



Yi Seong-gye (1335–1408) began life as an obscure warrior of Korea's borderlands, but rose to overthrow the 500-year Goryeo dynasty and become King Taejo, who founded the 518-year Joseon dynasty, Korea's final royal lineage and the longest lasting Confucian dynasty in history. King Taejo's momentous life intersected with watershed East Asian developments: the collapse of the Mongol Empire in Korea, the rise of China's brilliant Ming dynasty, the pacification of massive Japanese pirating operations, and the rise of Asia's most thoroughly realized Confucian society in Joseon. This biography tells the tale, ending with the tragic descent of King Taejo's own family into fratricide and grief.

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