

## Winterdark

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by [Planxty](#)

### Summary

Maya Noonien-Singh contemplates loss on the longest night of the year.

(AU where Ceti Alpha V was never devastated)

Marla McGivers had died as the sun set on the shortest day of the year, but by then the end of her life felt like a release, a welcome end to days of suffering and madness. Her young daughter was only five years old and had not been shielded from any of it.

Every year since that first night Maya had the same routine to cope with her mother's death, and had never skipped a year. She would sneak out of bed on the longest night to stay awake watching the stars as long as she could. When she was very young, she could only stay awake for a few hours before falling asleep, and her father would scold her for it. As she grew, however he allowed her more space to grieve in her own way, and she was able to stay awake until the sun rose.

This was the seventh year she honored her mother in this way. There was more of a chill in the air than usual, but she was blessed with a clear sky and stars that shown brightly. Somewhere out there was Earth. When her father spoke of Earth, he talked about the planet he was meant to rule. Her mother, though, talked about the art and music, and used to comfort Maya by telling her that even as a half-Augment she would have been one of the most brilliant minds on Earth. Maya believed it without question when she was young, but now she wondered if they were just pretty words said to comfort a child.

Maya sat in still silence until the first rays of sun began to shine. She sighed and got back to her feet. That was the signal that it was time to go back home and act as if nothing had happened. The first person she saw was her half-brother Arjun, who greeted her with a smirk on his face and his arms crossed.

"Still haven't moved on after all this time?"

"No." Maya walked past Arjun without looking at him. "And neither has Father, even if he does a better job of hiding it."

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