Lyanna's long, freshly washed thick white hair was arranged about her face. Jon sat at her side, staring down at her, his eyes stinging as his trembling fingertips traced over her remarkably unlined cheek. He brushed her hair with hands that shook.

She had been a devoted wife – loving albeit wilful at times. She had always been very much an equal in their partnership. There had never been a dull moment in their long marriage. A loving mother, an equally loving grandmother – their children and grandchildren were gathered around the bed weeping at her sudden and shocking loss. The fever that had taken her had been fierce and unexpected. Jon had not left her side during the entire illness.

There had been a moment of lucidity towards the end, a brief smattering of consciousness in which her dark eyes, clouded with pain and sorrow had met his. "I'm sorry, love," she had whispered hoarsely.

"No … don't leave … stay with me a little longer," he had pleaded with her, the tears stinging his eyes and his voice hoarse with grief.
His hair, liberally streaked with grey, fell over his lined face as he stared at Lyanna, unable to believe her stillness… completely unable to accept that his Lady Bear would not open her dark eyes again.

"Father. Please - you need to rest. You haven't slept in days," Dany whispered, her huge violet eyes, reddened as her husband held their daughter in his arms. Out of all of their children, Dany was the only one in whom the Targaryen blood had manifested itself, the rest being as dark-haired and dark-eyed as their parents. Appearance notwithstanding, Dany had chosen a Northern lord to marry and very much considered herself a daughter of the North and one of the She-Bears of Bear Island.

"There'll be time enough for that, Dany," he replied with a sad smile.

Jon lowered his head and brushed his mouth against Lyanna's pale, cold lips. For the first time, there was no response from her to his kiss. He closed his eyes, almost unable to comprehend the intensity of the grief inside of him. He had witnessed so much death, lost so many people over the years but the almost physical pain he felt now was bordering on overwhelming.

"… not you, little bear," he whispered in a broken voice. "This was not supposed to happen like this …"

He turned to their children, brave, strong and wilful like their parents, surrounded by their own children and their husbands and wives. Robb with his tousled dark curls. Dacey with her long mane of black hair and chestnut brown eyes. Dany, delicate and ethereal – but so sweet and kind. While most had elected at some point to travel, all had chosen to remain in the North. Rickon his heir lived on Bear Island, as did Dacey who had married 'beneath' her, marrying one of the island's crofters. The rest, travelled frequently to Bear Island and Winterfell, the Stark-Mormont alliance going far beyond marriage and politics. Founded on loyalty, friendship and love – it was considered unshakeable.

Jon embraced each of his children, in-laws and grandchildren who hugged him tightly. The little ones were sobbing uncontrollably and he kissed them lovingly with a melancholy air of farewell.

Finally he embraced Rickon – a man as serious and pensive as Jon in his youth. "Look after our family, Rickon – they will need you now more than ever," he told him and kissed him on the brow.

Rickon looked very confused, a flicker of horrified understanding starting to flit across his intelligent face. "Father – "

"What are you talking about?" Dacey demanded, her voice sharp and her eyes flashing concern as she rose to her feet. Her husband Karl also rose and he was frowning.

Jon lay down on the bed beside Lyanna and gathered her into his arms the way he had so very many times before. His heart hurt at how light and frail she felt. Even though she was but an empty shell, her body was all that remained of her and he held her close.

"When she lost her mother and sisters, she was left alone in the world to lead her people… I'm not going to let her make this journey alone … " he told them with a bittersweet smile. Before their horrified and incredulous eyes, he closed his eyes, held Lyanna close and then the life went out of him. His watch had finally ended.

Rickon's version of events was that Jon had died of a broken heart. Dacey's view was that with Lyanna's death, Jon had simply surrendered his spirit into death from which he had been summoned long ago by Melisandre. Dany and Robb had their own views which they did not share, nursing their raw grief in silence.
Given the impossibility of separating their bodies, Jon and Lyanna were burned together on the one funeral pyre at the water's edge. The flames could be seen by the ironborn ships that sailed on the horizon, ships that had been sent to pay their respects at hearing news of the death of the lord and lady of Bear Island.

"I don't think that they would have wanted to be buried in the crypt … in the cold and dark ..." Dany had ventured and the others had been inclined to agree with her. They buried the ashes of their parents at the look-out overlooking the water – Lyanna's favourite place on Bear Island where she had frequently been found sitting on the step staring out to sea.

Years later, the people of Bear Island began to report sightings of a snowy white wolf and a black bear who could occasionally be glimpsed at the lookout - although they were nowhere to be found if anyone approached the lookout.

As time passed, the legends claimed that the wolf and the bear only made their appearance to warn of impending peril to the island. As memory faded into legend, the islanders told tales to their children that Lady Lyanna and Lord Jon, heroes of ages gone by, continued to keep watch over their beloved island even in death …

fin
Love of mine, someday you will die
But I'll be close behind and I'll follow you into the dark
No blinding light or tunnels to gates of white
Just our hands clasped so tight, waiting for the hint of a spark
If heaven and hell decide that they both are satisfied
And illuminate the no's on their vacancy signs
If there's no one beside you when your soul embarks
Then I'll follow you into the dark
- Death Cab For Cutie - I Will Follow You Into The Dark

Although my favourite version is by Jasmine Thompson.

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