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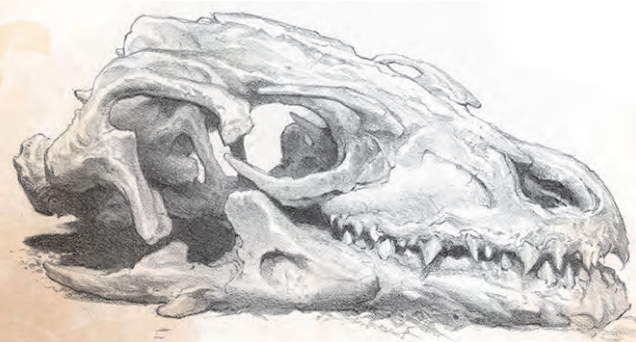
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Trim Size: 9" x 11-7/8" • Pages: 336 • Carton Qty: 6 • FULL COLOR THROUGHOUT  
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*To his most esteemed and gracious  
lord, Robert, Jeffrey Tommen  
the First of His Name, King of the  
Andals and the Rhoynar and the First  
Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms  
and Protector of the Realm, Yandel,  
humble Maester of the Citadel, wishes  
thousandfold prosperity, now and  
forever, and wisdom unmatched.*



# Preface

IT IS SAID with truth that every building is constructed stone by stone, and the same may be said of knowledge, extracted and compiled by many learned men, each of whom builds upon the works of those who preceded him. What one of them does not know is known to another, and little remains truly unknown if one seeks far enough. Now I, Maester Yandel, take my turn as mason, carving what I know to place one more stone in the great bastion of knowledge that has been built over the centuries both within and without the confines of the Citadel—a bastion raised by countless hands that came before, and which will, no doubt, continue to rise with the aid of countless hands yet to come.

I was a foundling from my birth in the tenth year of the reign of the last Targaryen king, left on a morning in an empty stall in the Scribe's Hearth, where acolytes practiced the art of letters for those who had need. The course of my life was set that day, when I was found by an acolyte who took me to the Seneschal of that year, Archmaester Edgerran. Edgerran, whose ring and rod and mask were silver, looked upon my squalling face and announced that I might prove of use. When first told this as a boy, I took it to mean he foresaw my destiny as a maester; only much later did I come to learn from Archmaester Ebrose that Edgerran was writing a treatise on the swaddling of infants and wished to test certain theories.

But inauspicious as that may seem, the result was that I was given to the care of servants and received the occasional attention of maesters. I was raised as a servant myself amongst the halls and chambers and libraries, but I was given the gift of letters by Archmaester Walgrave. Thus did I come to know and love the Citadel and the knights of the mind who guarded its precious wisdom. I desired nothing more than to become one of them—to read of far places and long-dead men, to gaze at the stars and measure the passing of the seasons.

And so I did. I forged the first link in my chain at three-and-ten, and other links followed. I completed my chain and took my oaths in the ninth year of the reign of King Robert, the First of His Name, and found myself blessed to continue at the Citadel, to serve the archmaesters and aid them in all that they did. It was a great honor, but my greatest desire was to create a work of mine own, a work that humble but lettered men might read—and read to their wives and children—so that they would learn of things both good and wicked, just and unjust, great and small, and grow wiser as I had grown wiser amidst the learning of the Citadel. And so I set myself to work once more at my forge, to make new and notable matter around the masterworks of the long-dead maesters who came before me. What follows herein sprang from that desire: a history of deeds gallant and wicked, peoples familiar and strange, and lands near and far.





## THE DAWN AGE

THERE ARE NONE who can say with certain knowledge when the world began, yet this has not stopped many maesters and learned men from seeking the answer. Is it forty thousand years old, as some hold, or perhaps a number as large as five hundred thousand—or even more? It is not written in any book that we know, for in the first age of the world, the Dawn Age, men were not lettered.

We can be certain that the world was far more primitive, however—a barbarous place of tribes living directly from the land with no knowledge of the working of metal or the taming of beasts. What little is known to us of those days are contained in the oldest of texts: the tales written down by the Andals, by the Valyrians, and the Ghiscari, and

*Dead*—a study of the barrow fields and graves and tombs of the North in his time of service at Winterfell, during the long reign of Cregan Stark. From bones that have been found in the North and sent to the Citadel, some maesters estimate that the largest of the giants could reach fourteen feet, though others say twelve feet is nearer the truth. The tales of long-dead rangers written down by maesters of the Watch all agree that the giants did not make homes or garments, and knew of no better tools or weapons than branches pulled from trees. **sb1**

The giants had no kings and no lords. They made no homes save in caverns or beneath tall trees, and they worked neither metal nor fields. They remained creatures of the

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The archives of Citadel contain a letter from Maester Aemon sent in the early years of the reign of Aegon V which reports on such an account from a ranger named Redwyn, written in the days of King Dorren Stark. It recounts a journey to Lorn Point and the Frozen Shore, in which it is claimed that the ranger and his companions fought giants and traded with the children of the forest. Aemon's letter claimed that he had found many such accounts in his examinations of the archives of the Watch at Castle Black, and considered them credible. **sb1**

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even by those distant people of fabled Asshai. Yet however ancient those lettered races, they were not even children during the Dawn Age. So what truths their tales contain are difficult to find, like seeds among chaff.

What can most accurately be told about the Dawn Age? The eastern lands were awash with many peoples—uncivilized, as all the world was uncivilized, but numerous. But on Westeros, from the Lands of Always Winter to the shores of the Summer Sea, only two peoples existed: the children of the forest and the race of creatures known as the giants.

Of the giants in the Dawn Age, little and less can be said, for no one has gathered their tales, their legends, their histories. Men of the Watch say the wildlings have tales of the giants living uneasily alongside the children, ranging where they would and taking what they wanted. All the accounts claim that they were huge and powerful creatures, but simple. Reliable accounts from the rangers of the Night's Watch, who were the last men to see the giants while they still lived, state that they were covered in a thick fur rather than simply being very large men as the nursery tales hold.

There is considerable evidence of burials among the giants, as recorded in Maester Kennet's *Passages of the*

Dawn Age even as the ages passed them by, men grew ever more numerous, and the forests were tamed and dwindled. Now the giants are gone even in the lands beyond the Wall, and the last reports of them are more than a hundred years old. And even those are dubious—tales that rangers of the Watch might tell over a warm fire.

The children of the forest were, in many ways, the opposites of the giants. As small as children but dark and beautiful, they lived in a manner we might call crude today, yet they were still less barbarous than the giants. They worked no metal, but they had great art in working obsidian (what the smallfolk call dragonglass, while the Valyrians knew it by a word meaning “frozen fire”) to make tools and weapons for hunting. They wove no cloths but were skilled in making garments of leaves and bark. They learned to make bows of weirwood and to construct flying snares of grass, and both of the sexes hunted with these.

Their song and music was said to be as beautiful as they were, but what they sang of is not remembered save in small fragments handed down from ancient days. Maester Childer's *Winter's Kings, or the Legends and Lineages of the Starks of Winterfell* contains a part of a ballad alleged to

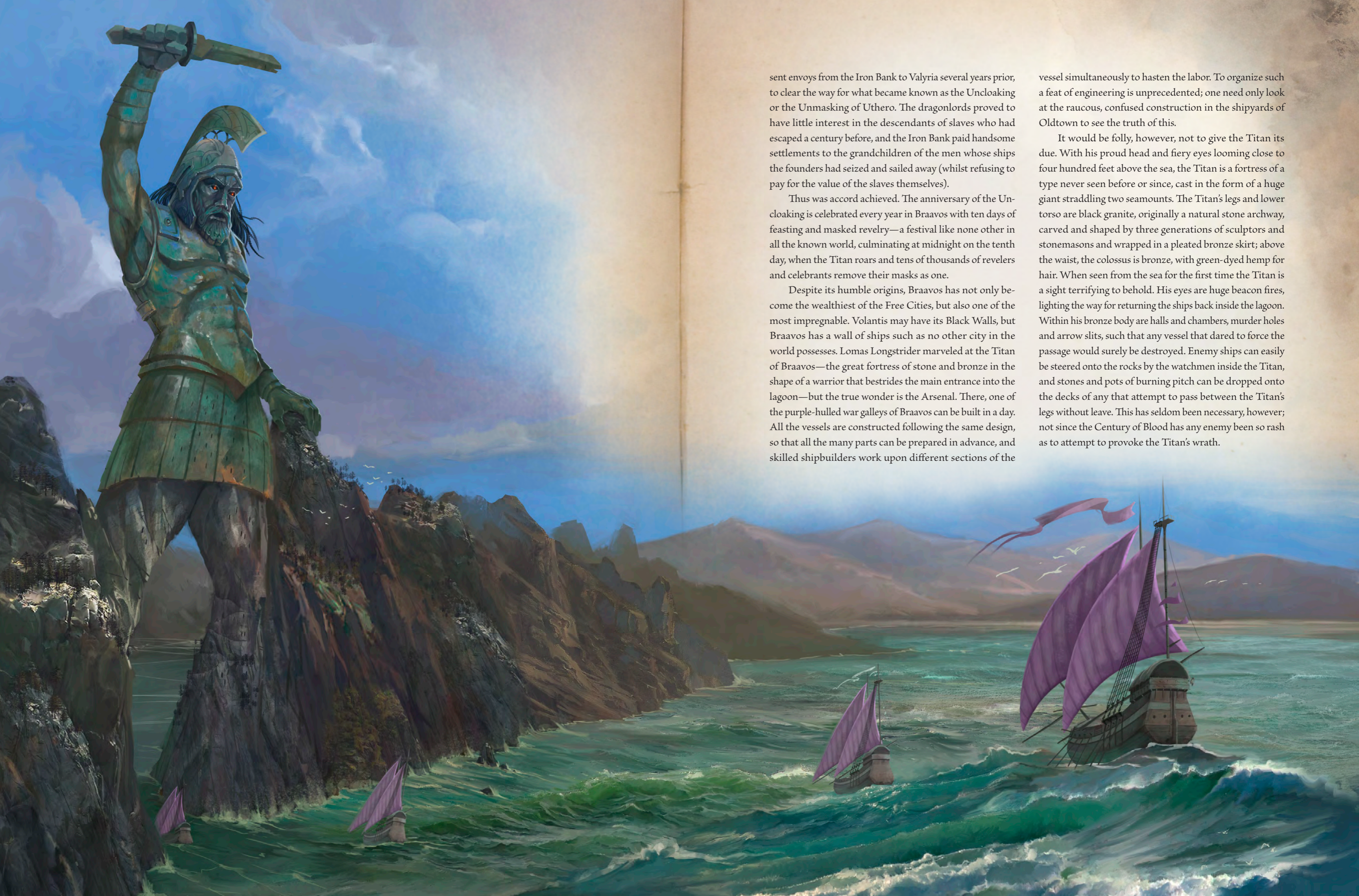
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The  
Reign of the Dragons







sent envoys from the Iron Bank to Valyria several years prior, to clear the way for what became known as the Uncloaking or the Unmasking of Uthero. The dragonlords proved to have little interest in the descendants of slaves who had escaped a century before, and the Iron Bank paid handsome settlements to the grandchildren of the men whose ships the founders had seized and sailed away (whilst refusing to pay for the value of the slaves themselves).

Thus was accord achieved. The anniversary of the Uncloaking is celebrated every year in Braavos with ten days of feasting and masked revelry—a festival like none other in all the known world, culminating at midnight on the tenth day, when the Titan roars and tens of thousands of revelers and celebrants remove their masks as one.

Despite its humble origins, Braavos has not only become the wealthiest of the Free Cities, but also one of the most impregnable. Volantis may have its Black Walls, but Braavos has a wall of ships such as no other city in the world possesses. Lomas Longstrider marveled at the Titan of Braavos—the great fortress of stone and bronze in the shape of a warrior that bestrides the main entrance into the lagoon—but the true wonder is the Arsenal. There, one of the purple-hulled war galleys of Braavos can be built in a day. All the vessels are constructed following the same design, so that all the many parts can be prepared in advance, and skilled shipbuilders work upon different sections of the

vessel simultaneously to hasten the labor. To organize such a feat of engineering is unprecedented; one need only look at the raucous, confused construction in the shipyards of Oldtown to see the truth of this.

It would be folly, however, not to give the Titan its due. With his proud head and fiery eyes looming close to four hundred feet above the sea, the Titan is a fortress of a type never seen before or since, cast in the form of a huge giant straddling two seamounts. The Titan's legs and lower torso are black granite, originally a natural stone archway, carved and shaped by three generations of sculptors and stonemasons and wrapped in a pleated bronze skirt; above the waist, the colossus is bronze, with green-dyed hemp for hair. When seen from the sea for the first time the Titan is a sight terrifying to behold. His eyes are huge beacon fires, lighting the way for returning the ships back inside the lagoon. Within his bronze body are halls and chambers, murder holes and arrow slits, such that any vessel that dared to force the passage would surely be destroyed. Enemy ships can easily be steered onto the rocks by the watchmen inside the Titan, and stones and pots of burning pitch can be dropped onto the decks of any that attempt to pass between the Titan's legs without leave. This has seldom been necessary, however; not since the Century of Blood has any enemy been so rash as to attempt to provoke the Titan's wrath.



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**H**ardhome was once the only settlement approaching a town in the lands beyond the Wall, sheltered on Storrol's Point and commanding a deepwater harbor. But six hundred years ago, it was burned and its people destroyed, though the Watch cannot say for a certainty what happened. Some say that cannibals from Skagos fell on them, others that slavers from across the narrow sea were at fault. The strangest stories, from a ship of the Watch sent to investigate, tell of hideous screams echoing down from the cliffs above Hardhome, where no living man or woman could be found. A most fascinating account of Hardhome can be found in Maester Wyllis's *Hardhome: An Account of Three Years Spent Beyond-the-Wall among Savages, Raiders, and Woods-witches*. Wyllis journeyed to Hardhome on a Pentoshi trader and established himself there as a healer and counselor so that he might write of their customs. He was given the protection of Gorm the Wolf—a chieftain who shared control of Hardhome with three other chiefs. When Gorm was murdered in a drunken brawl, however, Wyllis found himself in mortal danger and made his way back to Oldtown. There he set down his account, only to vanish the year after the illuminations were done. It was said in the Citadel that he was last seen at the docks, looking for a ship that would take him to Eastwatch-by-the-Sea. [sb7](#)

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The brothers Gendel and Gorne were joint kings three thousand years ago. Leading their host down beneath the earth into a labyrinth of twisting subterranean caverns, they passed beneath the Wall unseen to attack the North. Gorne slew the Stark king in battle, then was killed in turn by the king's heir, and Gendel and his remaining wildlings fled back to their caverns, never to be seen again. [sb68](#)

The Horned Lord would follow them, a thousand years after (or perhaps two). His name is lost to history, but he was said to have used sorcery to pass the Wall. After him, centuries later, came Bael the Bard, whose songs are still sung beyond the Wall . . . but there are questions as to whether he truly existed or not. The wildlings say he did and credit many songs to his name, but the old chronicles

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**A**mong the wildlings, it is said that Gendel and his people became lost and trapped in the caverns and still wander there today. Among the histories of the rangers, however, it is said that Gendel was slain as well, and that only a handful of his followers lived to flee back into the ground. [sb68](#)

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of Winterfell say nothing of him. Whether this was due to the defeats and humiliations he was said to have visited upon them (including, according to one improbable story, deflowering a Stark maid and getting her with child) or because he never existed, we cannot truly say.

The last King-Beyond-the-Wall to cross the Wall was Raymun Redbeard, who brought the wildlings together in 212 or 213 AC. It was not until 226 AC that he and the wildlings would breach the Wall by climbing in their hundreds and thousands up the slick ice and down the other side.

Raymun's host numbered in the thousands, by all accounts, and they fought their way as far south as Long

Lake. There, Lord Willam Stark and the Drunken Giant, Lord Harmond of House Umber, brought their armies against them. With two hosts surrounding him, and the lake to his back, Redbeard fought and died, but not before slaying Lord Willam.

When the Night's Watch appeared at last, led by its Lord Commander Jack Musgood (called Jolly Jack Musgood before the invasion, and Sleepy Jack Musgood forever after), the battle was done and the angry Artos Stark (the late Lord Willam's brother, accounted the most fearsome warrior of his age) gave the black brothers the duty of burying the dead. This task, at the least, they performed admirably.

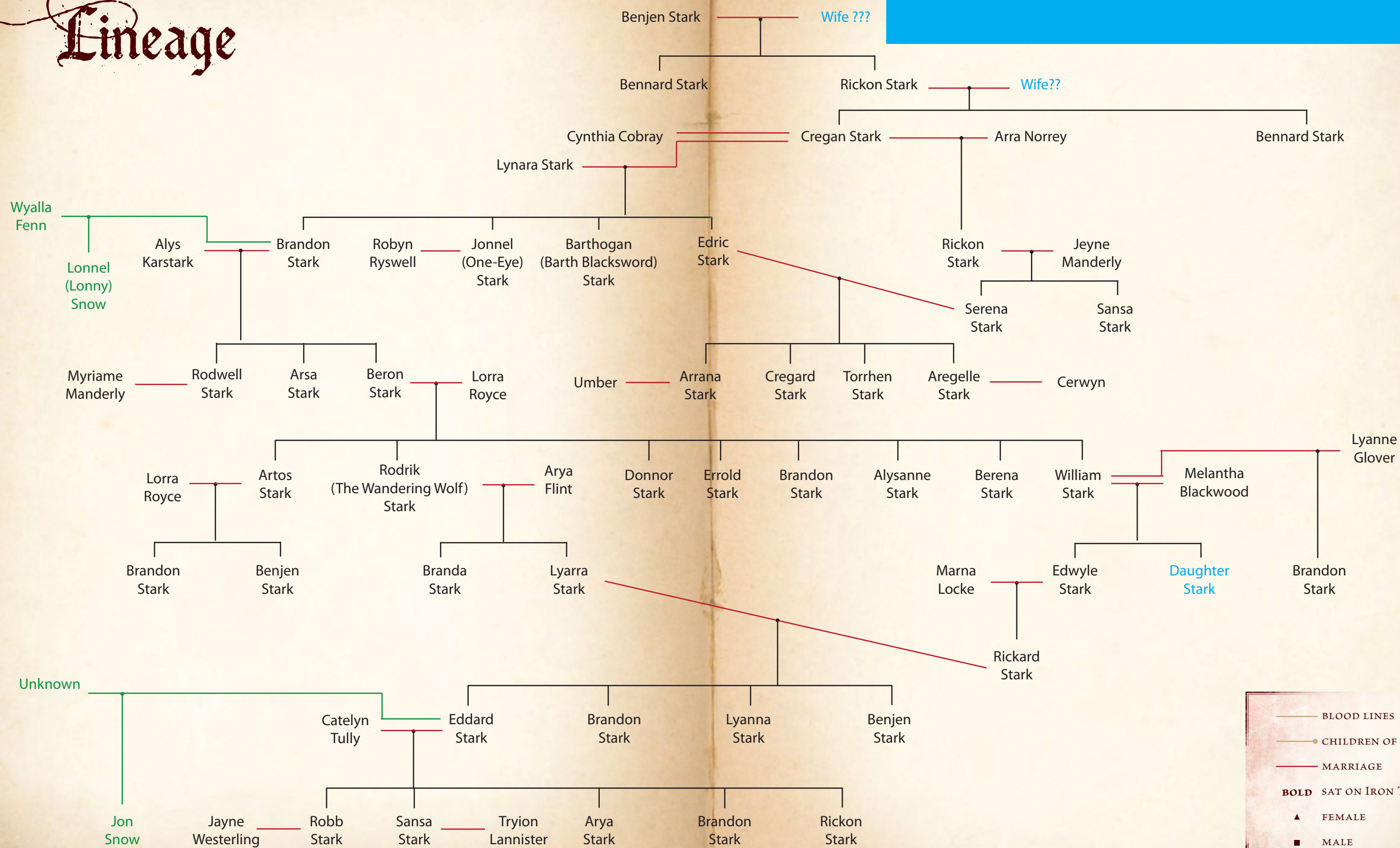
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# Stark Lineage

FAMILY TREE GRAPHIC TK



- BLOOD LINES
- CHILDREN OF
- MARRIAGE
- BOLD** SAT ON IRON THRONE
- FEMALE
- MALE

\* for sake of sapce and clarity birth order has not been deliniated in chart