2015

Truth

M. E. Hope
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A few names and fewer faces remained six years after, though I immediately recognize the face on the Metro section’s last page. Our petite guidon bearer—the same boot camp picture (here black and white), the golden hair just off the collar. The hair she refused to cut for one whole day; she appealed: My recruiter told me I could keep my hair long. Petty Officer Riley told her, Cut it or go home.

She finally acquiesced the next day, gave in to the barber’s quick scissors, one straight cut, uniform legal. She complained for days in her clipped English accent (I spent years in London as a child, my father at the embassy). I grew tired of the privileged drama, returned to shining my boots; hair grew back.

The article was short: murdered by her sailor husband, body hidden in the desert, confessing after telling everyone she’d gone AWOL.

Her family in Kentucky, a mother and sister, a whole life in some backwater. Our lives mixed for eight brief weeks; had anything in her life been true.