

## MARCELINE'S STORY

When the world ends, people panic. They take measures they shouldn't. They do silly things. And here it is, happening. The end of the world *and* people being silly. Silly as in: insane, sheltering in underground bunkers, having spaceships but not using them. Silly humans. One human, however, was not so stupid. She was rather mean, actually, with this spitting problem and really bloody lips. If you want to know a bit more, she also hated living in an underground bunker. She wanted to be free. She wanted to go, go and survive. She didn't know where she would survive; she just knew it wasn't underground. What she didn't know was that she didn't have much time in this world left, and she might have been half pleased to hear it.

Oh, here she is, standing outside, above her underground life station. I think she wants to make a break for it, across the endless expanse of snowy tundra. She's still considering. It has been a big topic of thought for her.

She stared out at the endless snowy advance and spat in the ground in disbelief.

"I hate this place," she muttered, and spat again. The spittle splattered into the snow, quickly melting away a bit of the frozen wasteland.

Her voice echoed across the tundra, and a spooked snow hare dashed off into the distance. The lemming around her foot stared up reproachfully, and tried to nibble on her jeans.

"Go away," she said irritably and looked down at the little lemming at her feet. She gave it a small little push, and when it didn't go away, kicked it very hard. The lemming rolled away and started crying, which most lemmings shouldn't do, because animals don't tend to cry. But everything was different out here, out in the frozen unkind Tundra.

She gave the lemming an almost apologetic look. *Somebody has to suffer from my insanity*, she thought with a sad relish. She was tall and thin, appearing to be made of knees and elbows. Her skin was as pale as the snow, but her bloody lips stood out like searchlights in the bleached terrain. Her irises were red, and the rest

of the eye was streaked with popping veins. She wore jeans and a white tank top, and she was also freezing.

She was called Marceline.

"Come inside, please," moaned somebody from the back of her vision. Marceline turned bitterly on her heels and spat at the wailing lemming as she walked toward the surface chute. The surface chute was a small fabric tube leading down into the earth, into the life station.

*Great, Marceline thought, I've got to go back down into that insane asylum.*

"Please, come faster," the voice said, and Marceline stared at the meek little boy that was holding open the surface hatch. He had freckles and vision specs, because he couldn't see properly.

"Whatever, four eyes," she said to her brother, Jamie.

"Just get into the hatch, please, and please stop calling me that."

"Try going insane for once," Marceline griped and climbed down into the chute. She stepped down a tiny metal ladder and then slid down into the tube. She wiggled down a bit, and then the sucking feeling began in her gut. Marceline got pulled down the chute, the fabric banging against her face. Finally, she landed in a disheveled heap in the arrival room. It was also the departures room, one of the many rooms that people could visit the surface from.

But Marceline was the only one that did it. Her brother had to get her sometimes, but other than that, she was the only one to use the chutes.

Marceline looked up and rolled sideways as her brother landed perfectly next to her. He immediately walked out of the room, and slammed the yellowed iron door behind him. There were some yellow space suits lined up against the wall, even though they were not needed. Marceline crawled into them and cried. She cried because she was insane, and she cried because she hated living the way she did, in an underground dungeon disguised as a refuge from the ravenous snowstorm above.

"I hate this place!" She yelled, and the shrill scream could be heard from behind the door, echoing into the empty hanger beyond. Empty except for the

spaceships. And Marceline remembered the spaceships and how she wanted to go in one far, far away, and she heaved and her sobs worsened.

Marceline lost count of the hours she cried under the spacesuits. *Toughen up, girl*, she thought. It didn't have the desired effect. She just stopped crying, and wiped her nose. Her eyes burned and felt dryer than sandpaper. She could barely see, and her cracked lips shed the metallic taste of blood through her mouth. She stood up and spat on one of the spacesuits. The spittle was red, and the stain was red, too. She smiled and spat again, spat on the spacesuits that never would be used, because the idiots that were humans said that they were content on staying exactly where they were. She spat on the spacesuit she could be in, but never would be. She spat because she had the chance to deface everything that humans dreamt for but would never have because they were idiots.

Marceline turned up at her living quarters at 2000 hours. Her mouth and jaw were covered in blood and dribbling saliva. Her eyes were almost completely red. Even the pupil looked strained.

Marceline's mother walked toward her with a napkin and a worried look. She tried to wipe at Marceline's bloody mouth.

"Get away from me," Marceline growled, and some saliva dripped around her mouth. She stalked into the bathroom and stared at the mirror. It was small, and the basin under it was cracked. Marceline put on the water and violently splashed her face with the water. It got in her eyes and stung, and it definitely wasn't pure, but she didn't care. After a while Marceline turned off the water and slid against the wall near the toilet.

Sleep enveloped her quickly, and it was a deep, deep sleep that she hated always, and for mostly no apparent reason except loathing of un-vigilance and the darkness.

Marceline awoke at 0206 hours to the sound of the alarm sounding off. The sirens clashed in her ears and she jumped up, pulled open the bathroom door and rushed out. There was nobody in her living pod. They had left. Without her.

The hatred welled up and Marceline swore horribly, spitting blood and kicking the nearest thing to her, which was an oxygen container. It hurt to kick. Marceline cannoned out the door and into the large hall that stretched up hundreds of yards high. White pillars supported the ceiling, which was cracked and bits of cement were falling from it.

There were screams. Marceline yelled in rage, and ran like a gale force wind toward the hanger bay. As she saw the huge doors to the bay, a piece of falling cement the size of a basket ball and jagged as a rocky knife, glanced off the side of her head. Marceline felt the warm blood trickle down her face and then the blue lights in front of her eyes. She pitched forward and blacked out.

Marceline awoke again. She didn't know what time it was. She didn't know where she was. All she knew was pain. The cold, direct pain she was exploding from her head, and she realized the pain everywhere else, in her legs and arms and joints. Marceline ached all over. She lifted her head and, because the pain was too much, retched on her tank top. Marceline was dizzy and nauseated. Tears dripped from her eyes and she rubbed her head. When she looked at her hand again, it was stained with blood.

The pain struck again, and she retched and pitched backwards, hitting her head on a stone. Marceline whimpered and shut her eyes, and tried to rest, tried to fall asleep forever. She knew that when she opened her eyes there would be nothing, no comfort or sugar-coated answer to the problem. Insanity licked at her brain and froze her thoughts, muddled her senses and she wailed.

Marceline could stand up some time later. She pulled herself up on a rock jutting up from the ground. Her vision swam, and she almost fell again, but she just bit her lip and swayed.

The pain stopped an hour later, and Marceline could walk without suffering a severe blinding pain that could knock her unconscious. It is a mystery how she made it to the medical station on her feet. Marceline entered a treatment room, which had a cot, a couple of cabinets and a desk. She fell on the cot and curled up into a ball, biting her lip as pain shot through her body.

Then she tried to stop the pain in her head. The room was solid enough, since it was not damaged by falling cement. Marceline located some Stem pills and popped them into her mouth. The relief filled her head, and she got to work on trying to find bandages. Marceline worked quickly wrapping the bandage around her head and, to make sure the bandages didn't fall off, inexpertly put band aids around the edges. *I need to get out of here and find help*, she thought.

Marceline then made her way to the supply depot and began pulling on winter gear: gloves, snow pants, thick coats, a hat, long underwear and a small in-suit heater. Looking up she could see a pile of rock that lead directly up to the cracked surface of the earth. Cold wind whipped the snow in, and it landed across her face as she clambered up the column, slipping a backpack full of rations and medicine over her shoulder.

Marceline pulled herself over a bit of rock and army-crawled onto the snowy turf. She stood up and looked out at the frozen tundra, the wind whipping the snow up into flurries in the air. And she grinned.

Marceline tripped and slid along the icy terrain. Her personal heater had been filled with snow and had malfunctioned. She had eaten through the food days ago. The medicine had been used up, too. Her jeans and snow pants had been lost in the current she had just barely escaped. She dripped with constantly freezing water, blue lights dancing over her eyesight. Her head wound had opened up again and was dripping a trail of bright red in the snow behind her. *Almost there, I hope*, Marceline thought. A half hour later, her legs were numb. She could barely move them, and her fingers, the pointer, pinky and index, had fallen off from frostbite. Her left leg stopped moving, and she pitched forward into the snow, her face landing in the freezing powder. It instantly turned numb. Marceline turned her head up and looked at the slowly setting sun, and smiled faintly. She felt that smile, even through the numbness of freezing. *I never really liked it here anyway*, she thought, and a tear rolled down her face. It froze on her cheek. Marceline sighed and closed her frozen eyelids forever.

A nearby settlement found Marceline's frozen body a hundred miles from her life station. She was curled up in a ball, with an empty backpack, only wearing a damaged coat and long underwear leggings. According to scans of the area, she was the only survivor of the initial earthquake that destroyed her life station, the earthquake that is now called, in history books, Earthquake Marcy. Marceline was buried somewhere in what is left of Kilkenny, Ireland.