

Time Dependence

10:57 am. I am sitting in between classes and my favorite professor just walked in to get himself oriented, teach us about the fundamentals of mass transfer, dimensionless numbers and concepts I'll never understand. 10:58. My phone buzzes in front of me, a phone call I've been waiting for the last few weeks. I'm out of my seat within seconds and running towards the hallway to answer it. The professor shuts the door behind me. Alone in a hallway I've spent the last four years roaming.

These last few weeks, they've been hell. With tensions overseas rising, and gas prices, and students who don't know what they're talking about, or talking too much, and test questions I didn't deserve partial credit on, and hours upon hours of working, and the question of where I'll live when my lease is up, and who will watch my dog when I deploy.

When I deploy, when I deploy, when I deploy.

Takes up most of my free thought. What to bring, where my gloves are, I need to get new boot laces, how are my soldiers feeling, make sure autopay is squared away.

I suppose I answered with a shaky hello, probably sounded more like a question, and it was. "Hello?" And the voice on the other end is stern and familiar, he doesn't sugar coat much and I don't need him to, I've grown accustomed to mediocre news and shitty endings. My bags are packed, and I'm ready for a hit time, a get in your car, sleek back your hair,

"You're not going." And time stood still, 1058. Nothing could have prepared me for that.

1058. I didn't say anything, because my voice would break. My tear ducts broke. His voice became softer, and he began to explain why. Why I was yanked from the roster, and why every other individual I've grown to love and call family over the last 5 years would be going, and I'd be staying. Be staying stateside.

There was a vote at 0600.

That finishing my education was more important than going. That they could do it without me, there's no reason for her to be in harms way, she's so close to graduating, she's done so much for us, it's the least we can do. A vote that didn't include my say, I should know that's how it usually goes.

1059. I began to beg. And that is the beauty of this United States Military, guilt is an impossible pill to swallow, makes the progressive, 22 years old female beg to go to war for something she doesn't know anything about.

1100. Please. You put me through school, I know what I signed up for, my best friend is going, you're all going, I can finish my degree later, I can be there in 3 hours.

I volunteer, I volunteer, I volunteer. My mind races.

"You're not going." And he left it at that, I knew to quit arguing, you can't argue. I stop.

11:01 am. There is a classroom full of my peers listening to a professor speak some combination of science and differential equations, and they are smart, but they cannot begin to understand the level of failure coursing through my veins. I tell them they take school too seriously, and they don't listen, because they've never known this heartbreak. In this moment, nothing matters.

We say our goodbyes, I wish him luck, "thank you, sir, be safe". 1102. There's a click, then only muffled lecture leaking through the classroom door.

I rest my hand against the drywall and it's cold to the touch. I force my mind back into thinking about boundary layers, and integrals, and equimolar diffusion, and analytical chemistry, and how this world works. It doesn't matter how it works, only if it does, but that's not how this program works.

Time doesn't stand still; it doesn't wait for you to gather yourself. 11:05 am.

I open the door to the classroom and find my seat. I am lost in the lecture, the boy sitting next to me slides me his notes, I am lost.