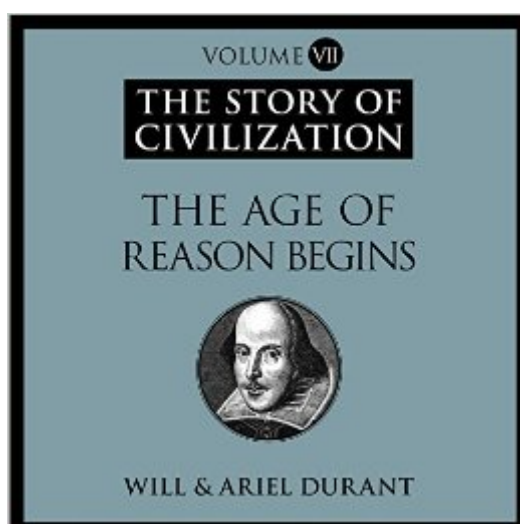


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# The Age Of Reason Begins: A History Of European Civilization In The Period Of Shakespeare, Bacon, Montaigne, Rembrandt, Galileo, And Descartes: 1558 - ... Book 7) (Story Of Civilization (Audio))



## Synopsis

[Read by Grover Gardner] This seventh volume of Will and Ariel Durant's renowned series, *The Story of Civilization*, chronicles the history of European civilization from 1558 to 1648. *The Age of Reason Begins* brings together a fascinating network of stories in the discussion of the bumpy road toward the Enlightenment. This is the age of great monarchs and greater artists - on the one hand, Elizabeth the First of England, Philip II of Spain, and Henry IV of France; on the other, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Montaigne, and Rembrandt. It also encompasses the heyday of Francis Bacon, Galileo, Giordano Bruno, and Descartes, the fathers of modern science and philosophy. But it is equally an age of extreme violence, a moment in which all Europe was embroiled in the horrible Thirty Years' War - in some respects, the real first world war. This chapter in cultural history is one that can't be missed.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this, the seventh volume of the unparalleled series "The Story of Civilization," Dr. Will & Ariel Durant have compiled a compelling rendition of historical fact covering nearly a century of Europe's past from the accession of Elizabeth I of England in 1558 A.D. to the death of Descartes in 1650 A.D.. The reader will be treated to vivid historical recounts concerning: Phillip II of Spain and his "invincible armada." Elizabeth I of England, the "Virgin Queen." The Hapsburg Family. The Thirty-Years' War. The Puritan Revolution in England. Spain's fierce struggle to subdue the Netherlands. Europe's disillusionment following the brutalities of the religious wars. Cardinal

Richelieu of France. And much, much more including plates and maps. The Durants have created a prose which is free-flowing and easy to understand. This book, designed to stand alone or within the series, is a masterpiece of historical accuracy to be enjoyed by professional and layperson alike. I rate it as five stars. Superb!

Will and Ariel Durant shine again in their seventh book of their history of European civilization. The given detailed attention to Shakespeare, Elizabeth I, Henri Quarte, Phillip II, Montaigne and many others. The prose sparkles with wit, verve, pith and an unflagging interest and love for the subject of history and the homeland of my ancestors. Highly recommended.

I have just read the 7th volume of the amazing Story of Civilization, and continue to be impressed with this series. This volume focuses on European civilization from 1558 - 1648 and focuses on such great minds as Shakespeare, Bacon, Montaigne, Rembrandt, Galileo and Descartes. From a political perspective, it focuses on the reigns of Mary Queen of Scots, Elizabeth I, and James I of England; Philip II, III, and IV of Spain; Henry III, IV, and Richelieu in France; and the interesting histories of the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Russia. The book also touches on the Islamic world at this time. Durant's prose is very readable and it is also easy to see his likes and dislikes of the characters in history. I personally like to be able to understand how an historian feels about his subject and I have learned to respect his opinions. I'm amazed at how bloody this part of European history was. I knew that the time of the reformation was filled with wars, but didn't realize how long it lasted after the reformation. This volume also shows how difficult it is for man to accept change, though this time frame does begin to show some positive ideas being accepted. From a religious freedom perspective, it is incredible how difficult and painful of a process it was to arrive at the freedoms we take for granted. Reading history really makes me grateful for what we are blessed with. I highly recommend this series and volume to anyone wanting to understand the story of our civilization. It is filled with beauty and horror. Let us learn from the lessons of history.

I purchased "The Age of Reason Begins" and "The Age of Louis iV" for my Kindle. I did so to refer to the history that is covered in Dumas' d'Artagnan saga, which I had also purchased for Kindle. The ability to go back and forth to the history books profoundly adds to the pleasure of reading the Dumas novels. The history books were very accurately transcribed for Kindle, and The Durant's beautiful prose is always a delight. The only criticism I have is not of the Durant books, but is of the transcription of the d'Artagnan saga: many annoying misprints--but not enough to destroy the

reading experience. However, I repeat, the transcription of the Durant books is excellent; and the reproduction of the portraits of Richelieu, La Valliere, Mazarin, and Louis IV in the Durant books is a bonus to the whole experience. Viva ! for Kindle and for Kindle Books, Viva!

I bought this series years ago in hardback and only recently bought Kindle editions for some. These volumes are long and the reading is dense. I have promised myself I would read one a year until I finish the series. That said, the writing is pithy, uniquely expressive and memorable. About every page or two, I read and marvel at how Durant has described an event, object, or condition. I wish I could write this review as they would have, but I can't; I can only promise you that if you love language and history, you will find the journey to be rewarding. These histories were written well before cheap printing or the Internet, so the illustrations are very poor by contemporary standards. I have found that reading the sections on art and architecture are especially rewarding when I search the Internet for images for the subject at hand. I smile when I think how the Durants would have enjoyed the ease of viewing so much so readily, although they claim to have seen all the art work they describe. Readers will also be amused or chagrined by the similarity of so many governments in the past with our current struggles to manage civilization. As much as we regret the present human condition, we can readily read that for most of history, life was brutal and often hopeless. Medical care was dangerous. One's status with the king or pope was everything and could change in an afternoon. Our histories have been dominated by superstition and dogma and people killed one another for the least of reasons. I, for one, believe we are making slow, but hopeful, progress for the species.

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