

LOVE MONSTER: LATE PENALTY

A "#0" short story and minor prequel
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Panel One - Ext. Video Dome - Evening

This is a small video rental store in the middle of the city. It looks to be in somewhat good repair, but isn't a very great building. This does not look as if it is making a ton of money. Various posters for fake movies hang in the windows, mostly we just see faces of actors and different cliché movie scenes. A large sign above the front door of course reads: "VIDEO DOME".

CAPTION: Meeting #1.

Panel Two - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

We now see the inside of this video store. Various RACKS of DVDS line the walls and stand in the center of the room. We cannot yet see her, but Pearl is somewhere in this room, presumably behind a rack. A COUNTER to one side of the room has a COMPUTER and CASH REGISTER on it. Behind the counter we see DICKY, a roly-poly, chubby little man who looks quite nerdish in his thick glasses and "Video Dome" t-shirt. He stares forward blankly. Behind him on the wall is a poster for a movie titled "PICKAXE" which displays a bloody pickaxe.

CAPTION: Confidence level: 13%

Panel Three - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Pearl steps up to the counter with an armful of DVD CASES. Dicky adjusts his glasses as he looks at Pearl's selection.

DICKY: Whoa.

PEARL: I know, right? Plus I've already seen half of them.

Panel Four - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Pearl has now put the DVDs on the counter and Dicky is looking at one of them in his hands.

PEARL: By which I mean I've probably seen half of each of them.

DICKY: Quite the... uh... HORROR fan...

Panel Five - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Pearl is now handing a laminated Video Dome CARD to Dicky, who accepts it rather sheepishly. Pearl looks upward as if she's thinking of something else.

PEARL: I've been on a horror kick lately. Something about a man in a mask...

DICKY: Uh... yeah.

Panel Six - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Pearl is now leaving with the DVDs in a plastic bag. Dicky watches her go, too meek to say or do anything else.

CAPTION: Confidence level: 2%

PAGE TWO

Panel One - Int. Video Dome - Months Later, Evening

Dicky is staring forward once again, toward the reader, as he stands behind the counter. Behind him is now a poster for "PICKAXE 3: RETURN TO MURDER FALLS" with a pickaxe dripping three tendrils of blood.

CAPTION: Meeting #7.

CAPTION: Confidence level: 28%

Panel Two - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Pearl stands at the counter holding a single DVD. She smiles at Dicky, who adjusts his glasses again.

PEARL: Is "Depravers" really gory? Like lots of blood and guts and maybe even a BRAIN or two?

DICKY: Oh, ah...

Panel Three - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky now has the DVD in his hands, he studies it.

DICKY: Not really, I mean... they kept most of the horror CEREBRAL... a... a lot of the TORTURE scenes take place off-camera.

Panel Four - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Pearl now has the DVD back. She looks down at it with a sour face, like she's looking at a carton of spoiled milk.

PEARL: Oh. Phooey.

Panel Five - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky now holds up a DVD toward Pearl, who is absently dropping the one she was hold to the floor. She's clearly focused only on the DVD in Dicky's hand.

DICKY: Someone just returned RECAPITATOR 2... this one has a bunch of cut-off heads... and zombie heads sewn onto headless bodies... and... and there's a rusty CIRCULAR SAW...

PEARL: OOOOH.

CAPTION: Confidence level: 40%!!

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Panel One - Int. Video Dome - Months Later, Evening

Dicky is now casually leaning on the counter, smiling as he looks forward. He's much more at ease than we've seen him in the past. On the wall behind him is a poster for "PICKAXE 2099" with the image of a high-tech pickaxe made of things like circuitry and microchips.

CAPTION: Meeting #17.

DICKY: So was FRESH GRAVE to your liking?

Panel Two - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Pearl is handing a DVD over to Dicky. She seems very excited as she beams at him.

PEARL: Yes! A thousand times YES! The CRYPT GOLEM was splendid, and I never suspected the gravedigger was actually the son of the oil tycoon who wanted to drill in the haunted cemetery!

CAPTION: Confidence level: 81%

Panel Three - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky smiles again as he holds his hand out to Pearl. Pearl looks intrigued.

DICKY: You know, I'm starting a "preferred customer" program. Every third rental is FREE...

PEARL: Oh?

Panel Four - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Suddenly, Bob pokes his head out from behind a movie rack. He's been here the whole time.

BOB: Free? Is that open to everybody?

Panel Five - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Bob is now standing next to Pearl at the counter. Dicky meekly adjusts his glasses again. He's lost some of his cool. Pearl seems to be introducing Bob to Dicky.

DICKY: Er... ah...

PEARL: This is Bob, he's only my BESTUS friend in the whole wide world.

DICKY: Sure... sure, it's open to your friend, too...

CAPTION: Confidence level: 78%

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Panel One - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Bob now thoughtlessly steps in front of Pearl. He's totally into this free offer. Pearl smirks at Bob, not annoyed, but thinking it's kind of "cute" that he's excited. Dicky is at the computer.

DICKY: I'll just need your information...

BOB: Bob - 213 Carpet Street, apartment triple-seven. Do you need my last name or no?

DICKY: Uh...

Panel Two - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Pearl is now wandering away from the counter. Dicky watches her, worried he's losing her attention. Bob continues to probe about this free offer.

BOB: So if I rent nine movies, three are free?

DICKY: I... I guess so, yes.

CAPTION: Confidence level: 64%

Panel Three - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Pearl is now a distance away from the counter and is studying a POSTER on one of the walls. It's for a movie titled "HACKWARDS", with the tag line: "HE KILLS THEM.. IN REVERSE!" It displays a scary man standing with his back to the viewer... his ARMS are backwards!

Panel Four - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky's face seems to light up as if he's realized something. He happily calls over toward Pearl.

DICKY: Hey, uh... you can HAVE that Hackwards poster if you want. I was JUST about to replace it.

Panel Five - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Bob is already taking the tacks out of the Hackwards poster as Pearl stands nearby. She looks in Dicky's direction, and is very excited to get this gift.

PEARL: REALLY?! Oh my goodness, it's my fifth FAVORITE slasher film EVER.

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Panel One - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Pearl is now about to walk past Dicky on her way to leave the store. She has the poster rolled up under one arm. Dicky looks happy as she approaches.

PEARL: Thank you so much! I mean it.

Panel Two - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

As Pearl passes by Dicky, she briefly touches his cheek with her hand. She smiles at him innocently. Dicky is awestruck by this small and meaningless scrap of attention.

PEARL: You're a sweetheart!

Panel Three - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

This is a shot of Dicky's awestruck face as he looks in the direction Pearl just passed.

Panel Four - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

From Dicky's point of view, we see Pearl leaving the building through the front door. We seem to be focused on her backside. A bell attached to the door sounds as she exits.

SFX: (bell) DING DING

Panel Five - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky smiles cheesily, arches one eyebrow, and makes finger-guns pointing at where Pearl just left. He's obviously thinking he's getting somewhere with her romantically.

CAPTION: Confidence level: 99.99%!

Panel Six - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky is back to normal now as Bob slides up to the counter with a skeptical look on his face.

BOB: So if I get thirty movies...

DICKY: Yes yes, ten are free.

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Panel One - Int. Video Dome - Months Later, Evening

We now focus on the poster on the wall behind Dicky's counter. It's all we can see. The poster displays a simple Pickaxe with the logo: "PICKAXE REBOOTED".

CAPTION: Several months later...

Panel Two - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

We pull back and now see Dicky at the counter once again. He's leaning his elbows on the counter, his chin in his hands. He looks very depressed.

CAPTION: Confidence level: Beneath ranking.

DICKY: "Oh, hello Pearl. I was wondering where you went. I've been meaning to ask if you'd like to go out sometime."

Panel Three - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

We pull back again to see that the entire store is empty except for Dicky, who still remains in his saddened state.

DICKY: "You've been waiting for me to ask? Ha ha. How funny! This will be a great story for our grandkids someday."

Panel Four - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

We see a close shot of Dicky's face as he looks down at the floor. A TEAR is forming in the corner of his eye.

DICKY: "Don't worry, we'll have fantastic children. My family isn't FAT, we're STOCKY. Built from TOUGH STUFF."

Panel Five - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky buries his face in his hands, and it looks like he might be crying though we can't tell for sure.

Panel Six - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

This is the same exact shot as panel five, but the we hear a small bell ringing to denote someone has walked into the store.

SFX: (bell, off panel) DING DING

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Panel One - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky looks up suddenly to see Bob standing at the counter. Bob looks a little uncomfortable with Dicky's mood.

DICKY: BOB!!

BOB: Were you CRYING?

Panel Two - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky adjusts his glasses with a sniffle.

DICKY: What? No! Ha ha... no. Not at all.

Panel Three - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Bob shoots Dicky an unconvinced look at Dicky tries to look very casual. TOO casual.

DICKY: So how have you been? Is PEARL with you? How's PEARL?

Panel Four - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Bob walks away from the counter, presumably to go look for movies to rent.

BOB: Nah, she's in this new aerobics class or spinning class or baking class or SOMETHING. Girl stuff, I wasn't invited.

Panel Five - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Bob digs through a BARGAIN BIN of videos as Dicky continues to talk to him off-panel.

DICKY: (off panel) So why hasn't she been coming around, lately? PEARL, I mean.

BOB: Eh... I got her this awesome mini video-player for her BIRTHDAY, it downloads any movie she wants... like, instantly. That's probably why.

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Panel One - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

We see a shot of Bob, looking toward the reader with a frustrated look on his face. In the background, Dicky stands at the counter, holding his head in his hands as if completely horrified.

DICKY: SHE'S NOT COMING BACK!?!

BOB: Ahhh. I get it, now...

Panel Two - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Bob now walks back to the counter where Dicky is still looking horrified.

BOB: How bad?

DICKY: What?

BOB: How bad do you have it?

Panel Three - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky stammers, looking away from Bob.

DICKY: I don't know what you... I mean, I don't even...

Panel Four - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky puts his face in his hands yet again as Bob pats him on the shoulder.

DICKY: SHE'S IN MY DREAMS.

BOB: Yeah, that's pretty bad.

Panel Five - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky is now looking up at Bob as Bob keeps his hand on Dicky's shoulder. Bob is trying to be as comforting as he can.

BOB: Look, uh, what's your name? I never asked.

DICKY: Richard Vivian Derwood... but everyone calls me Dicky. Why?

BOB: Yikes.

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Panel One - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Bob continues to comfort Dicky, shrugging as he does so.

BOB: Look, Dicky... you're a nice enough guy, I'm sure, but Pearl has a certain TYPE. By looking at you, I'd guess you're not IT.

Panel Two - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky looks distraught as he wipes a tear from his eye.

DICKY: It's not my fault, I'm a depression eater!

Panel Three - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Bob chuckles.

BOB: Ha! No, no, no. Dicky, buddy, she's into BAD BOYS. Know what I mean?

Panel Four - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Bob slyly whispers to Dicky, who seems a tad confused.

BOB: VERY bad boys. In MASKS. You pickin' up what I'm laying down here, Vivian? V-Dawg?

DICKY: I... think so?

Panel Five - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Bob suddenly walks away from Dicky, who looks as confused as ever.

BOB: Good! Now... what happens if I BUY three previously owned movies? Do I pay for TWO?

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Panel One - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky stares forward, an unnaturally blank and lifeless look on his pale face.

DICKY: Actually, Bob... I was just about to close up. If you could hurry it up, I have something I need to do.

Panel Two - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Bob is now walking out the front door. He waves dismissively as Dicky as if he'll be completely fine. The bell sounds.

SFX: (bell) DING DING

BOB: Yeah, I get it. Look, take as much time as you need. Take a vacation, even. Judge a WET T-SHIRT contest and tell the girls you're a small business owner.

Panel Three - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky is now walking out from behind the counter. He still looks pale and somehow hollow.

DICKY: Wet t-shirts. Sure.

Panel Four - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Suddenly, with almost animal rage, Dicky PUSHES over one of the movie racks, sending DVD cases flying. He screams in fury.

DICKY: RRAAAGGH!

Panel Five - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky RUNS along one wall, his hand out as he PUSHES DVD cases off the shelves, clearing them out!

DICKY: NOT HER TYPE?!

Panel Six - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky PUSHES over the bargain bin, spilling a horde of DVD cases all over the floor.

DICKY: Who are YOU to DECIDE that for HER?!

PAGE ELEVEN

Panel One - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky stands crouched and panting amid the chaos he's created in his own store. His glasses are askew and he looks positively manic.

DICKY: Huff... huff... huff...

Panel Two - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Suddenly Dicky turns to look at a DVD case still on one of the shelves. IT SPEAKS!

DVD CASE #1: Hey, don't take it out on us!

DICKY: Huh?

Panel Three - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Another DVD CASE speaks from amid a nearby rack as Dicky turns toward it.

DVD CASE #2: It's BOB you're mad at. You should be thinking about what you can do to HIM.

DICKY: Who... Who's talking?

Panel Four - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

Dicky walks over to a rack shelf that has a small paper sign reading: "DICKY'S PICKS". On the shelf are DVD CASES for "DEPRAVERS", "RECAPITATOR", and a movie called "SEW EVIL". The case for Sew Evil displays a SKELETAL HAND holding a NEEDLE with THREAD.

DEPRAVERS CASE: Nobody's talking. You've gone insane.

RECAPITATOR CASE: Well don't just SAY it like that.

DEPRAVERS CASE: He deserves the truth after what Bob did to him.

Panel Five - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

This is a close shot of Dicky's twisted, grinning face as he looks out of the corner of his eye as if surveying the room.

DICKY: You're right. BOB gave her the video player. BOB gave her a REASON to stay away from me. What do you suppose I should GIVE to BOB?

Panel Six - Int. Video Dome - Continuous

We now see the "Sew Evil" case in Dicky's hands. It is VERY important that we see the cover of the case in his hands, because it relates to the DVD's advice.

SEW EVIL CASE: I'm just thinking out loud here, but... human-skin pajamas?

DEPRAVERS CASE: (off panel) Huh. I like it.

RECAPITATOR CASE: (off panel) Now THAT'S inventive!

CAPTION: Confidence level: 100%