

House Vyrwel of Darkdell

Presented by the illustrious GentleIrongiant, ContraBlonde and AeksioOndos

House Vyrwel of Darkdell is one of the principal houses of the Reach, sworn to Highgarden. They are Andals that were given land by the Three Sage Kings during the time of Andal invasion in order to protect the borders of the Gardener's realm. - AGOT Appendix and AWOIAF

Igon Vyrwel is the captain of the guards at Highgarden while a previous Lord and Lady Vyrwel attended the disastrous Tourney at Whitewalls. - AGOT Appendix and The Mystery Knight

During the attempted Second Blackfyre Rebellion, a man in service to House Vyrwel was killed by a Costayne knight after claiming to be one of Bloodraven's spies. - The Mystery Knight

The fiercest fighters in the stormlands, and perhaps in all of Westeros, are undoubtedly the men of the marches, who are said to be born with sword in hand and oft boast of learning to fight even before they learn to walk. Theirs is the task of protecting the realm of the Storm Kings from the ancient enemies to the west and, especially, the south. - AWOIAF

The castles of the Dornish Marches are among the strongest of the realm, and for good reason, for seldom has a generation passed when they have not faced some new attack. They (the Stormlands Marcher castles) were established to create a bulwark against incursions from the Dornish and the Kings of the Reach. - AWOIAF

On the server, House Vyrwel is currently located north of the Prince's Pass (historically called the Wide Way) and so is one of the Reach Marcher lords.

The hundreds of leagues of the marches consist of grassland, moors, and plains, with a portion of the Red Mountains to the east. The Marches formed an effective buffer zone between the three kingdoms (Dorne, Stormlands, Reach) — WolaF

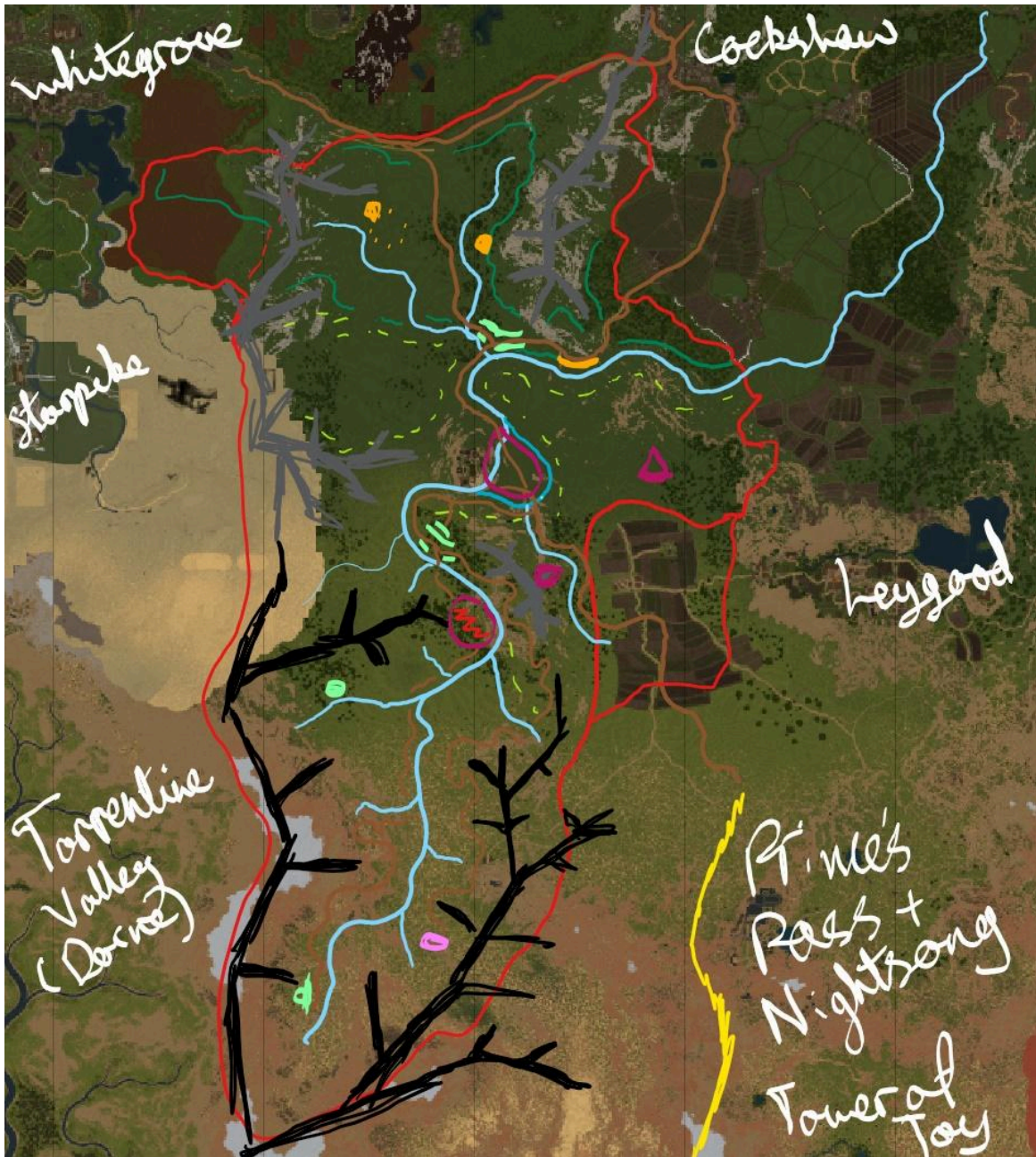
Despite being so close to the deserts of central Dorne, the highlands of the marches have a rather cold climate. — ADwD

The Kingdom of the Reach included western marches from Horn Hill to Nightsong ... most of the marches are now in the stormlands. However, Hornhill and Starpike are Reach marches. — WolaF

The marches are known for producing excellent bowmen. — AGoT, WolaF

The marchers sing lengthy ballads which, according to Tom of Sevenstreams, are each a hundred verses long. — ASoS, AWolaF

The Plan



- Maroon border with red squiggle — Darkdell (the castle)
- Maroon border — Vyrwel town, House Vyrwel's trade hub where traders stop between the Mander and the Princes Pass
- Maroon triangle — Vyrwel vassal
- Maroon dot — Canyon holdfast
- Lime green dots — Herders and shepherds crofts and hovels
- Lime green lines — Farming hamlets
- Pink dot — Hermitage

Orange — Industry i.e. logging camp, charcoal burners in the forest and clay pits along the stream

Dark green lines — Yew woodland

Light green dotted lines — grassland

Brown lines — roads, some have blended a bit too much with the terrain

Settlements

The main village, called **Vyrtown** for ease of communication, is a major revenue source for the Vyrwels. It's a trade hub on the Marches situated on a major road from Highgarden, through Whitegrove and into the Prince's Pass to Dorne. While this isn't the only road, and its tributaries and the main overland route to Dorne.

The town itself is built on the side of the hill that overlooks the small floodplain where they grow their crops. Because of this, many pathways through it become winding and alleyways can be quite steep.

In the past, the town centre served as a refuge for peasants from Dornish reavers, if they were able to flee in time. Nowadays, that same walled square serves traders between Dorne and its northern neighbours with multiple smaller inns having developed (one almost like a multitenant spreading through multiple buildings) to cater to travellers passing through. On the square is a fortified sept, which was the last redoubt in case dornish assault broke through the outer walls. It features a tall belltower and significant Vyrwel house crypt. A drinking house also is situated on the square, as well as some horse breeders and salesmen who supply fresh mounts and oxen to trade caravans hawking their prices. **Approx. 30 houses**

Inspiration comes mostly from Languedoc-Roussillon, Pyrenees-Orientales and other areas of the French Pyrenees, and vaguely from Circulade and Bastide planning with some influence from Sos del Rey Catolico in Aragon.

In the north of the project, a hamlet (**vyrham1**) sits on the road near a stream fork at the edge of the yew woodland. Mostly focused on horticulture with some silvopasture, it functions as the hub for workers at the tile maker downstream and the charcoal burner and logging camp. A workshop for bowyers is present in the hamlet and supplies the area's bowmen with weaponry.

Approx. 10 houses

Between the town and castle is a small farming hamlet (**vyrham2**) that has fields on the bend of the stream. **Approx. 8 houses**

The road from the Prince's Pass runs through a canyon on the way to the town. A holdfast (**Vyrhf**) sits above the road.

To the east of the town is a fortified manor of a vassal of House Vyrwel (**Vyrvassal / Corvobianco**). These landed knights have a mostly self-sustaining estate with olive groves, a small vineyard, livestock and a weaving workshop. **Approx. 6 houses + manor**

A mountaintop hermitage (**Vyrhermitage**) sits south of the castle with a long winding path from the Marches below.

Small herder's crofts are present in the foothills and mountains. They won't have warps.

Tests - /warp vyrweltest on the green platform

<https://imgur.com/a/D15lx2R>

Circulade example



Sos del Rey Catolico



The Vyrwel Castle - Darkdell

Darkdell will be settled on the edge of a mountain spur, with a stream below. The modest but still formidable castle lacks many ornamental elements found in other areas of the Reach. The upper castle and particularly the keep are older, of Andal construction, and ornamentation has been added later. Part of the curtain wall is built on top of an arch, which bridges the titular 'dark dell'. This is shaded by the castle and features scrawny pines and plentiful blackberries that make it more intimidating (insp roquefixade).

Main castle inspiration is from Chateau Foix, Peyrepertuse, Puilaruens, Roquefixade (Aeks fav for terra) and other 'Cathar Castles', Zamek Ogrodzieniec, Klis Fortress, Chateau Bonaguil
<https://imgur.com/a/0ZeTqAj>



Economy

The region around the town caters to supplying travellers. Artisans and yeomen that sell beasts of burden make up some of the wealthiest individuals in Vyrwel. The town produces fine leather equipment and saddles, with hide and gut cleaning being an important task performed outside the walls.

To supply the leather work, many shepherds roam up the marches into the mountains, taking herds to the greenest available patches.

Livestock is dominated by cattle, goat and sheep rearing. The leaner animals are slaughtered for their intestines and hides, rather than meat. The gut strings are used to create the weapons of famed Marcher bowmen and musical instruments to accompany the long ballads sung by them. Fletchers reside in most settlements, and impromptu ranges are an infrequent but not unordinary sight. The bowyers of the northern hamlet regularly make forays into the forest to cut quality yew boughs.

Parts of the forest are managed, with coppiced and pollarded trees near hamlet 1, as well as silvopasture.

Another large part of the livestock rearing trade are horses. While no match for Dornish sand steeds, the region takes pride in its horseflesh and a number of merchants hawk fresh horses and mules to traders with carts and wagons.

Terrain

The terrain is roughly split into three broad areas. Yew woodland in the north blends into central clear grassland which morphs again into grassland with low scrub.

The yew woodland would be made up of hawthorn, blackthorn, juniper and hazel at the edges of grassland, which would be crowded out by yew. The canopy of the main forest will be made up of yew, ash, with some (whitebeam) and hazel. This then transitions into the neighbouring forests by decreasing yew canopy and instead having them as understory trees.

The grassland is relatively simple as it is maintained by grazing. It covers the central third of the project and most of the hills.

The mountains themselves are covered in low scrubby trees and based on the environment of the eastern french pyrenees.

Schems to be made

Yew M|L, (Whitebeam), HazelS|M|L, ChestnutS|M|L(?), CoppicedHazel, Blackthorn

Headcanon creation story

WARNING

THIS IS ENTIRELY A NON CANON STORY THAT AEKSIOONDOS CREATED WHILE INCREDIBLY SLEEP DEPRIVED AND IS BASED ON THE DRAGON OF KRAKÓW (SMOK

WAWELSKI), MUTUAL OF BEAUCLAIR'S WILD KINGDOM QUEST IN WITCHER III AND FLIGHT OF THE CONCORD'S ALBI THE RACIST DRAGON

The Vyrwel legendary progenitor was an Andal warlord with a well sized but tough and hardy warband, so the Gardener king of the time offered them a tract of land on the south eastern borderland with Dorne and the Stormlands, under one condition. A drake of some kind, according to the tales of marcher folk, had been molesting the countryside and carrying off goats and cattle.

The Andal - who of course was also a knight - then set off on his quest and hid among the hills, watching and leaving out bait to see if he could draw out the beast or at least follow it back to its lair. After a few weeks of watching and waiting, the Andal knight was surprised by Dornish reavers while staking another goat carcass. The Dornish charged on him, throwing spears that the Andal caught in his shield before fleeing, for while they were strong of arms, they didn't think that one against two score was survivable and honourably fled for their lives.

Behind him, the knight heard the terrified winny of the sandsteeds but didn't turn around, focused on getting over the ridge and out of sight. They forded a brook and climbed up to one of the rocky hilltops where he happened upon a cave. Hearing an alarming clatter from the direction of the brook, he climbed in, worried the dornish were still on his tail and prepared for a final stand. But, instead of swarthy men with steel in hand, a silver beast with a blood-caked muzzle filled the entranceway, clutching a sand steed in its jaws.

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Recognising the beast had saved him, the Andal chose not to attack and instead built a fire, which won over the creature - for it had no fire of its own - and the two enjoyed a cooked meal of horseflesh. Strange as it may sound, scaley lord and the wannabe human dined on a Marcher delicacy, for sand steed slain in battle is considered the most delicious meat.

The knight returned to their camp afterwards and investigated a hunch developed in the cave. It turned out that somehow, the wyvern was racist and only attacked Dornish animals and people and so the knight reassessed his quest and instead focused efforts on convincing smallfolk to slaughter any animals taken in raids on the dornish mountaineers.

Trusting his plan, mostly due to its key element of no loss of limb, the Andal went back to the king of the Reach and told them that the silver wyvern would no longer be an issue and if it were, he would forfeit his life.

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And so the noble house began, with a wooden motte on the grasslands and a ban on the purchase or theft of Dornish livestock. No further attacks happened and the marcher herds were developed into prime breeding stock without hardy Red Mountains genes.

Reavers were found dead in the hills, supposedly due to the might of these new andals, and the new Faith of the Seven rituals seemed to strangely involve sacrificing animals in the hills.

Eventually, an enterprising man of the mountains came up with a stratagem to open up the cross border trade, allow raiding to resume and stop the wyvern which now plagued the mountains. They stuffed a goat carcass full of sulfur, phosphor and the hottest peppers available and bound its legs so it stood upright. The beast took the bait and then headed back to its lair, terribly unwell.

After noticing how his tributes were not being eaten, the Andal lord returned to the lair and found the wyvern dying, with the stinking, spicy sheep nearby. Rather than see it suffer, the knight decided to show it mercy.

The sigil legend is safeguarded by a hermitage in the foothills of the Red Mountains maintained by House Vyrwel, whose cave sanctuary houses the skull of an enormous creature. Thought to be the wyvern of the story, in reality the series of confused mammoth and wyvern bones. The hermitage is devoted to the Crone, while the chapel in the cave is dedicated to the Warrior.