these violent delights (have violent ends)

by carrotstix

Summary

On opening night, when the curtains go up behind Alice Cooper, the body on display is not Midge Klump. No, because this body has long red hair, the same red hair her twin carried, and the same that has been passed down through the Blossom line for generations.

or, Penelope never interferes, and Cheryl keeps her role as Carrie White. The rest goes... as expected.

Notes

i’m so sorry i’m so sorry i’m so sorry i’m so sorry i’m so sorry i’m so sorry

See the end of the work for more notes

The curtain goes up, and the entire crowd gasps. There’s a moment where nobody moves, nobody breathes. The audience waits for one of the actors to move the play forward, and the cast is deadly silent. That isn’t how they blocked this scene, that’s- oh.

Because pinned to the wall with knives, smeared with blood, is Cheryl, and she isn’t breathing at all.

Toni lets out an inhuman sounding noise as she rushes forward. At the sound, Alice turns around, and when she sees the dead teenager, she screams. The audience stirs up at the noise, starting to run for the exit, while Jughead pushes through the crowd in the opposite direction, trying to get to
Betty. Some of the cast runs for backstage, some begin to scream, but Toni breaks it straight for Cheryl’s body.

“No,” she cries, as she places one hand on the redhead’s cheek, the other trying to find a pulse in her neck. “No. No. Cheryl, no. Please, no.”

Her voice starts to raise in volume and pitch as she glances up and down Cheryl’s body. Something awful and rotten stirs in her stomach as she starts to panic.

(She’s a Serpent, she knows the rule about impaled objects. But there’s no pulse under Cheryl’s skin, no rising in her chest, and she’s still pinned against that wall, a knife straight through her heart. Toni can’t breathe.)

She wraps her fingers around the scissors in the girl’s shoulder, her other hand gripping Cheryl’s waist, and yanks. It clatters to the ground when she drops it, and she goes for to grab something else when there’s a soft touch on her upper arm.

“Toni.”

Toni shrugs Veronica off of her, reaching for the knife in Cheryl’s chest again, when something pulls at her. She tries to fight it off, but then there’s an arm around her waist, and she’s being wrestled away from Cheryl and back against someone’s chest.

Fangs.

“Let me go,” Toni spits, shoving at him as she thrashes. “Let me go!”

“Toni, there’s nothing you can do for her,” Fangs grits, trying to placate her while also holding her. It doesn’t work out so well, because instead of calming down, she only seems to grow more agitated, shouting at him in anger when he refuses. He’s taller than her, as so when he pulls her flush against him, trying to get a better grip, her feet dangle off the ground. She uses this to her advantage, trying to kick him with her heels.

“Toni, we should go,” he suggests, even as she struggles.

“No! I can’t leave her!” Toni shouts. “Please! She’s scared of being alone, I- I can’t leave her alone, I won’t!”

It goes on for a solid minute or two, Fangs holding her while she tries to break free. However, someone else calls her name, and when she glances over, there’s Jughead. He’s cradling Betty to him, pressing her face into his chest so she can’t see the body, but he isn’t looking at her. He’s looking right at Toni, and there’s a sad sort of understanding in his eyes.

“Toni, it’s a murder scene now,” he whispers. “You’re not supposed to disturb it. Everything here is evidence now.

“I don’t care,” she bites. “I don’t care, I don’t care!”

“Toni, the police are on their way,” Veronica says, and her voice is soft. “If they see this—”

“I don’t care, just let me take her down, please,” she pleads, her voice breaking. “You would if-just...please.”

Fangs sighs, and there’s a pause before his grip on her goes slack. Toni almost falls, before she stumbles forward, catching herself on the wall, one hand right on top of one of the letters painted
there. Cheryl’s blood smears beneath her fingers, but she ignores it, scrabbling to grab one of the knives in the redhead’s stomach. It comes after a few tugs, and Toni shucks it behind her, not even caring where it lands. Then she grabs another, and another, until all that’s holding Cheryl up against the wall is one knife, and the two pairs of scissors through her forearms. As if on cue, Jughead and Fangs both take a step forward, one on each side of Toni. Together, they grab the blades through Cheryl’s wrists, pulling them out slow and careful.

Now, left behind is only the knife beside Cheryl’s heart. Swallowing the lump in her throat, Toni wraps both hands around it and pulls, hard. It gives a hollow sucking sound before the bloody blade comes free, and Toni lets it fall to her feet, reaching out to grab Cheryl’s limp form instead. When Jughead and Fangs drop her arms, the body (oh my God, she’s a body now) sags into her arms. Gently, she lowers Cheryl to the ground, careful not to let her fall.

Cheryl doesn’t move, doesn’t react. The hollow pit in Toni’s stomach contracts and expands until she feels like it’s going to swallow her whole. Dead, dead, dead, her head echoes.

With a shaky breath, she pulls Cheryl’s head into her lap, cradles her face in her hands. She already looks paler, already feels a little colder, and the sob that’s been building in Toni’s chest finally releases.

Later, when she is sitting on Jughead’s couch wrapped up in a blanket and surrounded by him, Sweet Pea, and Fangs, she will think of the what ifs. The What If Cheryl hadn’t played Carrie, had listened when Kevin warned her about the threats. The What If they’d held actual auditions, and the role had gone to Ethel, or Midge. The What If Toni had never charged into the Sisters of Quiet Mercy. Sure, Cheryl would still be trapped in the dank, dark of that basement, but at least she would be safe. At least she would be alive, right?

(But Cheryl is here, and she is dead. The What Ifs are just fantasies, this is the reality.)

In the here and now, with Cheryl’s face between her hands and a gaggle of shell-shocked teenagers surrounding her in an emptied out theater, Toni takes a deep breath, opens her mouth, and screams.

End Notes

there wasn’t enough major character deaths in the choni tag, and i love grief, so i decided to fill the void in myself. i’m so sorry.

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