

*Eleven Fifty-nine*

**Characters**

**PIERRE:** An intelligent and motivated student. Too much of a perfectionist.

**MARGAUX:** An also intelligent student, driven, though not a perfectionist.

**CHORUS:** A group of three friends of PIERRE and MARGAUX. They describe the situation in a musical-esque way, sometimes representing what's going through a character's mind.

*(Lights up. PIERRE and MARGAUX are sitting and writing at desks facing the audience.*

*There is distance so the CHORUS can stand between the desks. A spotlight rises on the CHORUS)*

CHORUS:

Quite a moment they find themselves in,

A battle that neither can win.

It's them against time,

it feels like a crime,

and they won't get even a dime.

*(A spotlight rises on PIERRE)*

PIERRE:

It's okay, it's just, like three assignments...

times three classes.

Due at 11:59. Due at 11:59.

Due at *11:59*.

*(The CHORUS inclines towards PIERRE)*

CHORUS:

His wrist burns.

Was it worth it?

PIERRE:

I thought I could do this,

I think I'll get through this,

it'll be over soon.

CHORUS:

His wrist aches.

Was it worth it?

And meanwhile Margaux is still working, though,

Can she pull through?

There's so much to do.

*(A spotlight rises on MARGAUX, the CHORUS moves between MARGAUX and PIERRE)*

MARGAUX:

Just a couple things left to do, it's okay.

I wonder how Pierre's doing right now...

I know he's got a lot to do today.

*(PIERRE's phone rings. He reaches for it. He picks up.)*

MARGAUX:

Hey.

PIERRE:

Hey.

CHORUS:

Tick. Tock.

Tick. Tock.

Tick. Tock.

Ticking.

Ticking.

Tic.

MARGAUX:

Are you doing okay?

I know it's all due tonight,

I can help you a bit if you'd like.

PIERRE:

No. It's okay.

CHORUS:

Cramping hands for praising voices,

How do you feel looking back at your choices?

*Pierre...*

Oh, how you love learning,

Oh, how you love earning

A place on the trophy shelf.

It's almost a sense of self.

The honey cold medal

earns you warm appraisal,

Overflowing dopamine straight to your brain,

A wave of shock, yet

As lightning, flashes and leaves in a second.

You know you can't just *fail*.

You know the rain and hail

Will not stop for you.

Not for you.

Hard work non-stop,

Challenges crushing,

Straight A, beyond 4.7 perfection.

Is this what you wanted?

Is *this* what you wanted?

You took your survival instincts for granted.

Piling and piling,

And yet you are smiling

For them,

Not you.

Who carries the burden

At the drop of the curtain?

MARGAUX:

You're not okay?

Do you need to talk?

I can give you answers if you need.

PIERRE:

No. I'm okay. There's like three hours left.

MARGAUX:

You missed a couple days, this is ridiculous.

PIERRE:

There's so much, and. I just. Don't know? What to do anymore?

CHORUS:

Tick. Tock.

Tick. Tock.

Tick, tock,

Tick, tock.

MARGAUX:

It's okay, there's still time. Let's split it up or something.

CHORUS:

Easy for you to say.

PIERRE:

No, you don't understand.

CHORUS:

She won't understand.

MARGAUX:

It's not the end of the world. Come on.

PIERRE:

It is *not* that easy.

Do you think I want this, Margaux?

Do you think I like this?

Margaux?

Do you think I'd compare this situation "*to a summer's day?*"

*Say this pile of work "by any other name would be as sweet?"*

*Oh, this work would, were it not work called,*

*retain that dear perfection which it owes*

*without that title.*

I'm not some English poet.

*I love this endless pile*

*And my calloused fingers caused by pen*

*They really serve as a comfortable den,*

*They bring my face to a smile- (scoffs)*

No, Margaux!

MARGAUX:

If you don't hold that devotion, then pray tell, why won't you SPLIT THE WORK?

CHORUS:

Tick, tock, tick-

PIERRE:

It's just-

MARGAUX:

You can split. The. Work.

PIERRE:

Easy for you to say! That wouldn't be *my* work.

I've gotten this far, why should I give it all up?

You wouldn't understand. You'd *never* understand.

You've never been like me.

*(MARGAUX is stunned. She hangs up. A tense silence.)*

CHORUS:

Oh, look! *Eleven O'clock.*



*(MARGAUX and PIERRE look stage left. PIERRE begins writing frantically once again.)*

MARGAUX:

Not like him? *Not like him?*

We're both in the same boat,

We're both overflowing,

We're sinking and sinking

There's no time to breathe.

Why won't you see that I'm trying to ease

The load?

There's no use for stressing,

It's really not worth it,

Or what? Would you lose

Your hopes over this?

If only you could *let me help you?*

Is there NOTHING else I can do to get through?

CHORUS:

The time is nearing, the clock is ticking,

Pierre is insane if he thinks he can finish!

Margaux can't get through, he just won't listen,

What should they do when they're in this position?

The minutes are lacking, pure seconds remaining,

There's not enough time to complete what they're typing, it's-

56, 57, 58, 59,

11:59!

*Zero.*

*(PIERRE looks up, distraught. He drops his pencil, he freezes. Lights down.)*