

"SEMPER FIDELIS"

by

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FADE IN:

INT. CUBE FARM - EVENING

Employees are shutting down their systems at the end of a workday. Outside the large windows, we see a deepening grey sky and the buildings of a small city. Lights are on in some windows, going out in others. We focus on GREG, mid-forties, overweight, ordinary, with mouse-brown hair and glasses. A CO-WORKER, male, just as dull, leans into his cube.

CO-WORKER

Coming, Greg?

GREG

In a bit. I just want to finish up.

LAP DISSOLVE: Same view, but the windows are dark, other buildings mostly dark with some lit windows. The office is dark but a pool of light by GREG, who sits back, shutting down his computer. He looks down at his desk at a framed photo, which shows a lovely young woman, barely out of her teens, if that. There's a LOGO on the picture, that shows it's a publicity shot from some movie or TV show. He smiles wistfully, with feeling and sadness, kisses his fingertip, and transfers that to the photo, his fingertip pressing his kiss over the actress' lips

GREG

(His voice hushed, sincere)
Good night, my love...

FADE TO BLACK THEN UP ON:

INT. - RESIDENTIAL LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Front door opens, and GREG enters. He's in a coat, and soaking wet from rain outdoors. Tucked under his arm is a heart-shaped box of chocolates, much the worse for wear. CLARA, approximately GREG's age, and no more or less

attractive, stands from sofa, crosses to him.

CLARA

You're soaked.

GREG shrugs. CLARA tips her face up to him, and he kisses her. There's real affection there, but tension and anger, too, on both sides.

CLARA

Well, don't come up like that. I just changed the sheets. Try not to wake me when you come in.

GREG
I'll try, love.

CLARA
'Night.

CLARA goes upstairs, leaving GREG in his dripping coat.

DISSOLVE TO: INT. - RESIDENTIAL LIVING ROOM, LATER THAT NIGHT.

GREG is sitting on the sofa. His hair and clothes are still damp. The battered box of chocolates, unopened, lies on the coffee table. Bluish light flickers on him from a TV, and we hear the murmuring of whatever he's watching. It's not obnoxious, not important. Beside him on the sofa is BRANDY, a largish, mixed-breed dog. She's not a "Hollywood Dog" just a big mutt. He digs in his pocket and produces a brand-new, heart-shaped doggie-treat for her. She devours it quickly, and then moves so she's leaning against him, and he unconsciously slides an arm around her, stroking her head. She looks up at his face, and he glances down at her. She leans up, and starts licking his face.

GREG
Hey, sweetie. Hey, Brandy. Hey, my
valentine girl...

He relaxes into her happy doggie-kisses, surrendering to her love, and, very quietly, begins to weep.

FADE OUT:

THE END