munitions expert, client of House Barca, a Red

SCREWFACE Howler, client of House Augustus, a Gold

MARBLES Howler, hacker, a Green

TONGUELESS Former prisoner at Deepgrave, an Obsidian

FELIX AU DAAN Bodyguard to Darrow, client of House Augustus, a Gold

THE SOCIETY

ATALANTIA AU GRIMMUS Dictator of the Society, daughter of the Ash Lord Magnus au Grimmus, sister to Aja and Moira, former client of House Lune, a Gold

LYSANDER AU LUNE Grandson of former Sovereign Octavia, heir to House Lune, former patron of House Grimmus, a Gold

ATLAS AU RAA/THE FEAR KNIGHT Brother to Romulus au Raa, Legate of the Zero Legion ("the Gorgons"), former ward of House Lune, client of House Grimmus, a Gold

AJAX/THE STORM KNIGHT Son of Aja au Grimmus and Atlas au Raa, heir of House Grimmus, Legate of the Iron Leopards, a Gold

KALINDORA AU SAN/THE LOVE KNIGHT Olympic Knight, aunt to Alexandar au Arcos, client of House Grimmus, a Gold

JULIA AU BELLONA Cassius's estranged mother and Darrow's enemy, Primus of the House Bellona remnant, a Gold

SCORPIO AU VOTUM Primus of House Votum (the metal mining magnates and builders of Mercury), a Gold

CICERO AU VOTUM Heir to House Votum, son of Scorpio, Legate of the Scorpion Legion, a Gold

ASMODEUS AU CARTHII Primus of House Carthii (the shipbuilders of Venus), a Gold

RHONE TI FLAVINIUS Lunese subPraetor, former second officer of the XIII Dracones Praetorian Guard under Aja, a Gray

SENECA AU CERN Dux of Ajax, Centurion of the Iron Leopards, a Gold

MAGNUS AU GRIMMUS/THE ASH LORD Former ArchImperator to Octavia au Lune, the Burner of Rhea, a Gold, killed by the Howlers and Apollonius au Valii-Rath

OCTAVIA AU LUNE Former Sovereign of the Society, grandmother to Lysander, a Gold, killed by Darrow

AJA AU GRIMMUS Daughter of Ash Lord Magnus au Grimmus, a Gold, killed by Sevro

MOIRA AU GRIMMUS Daughter of Ash Lord Magnus au Grimmus, a Gold, killed by Ragnar

THE RIM DOMINION

DIDO AU RAA Co-consul of the Rim Dominion, wife to former Sovereign of the Rim Dominion Romulus au Raa, née Dido au Saud, a Gold

DIOMEDES AU RAA/THE STORM KNIGHT Son of Romulus and Dido, Taxiarchos of the Lightning Phalanx, a Gold

SERAPHINA AU RAA Daughter of Romulus and Dido, Lochagos of the Eleventh Dust Walkers, a Gold

HELIOS AU LUX Co-consul of the Rim Dominion, with Dido, a Gold

ROMULUS AU RAA/THE LORD OF THE DUST Former Primus of House Raa, former Sovereign of the Rim Dominion, a Gold, killed by ceremonial suicide

THE OBSIDIAN

SEFI THE QUIET Queen of the Obsidian, leader of the Valkyrie, sister to Ragnar Volarus, an Obsidian

VALDIR THE UNSHORN Warlord and royal concubine of Sefi, an Obsidian

OZGARD Shaman of the Firebones, an Obsidian

FREIHILD Skuggi spirit warrior, an Obsidian

GUDKIND Skuggi spirit warrior, an Obsidian

XENOPHON Advisor to Sefi, a White *logos*

RAGNAR VOLARUS Former leader of the Obsidian, Howler, an Obsidian, killed by Aja

OTHER CHARACTERS

EPHRAIM TI HORN Freelancer, former member of the Sons of Ares, husband to Trigg ti Nakamura, a Gray

VOLGA FJORGAN Freelancer, colleague of Ephraim, an Obsidian

APOLLONIUS AU VALII-RATH/THE MINOTAUR Heir to House Valii-Rath, verbose, a Gold

THE DUKE OF HANDS Syndicate operative, master thief, a Rose Pink

LYRIA OF LAGALOS Gamma from Mars, client of House Telemanus, a Red

LIAM Nephew of Lyria, client of House Telemanus, a Red

HARMONY Leader of the Red Hand, former Sons of Ares lieutenant, a Red

PYTHA Pilot, companion to Cassius and Lysander, a Blue

FIGMENT Freelancer, a Brown

FITCHNER AU BARCA/ARES Former leader of the Sons of Ares, a Gold, killed by Cassius au Bellona

THE SOVEREIGN

“CITIZENS OF THE SOLAR REPUBLIC, this is your Sovereign.”

I stare half blind into a firing squad of fly-eyed cameras. Out the viewport behind my stage, battle stations and ships of war float beyond the upper atmosphere of Luna.

Eight billion eyes watch me.

“On Friday evening last, the third day of the Mensis Martius, I received a brief indicating that a large-scale Society military operation was under way in the orbit of Mercury. The largest in materiel and manpower since the Battle of Mars, five long years ago.

“We are responsible for this crisis. Lured by the false promises of an enemy plenipotentiary, we allowed our resolve to weaken. We allowed ourselves to believe in the better virtues of our enemy, and that peace was possible with tyrants.

“That lie, seductive though it was, has been exposed as a cruel machination of statecraft designed, perpetrated, and executed by the newly appointed Dictator of the Society remnant, Atalantia au Grimmus—daughter of the Ash Lord. Under her spell, we compromised with the agents of

tyranny. We turned on our greatest general, the sword who broke the chains of bondage, and demanded he accept a peace he knew to be a lie.

“When he did not, we cried *Traitor! Tyrant! Warmonger!* In fear of him, we recalled the Home Guard elements of the White Fleet from Mercury back to Luna. We left Emperor Aquarii at half strength, exposed, vulnerable. Now, her fleet, the fleet which freed all our homes, floats in ruins. Two hundred of *your* ships of war destroyed. Thousands of *your* sailors killed. Millions of *your* brothers and sisters marooned upon a hostile sphere. Quadrillions of *your* wealth squandered. Not by virtue of enemy arms, but by the squabbling of *your* Senate.

“I have heard it said in these last months, in the halls of the New Forum, on the streets of Hyperion, on the news channels across our Republic, that we should abandon these sons and daughters of liberty, these Free Legions. I have heard them called, in public, without shame, ‘the Lost Legions.’ Written off by you, despite the courage they have summoned, the endurance they have shown, the horrors they have suffered *for you*. Written off because we fear to part with our ships will invite invasion of our homeworlds. Because we fear to once again see Society iron over our skies. Because we fear to risk the comforts and freedoms the men and women of the Free Legions purchased for us with their blood...

“I will tell you what I fear. I fear time has diluted our dream! I fear that in our comfort, we believe liberty to be self-fulfilling!” I lean forward. “I fear that the meekness of our resolve, the bickering and backbiting on which we have so decadently glutted ourselves, will rob us of the unity of will that moved the world forward to a fairer place, where respect for justice and freedom has found a foothold for the first time in a millennium.

“I fear that in this disunity we will sink back into the hideous epoch from which we escaped, and that the new dark age will be crueler, more sinister,