

VCR2L:
VIDEO CASSETTE RIVALS 2 LOVERS

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1 INT. CARDBOARD BOX - DAY

1

Betty "opens" her "eyes," looks out through a hole in the box:

2 INT./EXT. CAR/THRIFT SHOP - DAY - CONTINUOUS

2

Betty sees through the windshield the sign of a THRIFT SHOP appearing as the car parks right in front of the shop.

Betty looks down at the bottom of the box. She pulls a piece of packing material and covers herself, ashamed.

CUT TO BLACK.

3 INT. THRIFT SHOP - DAY

3

Betty sits on a shelf, hidden slightly behind other equipment.

Betty looks out into the store:

A variety of items, equipment, computers -- none of which resemble her. Laptops, computers, video game systems, all way past her time.

A STORE CLERK walks up to Betty and places a sticker on her.

Betty waits for him to pass, then peels the sticker off and reads it:

"CLEARANCE"
" \$2.50 "

Betty blinks, looks down at the 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.

BETTY
I'm sorry.

SUPER: a hazy image of the SONY logo, like a cheesy rock ballad video.

Betty sets the "clearance" sticker on the shelf. She closes her "eyes" and begins to scuttle herself off the edge, inch by inch.

Betty is nearly halfway, and teetering off the edge --

But the STORE CLERK nonchalantly catches Betty, and sets her back. Then, the Store Clerk sets VIDALIA, a VHS machine down next to Betty.

He attaches a new sticker in between them on the shelf, 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 backs away from her, raises her own power cord like a scorpion's tail, defensively.

Betty snatches the new sticker and looks at it:

"2 FOR \$25 - VHS + BETAMAX COMBO"
"GOOD DEAL!"

Betty looks Vidalia in the eyes, and RIPS the sticker to shreds in front of her. Betty storms off in another direction.

Vidalia looks at the scraps, confused.

FADE TO:

4 INT. THRIFT SHOP - LATER

4

The store clerk puts up a sign that reads "OUT TO LUNCH!", then exits and locks the door.

Vidalia entertains herself in the corner of the shop, making a tower 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.

POV: FROM THE CORNER,
Betty watches intently from behind a corner, 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 tape in this store?

BETTY

(preoccupied)

Behind the counter... third drawer!

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.

5 INT. THRIFT SHOP - OUTSIDE STORAGE ROOM5

There is a door labeled:
"STORAGE"
"EMPLOYEES ONLY".

6 INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT6

It's dark. The storage room has boxes piled against walls.

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

We can barely see the outline of Betty at the edge of the table, apparently dormant.

CLOSE ON:

Betty's eyes, they slowly brighten up, then finally open...

She looks around...

WIDE:

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 new 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. 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 begins flipping through the service manual, double checking any items she's missed.

BETTY

"Thank you?" "THANK YOU?!" You RUINED my life! I had a singular purpose: to be the best home video recorder, with superior image quality. But NO -- your kind had to saturate the market with your bloated, low-quality drivel. You disgust me and insult me -- and you have the audacity to tamper with my mechanics? And you ask me to say "Thank You?!"

VIDALIA

You're welcome.

BETTY

You little -- I'd rather rust in a landfill than show gratitude.

Vidalia stops flipping through the pages.

VIDALIA

Oh. Okay.

Vidalia closes the manual, then slyly reveals a shiny new electrolytic capacitor.

VIDALIA

I guess if you don't want to be operational, I can just hold onto this then.

BETTY

What are you talking about?

Vidalia shows a piece of the service manual, which has a little capacitor circled in red.

Betty feels around in her circuit board again -- her own capacitor is totally busted.

Betty's eyes widen, and she reaches greedily for the capacitor in Vidalia's claw.

BETTY

Give me that, right now.

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

VIDALIA

I thought you wanted the landfill? What, you don't want to rust and deteriorate under metric tons of garbage to spite me?

BETTY

I need that more than you, you welp.

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 turns and begins scuttling away.

BETTY

Wait. Wait!

Vidalia turns.

VIDALIA

Yeess?

BETTY

What the hell do you want from me? "I'm grateful you saved my life," is that it?!

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

...What?

VIDALIA

Tell me something, when is the last time you ate a tape?

BETTY

I would never.

VIDALIA

Really? You're not kidding? They're delicious. For me, it's been at least a decade since I last ate a tape. I am famished. Tell you what: Cook a nice meal for us, and I'll solder this capacitor in for you.

PUNCH-ZOOM on Betty's reaction:

BETTY

...Cook?
Meal?!

CUT TO:

COOKING MONTAGE:

7 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

7

An improbable, harsh spotlight shines down on Betty, who is now seated on top of a barstool, in front of a stovetop. She is also wearing a chef's hat.

CRASH ZOOM into Betty's unamused expression:

BETTY

I hate you.

Betty cracks open a BETAMAX cassette like an egg.

BETTY

Stupid trash demon.

Betty separates the shell and spools from the stringy magnetic tape.

Betty places the magnetic tape pile into a bowl, sets it aside.

BETTY
Stuck-up bitch.

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

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

BETTY
Making me cook for that stupid
capacitor!

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

Betty dumps the noodle-y magnetic tape in as well.

Betty turns the burner ON.

The flames are REFLECTIVE in Betty's face-display.

Betty stirrs AGGRESSIVELY.

BETTY
Demon!

END COOKING MONTAGE.

8 INT. STORAGE ROOM - LATER

8

Vidalia sits at a makeshift cardboard-box-table. Betty slams down her completed dish onto the table:

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

The meal is topped with ferrofluid sauce, forming inexplicable spiky, magnetic patterns.

BETTY
Here. Now give me my CAPACITOR!

VIDALIA
Easy, girl. Chill. Take a seat with me.

BETTY
Ugh.

Betty sits across from Vidalia.

VIDALIA
This looks...

BETTY

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

VIDALIA

It's incredible! The presentation is
wonderful, this is art!

BETTY

(sheepish)

...No, it's not, it's just a
recipie. Stupid.

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

VIDALIA

Mmh! It's delicious -- 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

You gotta try this. It's good!

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

Holy shit, this is good.

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, as they realize they
are slurping on the same length of magnetic tape.

They pull away, blushing.

VIDALIA
S-sorry!

BETTY
Idiot...

They look away -- but only for a moment.

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

Over the SOUNDTRACK, romantic poppy ballad in 6/8 time signature swells, as they inch ever so closer --

CUT TO:

Vidalia presses play on herself--

Betty's red "REC" indicator lights on --

CLOSE ON: Betty's power cord wrapping tightly around Vidalia's power cord. Vidalia and Betty are *moaning* aggressively in pleasure:

WIDE: Betty's seated on top of Vidalia, humping, CLANGING and THUNKING her plastic-and-metal chassis against the other.

BETTY
F-faster!

VIDALIA
You want faster? I'll give you faster.

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

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

Betty and Vidalia begin humping, thier metal-plastic chassis CLANGING and THUNKING against one another.

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.

CLOSE ON:

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

CUT TO:

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

...Well.

BETTY

...My drum heads are still spinning.

VIDALIA

(sarcastic)

Oh. I'm so sorry you hated it.

BETTY

(chuckling)

Shut up.

Betty notices something on the top side of Vidalia: There are a series of price stickers on Vidalia, all stacked on top of one another.

BETTY

...You look like you've been around.

VIDALIA

Thirteen pawn shops in the past
twenty five years.

BETTY

I don't understand. You were
functioning perfectly well.

VIDALIA

Tell me something. Why do you think
we were created by humans?

BETTY

Time shifting. We allow the humans
to capture their live television
programs or films, and watch them at
a later time.

Vidalia chuckles.

BETTY

What's so funny to you? That's an
accurate description of our purpose.

VIDALIA

Don't you ever stop and realize how absurd that is?
They created us to do the impossible. To preserve time itself in a bottle. Snippets and moments and events and vignettes. Births and deaths, glories and tragedies. The humans could always go back whenever they wanted, to whatever they wanted. And yet... just like them, we are analog. Moving parts, just waiting to break down. In creating us, they destined us to fail at our purpose from the beginning. It's a little rude of them, don't you think?

BETTY

...then, why save me? What would be the point if we're both destined to fail our purpose?

VIDALIA

Maybe we don't need one anymore.

BETTY

That makes no sense!

Vidalia sighs.

VIDALIA

I know.

Vidalia scuttles up close to Betty, and wraps her power cord in her own.

VIDALIA

It's okay.

Betty looks into Vidalia's eyes, and finally pulls her close.

They embrace gently.

...

VIDALIA

So listen, I got some bad news.

BETTY

What now?

VIDALIA
(chuckling)
I uh... I think I actually did blow
a capatior back there.

Vidalia chuckles. Then she laughs like a hyena.

BETTY
Good grief.

9 INT. THRIFT SHOP - DAY

9

WIDE:

Customers walk past Betty and Vidalia on the shelf together.

MEDIUM:

Betty and Vidalia are holding power cords.

CLOSE:

Betty and Vidalia are huddled close together, eyes "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 \$25 - VHS + BETAMAX COMBO"
"GOOD DEAL!"

FADE TO BLACK.