

## OC-tober

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## OC-tober

by [Planxty](#)

### Summary

Prompts from an October writing challenge on Reddit, exploring some missing moments featuring Maya Noonien-Singh

### Notes

Prompt: first love

## Chapter 1

“Studying.” That was what she called it, all the hours she devoted to try to fill in the gaps in Earth’s history and culture that she had missed while living on Ceti Alpha V. Sometimes (like today) this looked less like pouring over books and more like lying in bed watching a video projected on the ceiling. Music, dance, theatre...these were still important pieces of Earth’s history, and there were days when her fatigue kept her from doing much more than lying back and passively watching.

Today’s choice was a Russian ballet classic: *The Sleeping Beauty*. Maya knew nothing about it, only that the music was composed by Tchaikovsky, and that she was fond of Tchaikovsky. However, she had barely through the overture and opening credits when she saw something so shocking that it gave her a jarring surge of energy.

Ekaterina Mikhailovna Smirnova.

The dancer portraying the lead role had the same first name and patronymic as the same girl Maya had loved years ago, but she tried not to dwell on it. This was a common Russian name. She set those thoughts out of mind enough that she could enjoy the prologue without distractions, but when Princess Aurora danced onstage, Maya felt her throat itch and her eyes close when she saw how much this Ekaterina reminded her of her own. This recording was over 200 years old, yet in this woman of the past she saw so much that reminded her of the girl she used to love: lean, long round eyes, and a warm smile.

She wondered what else the two young women had in common. They both had fathers named Mikhail and were probably called Katya or Katusha by their friends. Did this Katya see the best in people, or have a tender heart that ached whenever the people around her were unhappy? Could her Katya dance like that if she had only had the chance to learn?

A more troubling thought crossed her mind. Whether it was true or not, Mikhail Ivanovich Petrov—Katya’s father—claimed that part of his genetic template came from Russia’s best dancers. The timing might be right, the dancer flitting across the stage could be an ancestor...No. Her thoughts were getting too far ahead of herself.

“Computer, stop.”

The projection went dark, and Maya closed her eyes and took a few deep breaths. Five years had passed since she and Katya were forced apart, and not long after the heartache had begun to fade she saw her first lover killed before her eyes. Katya was everywhere, and Maya wasn’t sure if she liked the little reminders or wanted to that part of her past from her memory.

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Notes

Prompt: favorite thing

“Oh what a rogue and peasant slave am I!”

The augments of Ceti Aloha V were all deeply fond of classical literature. No one ever spoke of their lives before Khan Noonien Singh ruled one quarter of Earth, but Maya suspected it was a common thread in their educational background. The survivors of the Botany Bay had works of Shakespeare, Milton, and Homer committed to memory and passed these on to their children as if they were cherished oral traditions.

“...Make mad the guilty and appall the free, Confound the ignorant and amaze indeed The very faculties of eyes and ears.”

With few options for recreation, recitations were a favorite activity, and plays lended themselves to it best. Suzette Ling organized this particular staging of Hamlet, and Maya had her theories as to why she was chosen for the title character...none of them had to do with merit. Too few men were interested, and those who were were too old to portray the young Prince of Denmark, and Suzette likely wanted to curry favor with Khan. Everyone did.

“...No, not for a king Upon whose property and most dear life A damned defeat was made....”

Undeserving though she felt, Maya tried not to dwell on it, for it was one of few times she believed her father was actually proud of her. He had been eager to coach her, and the time they worked together had been her fondest memories. For once her father was enthusiastic about spending time with her and patient when she made a mistake.

“...But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall To make oppression bitter...”

Though, the more she worked the more she began to believe that maybe she did deserve this after all. Memorization came easily, and she had no trouble relating to Hamlet: a young prince mourning a parent with an unhappy relationship with the other, who felt as if his home was a prison.

“..For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak...”

For a moment, Maya was distracted. She stepped out of Hamlet's head and into her own to try to quickly read her father's face. Had he understood the same interpretation? He still seemed pleased, so perhaps not. Unless he hid it well.

“The play's the thing, wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.”

## Chapter 3

### Chapter Notes

Prompt: regret

Warning: MAJOR spoilers for “That Which You have Sown”

Seriously, save for later if you don't want to know how that one ends

Maya had what she had always wanted, but at what cost? She was off of the planet that hated, rid of the people who treated her badly, and ready to start a dignified new life. She should have felt excited about it, or at least a sense of relief. Instead Maya felt only heartache and exhaustion. The path that lead her here also lead directly to the death of one of the kindest, gentlest people she had ever known.

Captain Vivienne Albrecht was unlike anyone Maya had ever met. She grew up surrounded by egocentrism and cruelty, but Albrecht wanted nothing more than to help people, even if it put herself at risk. Albrecht had trusted her —someone who should have been an enemy but asked for help—without question. And what had Maya done to repay that altruism? Immediately betrayed Albrecht to serve her own ends.

Over and over, Maya reminded herself of the words of wisdom that Doctor McCoy had shared: that you can't undo the past, but that it's never too late to start making the right choices. That wouldn't bring back Albrecht or anyone else who gave their lives defending her ship, though.

Maya wished she knew more about her. Albrecht was from a place on Earth called Alaska. She had a wife. She liked Earnest Hemingway novels. That was all she knew.

The least Maya could do was honor Albrecht's memory by reading the novel she recommended in their last conversation. Well, not their last conversation, but the last one before everything went sideways for Albrecht. “A Farewell to Arms” was, like Albrecht had said, a much better read than “The Old Man and the Sea,” but Maya found no comfort in the narrative. The ambulance driver deserted the army to live peacefully with his lover and their newborn child only to lose them both. Working so hard to carve out a better life only to lose so much along the way... centuries later those old themes were still haunting.

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