

COLD EQUATIONS

Alternate Ending

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Friends become Enemies

“Good-by, Gerry.” Faint and ineffably poignant and tender, the last words came from the cold metal of the communicator: “Good-bby, little sister—”

She sat motionless in the hush that followed, as thought listening to the shadow-echoes of the words as they died away, then she turned away from the communicator, toward the air lock, and he pulled the black lever beside him. The inner door of the air lock slid swiftly open, to reveal the bare little cell that was waiting for her.

“Wait, is this really the end?” Marilyn whispered, tears welling up in her eyes. Barton looked at her long and hard, contemplating, calculating. “Actually, there is another option.” Marilyn looked up with hope in her eyes. “We have got to make the ship lighter somehow, and we have to do it fast if we want to avoid the **inevitable**.”

Quickly, they **scatter**, looking for anything that could be affordable to lose, but the ship was devoid of all objects save for the freight. Marilyn found a small toolbox hidden beneath the captain’s chair and was about to lob it into the airlock when Barton **intervened**. “Wait, there might be tools we can use to take my chair apart”

They **pored over** the toolbox, emptying its contents out all over the floor. Their hopes dropped as fast as they rose – The only thing inside the toolbox was a **thin, flexible** yet rusty old saw blade.

Barton **cussed** loudly. Stardust had absolutely nothing disposable in it. It was just...empty. **Considerably** more **hollow** than a feminist’s brain in America in the year 2015.

Marilyn and Barton shared a moment of **mutual** frustration when a horrible idea struck Marilyn.

“There’s yet another way.” she said slowly, **dubiously**. “What way would that be?” Barton asked.

Marilyn didn’t take her eyes off of the saw blade. She circled around the location where it lay on the floor. And then it dawned on him. “You’re crazy...” he stammered as she **armed** herself with the sawblade. “You’re **obviously** insane! You? Want to challenge me? I couldn’t think of anything more **violent** than fighting a girl!”

“It’s the only way” Marilyn said, her lips pursed as thin as a razor. Something changed within her. A feeling she couldn’t **dismiss**. Just a short while ago she was prepared to give up, prepared to surrender herself to the abyss. Not any more. She stalked closer and closer to Barton who was now scrambling for his gun. She was **glaring**, waiting for the perfect moment.

With one smooth leap Marilyn launched herself at Barton and sliced at his hand. The blade connected and cut deep into his fingers, causing him to drop the gun before he could fire.

Marilyn wasn’t finished. Murder was in her eyes. She slashed at him again, this time aiming for his throat.

He never stood a chance.

Barton **collapsed** to the floor. His artery was severed and he only had a few precious second of consciousness left. He tried **crawling** towards his gun but it was too far away.

“Not so tough anymore, huh?” Marilyn said coldly.