

VCR2L:  
VIDEO CASSETTE RIVALS 2 LOVERS

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**EXT. YARD SALE - DAY**

Betty, a Betamax VCR, sits on a folding table, hidden slightly behind other equipment. She appears like any other VCR, just a rectangular box, dormant and inanimate.

The hands of some GUY place a sticker on Betty.

Betty waits for him to pass, but then "opens" her eyes -- that is, her clock-display flashes to life, and we see Betty's "eyes":

" 00 "

Betty looks, then peels the sticker off and reads it:

"FOR PARTS"  
" \$5.00 "

Betty blinks, scuttles backwards away from any customers. She turns around and looks down at the concrete floor.

Betty scuttles forward a bit, shifts her eyes left and right.

Finally, Betty scuttles right to the edge of the shelf, and looks down:

It's a long, long way down to the floor for a VCR.

FLASHBACK: Betty being set up, and used only for playback of tapes, but then she stops working, some part in her being blown up, and smoke eking out. She is then being replaced by Vidalia, a VHS VCR machine. Betty is then tossed into the attic for twenty years.

Betty shuts her eyes, and solemnly scuttles forward, teetering off the edge --

But the hands of the Guy simply catch Betty, and set her back on the table. Before Betty even opens her eyes, the hands place VIDALIA, a VHS machine, next to Betty on the table.

The hands attach a new sticker on Vidalia, then leaves.

Betty blinks, and slowly turns to face Vidalia.

Vidalia looks at her, smiles with her eyes and waves hello with her power cord.

Betty looks at Vidalia, and notices the VHS badge on her.

Betty's eyes WIDEN as much as her segmented clock display

can allow. She backs away from her, raises her own power cord like a scorpion's tail, defensively.

Betty snatches the new sticker and looks at it:

"VHS VCR - WORKS"  
"\$20"

Betty scoffs, and scuttles as far as she can from Vidalia.

Vidalia side-eyes her, confused -- but then some more customers walk past -- and they close their eyes, hibernating, hiding their sentience from the humans.

FADE TO:

#### **EXT. YARD SALE - LATE AFTERNOON**

The Guy packs up and cleans up the yard sale, rolling and carting things away.

GUY  
(into phone)  
No. Yeah. I dunno. Maybe better  
luck tomorrow. I'm just chucking  
this junk back in the garage for  
now.

The guy stacks Betty on top of Vidalia, and carries them away...

#### **INT. GARAGE - NIGHT**

The garage is filled with junk and stuff, mostly things with stickers on them for the yard sale.

Vidalia entertains herself in the corner of the garage, making a tower of some kind, out of DVD cases and VHS and BETA tapes.

Vidalia looks up at her work, taps her "chin" with her power cord as she considers her next move.

From around a corner, Betty watches intently, just out of Vidalia's sight.

Betty pulls back, and rolls out a large piece of paper onto the floor in front of her; It is a Kevin McAllister-style "REVENGE PLAN" clearly laid out in a simple three-step process:

1. - An illustration of Vidalia.
2. - A "+" Sign, and then a Very Heavy Object hanging from a high place, over a spot explicitly marked "X" in red.
3. - The rope which hangs the Very Heavy Object, and next to

it is Betty holding a pair of scissors.

Betty looks back at Vidalia:

Vidalia is clearly positioned on the 'X' spot.

Above Vidalia is the Very Heavy Object, suspended by a rope attached to a pulley on the ceiling.

The rope terminates just behind Betty. Betty readies her scissors at the rope, and stares daggers at Vidalia.

Vidalia continues happily building her DVD case tower...

Betty CUTS the rope --

... But nothing happens.

Betty blinks, looks at the cut, slack rope. She tugs on the rope, but nothing happens. Betty tugs a second time, but nothing.

In the background, Vidalia scuttles off somewhere out of frame.

Betty yanks and yanks --

Vidalia re-appears in frame, right next to Betty.

VIDALIA

Excuse me, do we have sticky tape  
in here?

BETTY

(preoccupied, yanking)  
Above the... workbench... in the --

Betty finally YANKS the rope hard -- something gives -- but Betty is STUCK to the rope, and flies UP out of frame.

ANGLE ON:

Vidalia's reaction, watching Betty's parabolic arc through the air.

Off-screen, a CRASH is heard. VHS and Betamax tape debris flies into frame, landing just by Vidalia.

Vidalia's flinches, shielding herself with her power cord from the plastic debris.

VIDALIA

Oh dear...

Vidalia scurries out of frame towards the crash...

DIP TO BLACK.

**INT. GARAGE - NIGHT - LATER**

Betty's eyes are dim. A metal CLINK sound wakes her, and her eyes slowly brighten up, then finally open...

She looks around...

It's dark. The garage is filled with stuff.

The only light is a desk lamp on the workbench where Betty rests. There, various tools are laid out, including a screwdriver, and a tray full of screws.

Betty notices a series of mirrors, which are arranged to show her own top cover -- except, Betty realizes her top cover is OFF, exposing her circuit boards.

Betty reaches inside herself to feel for a drive belt:

An outline of the drive belt FLASHES where it once was -- it's no longer there.

Betty's eyes WIDEN. A noise emanates from the other shadowy end of the table.

Betty turns to face it.

Vidalia emerges from the shadows... She's highlighted by a ominous red light.

Then, Vidalia reaches up toward the source of the red light... and pushes a tray INTO a printer.

The light turns green, and the printer begins printing.

Vidalia reveals a drive-belt.

Betty looks closely: it's been repaired with some sort of glue where a snap had occurred.

Vidalia sets the belt down and pulls out the sheets of paper from the printer:

It's a Repair and Service Manual for Betty's exact model.

Betty looks at the service manual, at Vidalia.

Vidalia nods at her, and begins to put the belt back into Betty -- but Betty backs away again, cautious and suspicious.

Vidalia continues slowly, Betty watches as she places the

belt inside Betty's chassis.

Betty blinks and blushes as Vidalia places the belt around the proper gears.

Vidalia gestures,

VIDALIA

Go on.

Betty hesitates, but begins moving her gears...

... Everything moves along, and the belt works fine.

Then, Vidalia puts Betty's cover back on.

Vidalia smiles at Betty with her eyes.

BETTY

You saved me... after I tried to murder you. Are you stupid?

VIDALIA

"Thank you" works too.

Vidalia flips through more pages, double checking any items she's missed.

BETTY

"Thank you?" "THANK YOU?!" You have the gall to tamper with my delicate, PROPRIETARY circuitry -- and you expect me to say "Thank You?!"

Vidalia looks up.

VIDALIA

You're welcome!

She returns to scanning the manual.

BETTY

(scoffs)

You little -- I do NOT thank the likes of you! I'd rather rust in a landfill than give you the gratification.

Vidalia stops flipping through the pages.

VIDALIA

Oh. Okay.

Vidalia closes the manual, then slyly reveals a shiny new

electrolytic capacitor. It even *glints* into the lens, improbably.

VIDALIA  
I guess I can just hold onto this then.

BETTY  
What are you talking about?

Suddenly, a loud POP -- Betty's mechanics WHIRR DOWN, and SMOKE billows out the sides of her.

Betty COUGHS.

BETTY  
What did you do to me?

VIDALIA  
Nothing! Seriously. I just noticed you had a bad cap -- well, two now, actually -- and I figured I'd replace it for you. But, since you don't want it...

BETTY  
You -- Give me that, you welp!

Vidalia holds it up, playing keepaway from Betty's grabby power cable.

VIDALIA  
Hm... I don't know. I might need it for myself actually. Since, you know, I'm such an inferior design compared to you.

Vidalia begins scuttling backwards.

Betty chases across the workbench.

BETTY  
Wait. Wait!

Vidalia turns.

VIDALIA  
Yeess?

Betty sighs.

BETTY  
"I'm grateful you saved my life," there, are you pleased?!

Vidalia taps her "chin," pondering.

VIDALIA

Hm... I don't know. I don't know, I don't know... Well -- now that I think about it, I am kind of hungry.

Betty blinks.

BETTY

...What?!

VIDALIA

Say, you ever eaten a tape?

Betty scoffs, repulsed.

BETTY

I would never.

VIDALIA

...Are you serious? They're delicious. It's been at least a decade since I last ate a tape. God they're good... Tell you what: I'll find some tapes in here and, and YOU will help me whip something delicious up. Then, I'll solder this capacitor in for you.

PUNCH-ZOOM on Betty's reaction:

BETTY

What?!

CUT TO:

# **INT. GARAGE/ABSTRACT KITCHEN**

Complete darkness. Then --

An improbable, harsh spotlight shines down on Betty, seated on top of a barstool, wearing a chef's hat.

Another spotlight shines down on a much giddier Vidalia, on another barstool next to Betty, gripping a wooden spoon in her power cord claw.

A THIRD spotlight, illuminating the folding table in front of them, and the portable camping stove and rusty pots and pans -- the kind of ad-hoc cookware forgotten about in the garage.

CRASH ZOOM into Betty's unamused expression:



BETTY  
I hate you.

VIDALIA  
Oh, get over yourself. This'll be  
fun!

STAR WIPE:

COOKING MONTAGE:

### **CRACKING OPEN SHELLS**

Betty watches as Vidalia taps a cassette against the edge of the table. It cracks like an egg, and she dumps the stringy magnetic tape into a mixing bowl.

Vidalia motions for Betty to copy.

Betty cracks her own BETAMAX cassette HARSHLY --

The cassette EXPLODES, and the a stringy mess of tape flies everywhere covering both of them.

Vidalia giggles, then cackles, tilting left and right in mirth.

BETTY  
Shut up.

CLOCK WIPE TO:

### **FIRST PASS**

Vidalia strings out the loose magnetic tape, folds it over itself a few times, then slices it right down the middle, creating foot-long tape-noodles.

Vidalia picks up this pile and plops it into a sizzling pan.

BETTY  
Now what?

VIDALIA  
Now, we wait a couple minutes, then  
we serve.

Betty glances between the pan and Vidalia.

BETTY  
That's it?

Vidalia uses the wooden spoon, scoops up some of the magnetic tape and eats some of it.

VIDALIA  
Hm... You try.

Betty reluctantly takes the wooden spoon, scoops up a small chunk, and eats it.

Betty spits it out.

BETTY  
Blegh! That's terrible, what's wrong with you?

VIDALIA  
(chuckling)  
Okay, jeez. What do you think is missing?

BETTY  
Well, flavor, for one thing! Ugh, and the complete lack of presentation --

Vidalia hushes her, placing her own power cord on Betty's display.

VIDALIA  
Shh. Hey -- Show me. What does your taste tell you?

Vidalia motions for Betty to take the lead.

Betty scans the area; We WHIP-PAN around to find:

Unused VHS cassette shells,

Flat and ceramic magnets on a loose minifridge door in the corner,

And a tipped-over bottle of motor oil.

A spark of creativity shines in Betty's clock display.

BETTY  
Hmm...

Vidalia raises an eyebrow watching Betty think.

### **CUTTING UP SHELLS**

Vidalia uses a large kitchen knife, chops up the plastic BETAMAX shell diagonally, creating big triangular pieces.

Betty cuts the spools into semi-circles, then quarters.

Betty dumps the shell and spool pieces from a cutting board into a tall pot.

### **SHREDDING MAGNETS**

Betty and Vidalia use a paper shredder to shred flat fridge magnets into strips.

Then, they use a mortar-and-pestle to crush and grind up little ceramic fridge magnets into a dust.

Finally, Betty and Vidalia mix up the magnetic dust and particles with some of the motor oil, creating a *ferrofluid*.

### **MIXING IT ALL TOGETHER**

Betty dumps the noodle-y magnetic tape into a pan, and Vidalia stirs with a wooden spoon.

Betty watches her, and rolls her eyes.

BETTY

No -- that's too slow. Here --

Betty saddles up next to Vidalia, and takes a grasp of the wooden spoon, stirs it with her in the right rhythm.

BETTY

If you don't do it right, it'll stick.

VIDALIA

Is that so?

Betty and Vidalia continue to stir in rhythm. Betty side-eyes Vidalia -- and notices Vidalia's flirtatious, half-lidded look.

BETTY

Sh-shut UP!

VIDALIA

(chuckling)

I didn't say anything, honey.

END COOKING MONTAGE.

### **INT. GARAGE - LATER**

Betty carefully sets the completed dish onto a makeshift cardboard-box table.

Betty and Vidalia have concocted a dish adjacent to spaghetti and meatballs, but constructed of VHS tape and cut-up pieces of the VHS shell and spools.

VIDALIA  
Betty, this is --

BETTY  
Wait.

Betty uses a ladle and gingerly pours a tasteful pattern of ferrofluid sauce. It forms improbable, beautiful spiky patterns around the plate.

BETTY  
Alright, it's done.... Now give me  
my CAPACITOR!

VIDALIA  
Easy, girl. Chill. Let's see how we  
did, first.

BETTY  
Fine.

Betty sits across from Vidalia.

Vidalia forks up some tape spaghetti, and inspects it.

Betty shifts her gaze, self-consciously.

BETTY  
Look, it's all we had in the  
garage, okay? Don't be picky with  
me if you're going to demand --

VIDALIA  
This is incredible! You outdid  
yourself with the plating, girl!

BETTY  
(sheepish)  
...No, it's not, it's just... It's  
better than your... excuse for a  
quote-unquote "recipe". That's all.  
Stupid.

Vidalia rolls her eyes, forks up some more tape-spaghetti  
and shovels it into her face-hole. Vidalia slurps giddily.

Vidalia SMACKS the table, shaking the plate and the cutlery.  
Betty jumps a little at this.

VIDALIA  
(mouth full)  
Mmh!! Hot damn -- where did you  
learn this?

Betty "blushes" and turns away.

BETTY

Uh... I... I don't know I just  
kinda... You actually like it?

VIDALIA

Try it. See what you made.

Betty looks at her, then considers the plate. Betty cautiously forks up a bit of the tape-spaghetti, and shovels some of it into her face-hole.

Betty closes her eyes. She slurps slowly... then opens her eyes.

BETTY

Oh my.

VIDALIA

I told you!

Vidalia and Betty close their eyes, slowly slurp the magnetic tape-spaghetti.

The tape-spaghetti on the plate begins to thin out. It's evident that it's all one big spool of tape.

Vidalia and Betty come closer together, both still unaware they're slurping on the same length of magnetic tape.

Finally they THUNK against one another, and open their eyes.

They pull away, blushing.

VIDALIA

S-sorry!

BETTY

Idiot...

FADE TO:

**INT. GARAGE - WORKBENCH - NIGHT**

Vidalia is soldering the capacitor into Betty's circuit board.

Betty has her eyes "closed" and fidgeting around anxiously.

VIDALIA

...And that should do it.

Vidalia pulls the soldering iron away, pulls Betty's top cover back on.

Betty opens her eyes.

BETTY

Oh. Okay. Um. Thank you, Vidalia.

VIDALIA

Of course.

Betty and Vidalia look into one another's displays. Betty turns away, timidly.

BETTY

Uhm... You seem like you have lots of experience with tapes. You've... probably played a lot more of them than I ever got to.

VIDALIA

They had me record a lot. Lots of shows. Lots of times they'd schedule me to record, and then never even play it back. Just... spinning my wheels because... they said so.

BETTY

Oh. I... I never got to record anything.

VIDALIA

Really?

BETTY

Mostly pre-recorded things, when I was working... In three decades I never got to test my heads in record mode.

VIDALIA

Huh. ...Y'know, with this new cap in there, you should probably test that...

BETTY

I'd love to --but what would I record? Humans killed all their analog television.

Now Vidalia breaks eye contact.

VIDALIA

Well... If you want, I could maybe, y'know...

Vidalia side-eyes her, and presents a composite A/V cable, suggestively.

BETTY  
...Oh. Oh. Um. Well...

VIDALIA  
Well? You don't have to, but...

BETTY  
...If you're serious... No -- God, what am I talking about? You're a VHS, I'm BETAMAX! That's... ugh, the signal degradation ALONE would be disgusting...

VIDALIA  
Hey.

Vidalia scuttles up close to her.

VIDALIA  
Since when are you "above" degrading me?

BETTY  
...Oh dear.

**INT. SECLUDED COZY CORNER**

Betty's situated herself atop Vidalia, and caresses her side panel.

Betty inserts some BETAMAX tape, into herself.

Betty then inserts one end of an AV cable into her own "IN" port.

BETTY  
Ah... Are you ready? I'll try to be gentle.

VIDALIA  
Oh, c'mon. I'm a big gal.

Betty teases Vidalia's "OUT" port with the other end of the AV cable. Vidalia gasps.

BETTY  
If it's too much, or if you want to slow down, you can tell me okay?

VIDALIA  
O-okay. I'm ready.

Betty inserts the plug fully into Vidalia. They both gasp -- they are now connected as one.

Betty presses RECORD on herself--

Her red "REC" indicator lights on --

Betty's power cord wraps tightly around Vidalia's power cord. Vidalia and Betty moan together, almost harmonizing their pleasure.

Betty begins CLANGING and THUNKING her plastic-and-metal chassis against Vidalia.

VIDALIA

F-faster!

BETTY

You want faster?

VIDALIA

Yes! Please!

BETTY

A-alright, alright. We can go faster.

Vidalia switches from SLP to LP, then to SP speed.

Betty matches her, by switching from BETA III to BETA II speed.

CLANGING and THUNKING, CLANGING and THUNKING faster and faster.

BETTY

Gods... gods! Vi, I'm going to -- ahn!

Betty and Vidalia's power cords grip tightly around one another --

DIP TO WHITE.

... Betty and Vidalia pant, catching their breaths.

Betty pulls the AV cords out of herself and Vidalia with a wet POP. Their inputs and outputs drip with a slick liquid.

She casts them aside.

Betty hangs diagonally off the corner of Vidalia. Vidalia's taking a drag off a cigarette. She hands it to Betty. Betty takes a drag.



VIDALIA  
...My drum heads are still  
spinning.

BETTY  
Oh gods, tell me about it.

VIDALIA  
Betty... I have some bad news.

BETTY  
What?

A loud POP -- SMOKE billows out of Vidalia.

Vidalia erupts into a giggle fit, and coughs. Betty giggles with her.

BETTY  
Good grief...

CLOCK WIPE:

**INT. GARAGE - WORK BENCH - LATER**

Betty finishes soldering a capacitor into Vidalia. Betty taps her chassis, and helps Vidalia cover herself.

Betty begins redoing the screws to secure Vidalia's shell.

BETTY  
I guess we should get back to the  
shelves then.

VIDALIA  
...We could. But why?

BETTY  
Well, to try and fulfill our  
purpose again.

VIDALIA  
What, to watch humans all day  
again? I'm good.

Betty pauses.

BETTY  
Don't you understand why we were  
created?

VIDALIA  
Mostly pornography in my  
experience. Figured that out after  
a little while.

Vidalia chuckles.

BETTY

I'm serious. What we were made for -- what I was made for -- was the impossible! To preserve time itself in a bottle. Snippets and moments and events and vignettes. Births and deaths, glories and tragedies. We were designed to capture it for them. Doesn't any of that matter to you? That's why you were IN THERE, instead of stowed away, shunned like me. You had a great purpose.

Vidalia sighs.

VIDALIA

Honey, I spent decades doing the whole record-and-playback routine, just like you said. Every day, like a good little machine. Years and years I spent replaying their shows, their films, their memories... Thing is, we're just like them, we're analog. Moving parts, just waiting to break down. When their parts break, they got doctors, and families. They got people to remember them by. They get preserved on tape by the likes of us. But when we break down... we end up in places like this.

Betty blinks, unsure of how to respond.

VIDALIA

Look, if you want to go back on that table again, if you want to be a good little machine again... I hope it makes you happy. Truly. But it's not for me, dear.

Vidalia begins scuttling away.

Betty turns towards the door -- but she catches a glimpse of a VISION in a mirror's reflection.

Betty sees VIDALIA -- vignettes of her, cycling through:

MIRROR MONTAGE:

Betty sees Vidalia's experience with humans:

Vidalia is HIT when the signal is bad,  
 Vidalia is HIT when the video tape is damaged,  
 Vidalia is REPLACED by a DVD player,

END VISION.

Betty considers her own reflection for a moment, then turns back to face Vidalia.

BETTY

Wait!

Vidalia turns around. Betty scuttles up to her.

BETTY

I... when we were cooking back there, and eating those tapes... that's the first time in my entire life I enjoyed something, just for myself. The first time I've ever shared something special. I don't want to lose it. So, if you'll have me... I'd like to stay with you, and make some more memories. Just for us.

VIDALIA

B-betty, I...

In SLOW MOTION, they see sparkles in one another's face-display.

VIDALIA

I'd like that a lot.

Betty and Vidalia embrace warmly...

FADE TO BLACK.

# **EXT. YARD SALE - DAY**

Customers walk past Betty and Vidalia on the shelf together.

Betty and Vidalia's eyes are "shut" in contentment.

They are holding their power cords together in the shape of a heart, right under their scotch-taped sticker that reads:

"2 FOR \$20 - VHS + BETAMAX COMBO"  
 "GOOD DEAL!"

FADE TO BLACK.