A Nightmare in Riverdale

by Ladyjaybird

Summary

Betty's been having nightmares, and she's beginning to wonder if they could hurt her in real life. Are she and her friends in jeopardy?

Inspired by A Nightmare on Elm Street (1984). Multi-part fic, which may get more violent and gory as it progresses.

Notes

Hi everyone, this is my first time posting fanfic! I love Bughead, and haven't been this excited about a pairing in a long time, so I thought I'd give this a go. This is a loving tribute to A Nightmare on Elm Street and Riverdale/Archie Comics. Hope you enjoy :)

P.S. I just signed up to Ao3, so sorry if I make any formatting/tagging etc mistakes!

I do not own any of these characters. This is written just for fun.

See the end of the work for more notes
Chapter 1

“Do you believe in the Boogeyman, Jug?” Betty rubbed his knee as they lounged together on her bed.

Jughead looked up from his dog-eared copy of *In Cold Blood* and smirked at her. “Seriously?”

“Yeah.” Betty twirled her ponytail around her index finger. “Like, do you think he could be real?”

“Hmm. We’re seventeen years old, and you’re just now asking me about the Boogeyman? Everything okay with you, Betts?”

Betty leaned her head on his shoulder. “Yeah. I just had a weird nightmare last night, that’s all.”

“Oh. Sorry. Do you want to talk about it?” He nuzzled her hair.

Betty bit her lip. “I don’t know. I guess not. I feel kind of silly now.” Much of the dream had faded. Except for the face she couldn’t see, hidden under a hat, and the knives, screeching against the window as he dragged them down the glass mockingly. She suppressed a shudder.

“Hey, no need to feel silly. It’s a shame I wasn’t around to make you feel better,” Jughead murmured. He kissed her forehead and trailed his fingers down her arm. “You still need some comforting?”

“You know, I think I might,” she said, grinning as he slipped his arms around her waist and pulled her close. She snuggled up against him, glorying in his warmth and his solid, angular body.

Betty’s body tingled as she returned Jughead’s deep, hot kiss. Things never got boring with Jughead. They’d been together for four months, and each day she woke with butterflies, thinking of when she’d next see him, and then came the glorious moment itself, when he put his hands on her hips and drew her breath from her lips like magic.

Betty pulled Jughead on top of her, needing to feel him covering her, cocooning her. Before they could kiss again, Betty’s door swung open and they quickly broke apart.

“Jughead Jones! What have I told you about wearing shoes on the bed? If you’re going to sneak into my daughter’s bedroom, the least you can do is have good manners while you do it.” Alice glared at him, arms crossed in front of her chest.

He grinned sheepishly. “Sorry, Mrs. Cooper.” He toed off his sneakers and set them by the window, where he continued to stand awkwardly.

Alice sniffed. “Betty, I expect you to be the only person present in your room in five minutes. Understood?”

“Yeah.” He ran his hands up and down Betty’s waist. “She at least could have invited me to stay for dinner.”
She smacked his arm playfully. “Then there’d be nothing left for the rest of us.”

He made a pouting face. “I don’t touch the salad. You’re welcome to that.”

“Hmph.”

They cuddled and kissed for a few more minutes, before Jughead finally whispered against her lips that he had to leave. He released her from his gentle grip, put his shoes back on, and began to climb out the window.

“You could use the front door, you know,” Betty pointed out. “She already knows you’re here.”

“Nah. I like the ladder. It gives our meetings a clandestine feel,” Jughead drawled. “I mean, even though we got caught.”

“I don’t want you to leave,” Betty blurted out, and covered her mouth. Where had that come from?

His grin faded. “Hey, Betts, we’ll see each other tomorrow.” He came back to her and rubbed her arms tenderly. “We can get away from the rest of the gang and have lunch, just the two of us. How about that?”

She nodded, forcing herself to smile.

Jughead clasped her hands in his, then kissed her palms. “Just think of me if you get anxious. You know where I’ll be. And I’ll be thinking of you.”

Having a boyfriend who lived directly across the street definitely had its advantages. She kissed his cheek. “Thanks, Juggie. That means a lot.”

Her mother loudly cleared her throat in the hallway, so Jughead scrambled out the window and down the ladder. Betty blew him a kiss, then hurried to her door. She flung it open and gave her mother a wide smile. “Hi, Mom. Is dinner ready yet?”

Alice eyed her suspiciously for a moment, then gave her a grudging smile. “Yes. Go wash your hands. And close your window. You don’t want to catch a cold.”

Betty headed back to the window and pushed it down, then gasped.

There were long scratch marks on the glass, as if a wild animal had clawed at it.

Her stomach churned, and her nails automatically began to dig into her palms. She stopped herself before she drew blood. It must have gotten scratched the last time Jug threw pebbles at it. It’s fine. Just a silly coincidence.

Betty took a deep breath, and headed to the bathroom to wash her hands.

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She didn’t know where she was. Smoke billowed and flames licked in too many places. Would she escape? Or would she die in this strange place?

A rumble sounded, and she wondered if something was about to explode. Or maybe it was an earthquake.

The rumble erupted into a laugh, so loud she thought her eardrums would burst. She covered her
ears. “Stop it!”

The noise ceased, and she took a trembling breath. The fire and smoke had died down, and a wiry, hunched figure emerged from the bleakness. He stalked toward her, his grubby hat and sweater giving off a deathly stench. He lifted his hat, and narrowed his beady, dark eyes at her.

“Hello, Betty.”

She opened her mouth, but couldn’t scream.

The man grinned, revealing his yellow teeth, and came barreling at her with a roar.

She couldn’t move. God, she couldn’t move. Help Help Help Help Help

He slashed at her arm (Christ, were his fingers made of knives??), and finally Betty found the strength to scream.

She woke, lungs heaving and her body soaked with sweat. She switched on her lamp and hugged her stuffed cat to her chest. Breathe, Betty. Breathe. It was just a dream. Just a nasty, horrible dream.

Betty got up and headed to the bathroom. Maybe the stark light and a few splashes of cold water would anchor her to this world, the real world. Not that horrible one of smoke and fire and…

She switched on the light, and sucked in a breath.

Angry red marks, still bleeding and raw, blazed across her arm.

Right where the Boogeyman had slashed her.
Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Big thanks to everyone who's read, commented, and left kudos on my work! Hope you enjoy this next bit. :-)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hey, B. You look like you haven’t slept in days.”

Betty nudged Veronica with her elbow as they headed to homeroom. “Thanks, V. Appreciate the compliment.”

“Seriously though, you need about five espressos, amiga. Were you up all night cramming for Flutesnoot’s exam?”

“I’ve been studying a little bit every night for weeks so I don’t have to cram,” Betty informed her primly. “I’ve just been…” She forced a laugh. “It’s silly. I’ve been having a lot of weird, gross dreams lately. Makes it hard to sleep.” She closed her eyes, wishing she could forget the sight of the man’s knife-hand, and the sound of his terrifying laugh…

And the scratches on her arm after she’d woken up.

She’d managed to convince herself that she’d caused the scratches herself, in the confusion and terror of the nightmare. What else could it be? It was just a couple bad coincidences. Things would get back to normal soon enough and she’d forget all this had ever happened.

“Excuse me, airhead. Other people need to get inside the classroom.”

Betty jumped as Cheryl brushed past her impatiently. Betty realized she’d been standing in front of the doorway, staring off into the distance.

Veronica patted her shoulder sympathetically as they entered the room. “Ignore her, Betty. She’s always got a stick up her ass.”

Betty managed a small grin. “Yeah.”

“And don’t worry about the nightmares. They can’t hurt you. Just get that boy of yours to be your nighttime bodyguard.” Veronica gave her an encouraging smile as they took their seats.

Betty smiled back as the scratches on her arm throbbed.

Veronica chose that moment to grab her arm, and Betty gasped from the sting of pain. Veronica’s eyes widened. “Whoa. Sorry, B.”

“It’s fine. Still just, ugh, you know, feeling weird.” Betty rolled her eyes, knowing she must seem ridiculous.

Veronica eyed her for a moment. “Okaaay. I just had an idea. My mom is going to be away on business this weekend. Why don’t you and Jughead come over, and Archiekins will be there of course, and we can have a little party?”
“Oh. That’s sweet of you, Ronnie, but you know Juggie doesn’t like parties. And wouldn’t you rather have Archie to yourself for the night?”

Veronica flipped her hair. “Please. We get plenty of alone time when his dad is at work. And I didn’t mean like a party-party. It’d just be the four of us. We can watch movies, play board games… I’ll even have Smithers get us a bunch of stuff from Pop’s if my company isn’t enough to entice Riverdale’s own James Dean. And then you can forget about your nightmares for a little while. Ronnie says relax.”

Just then the bell rang, signaling the start of the school day. “It’s really sweet of you to offer, Ron. I’ll try to plead my case to Juggie,” Betty said. But she wasn’t sure the grandeur of her friend’s home would lull her into feeling safe.

Throughout the day, Betty struggled to stay awake. Though she hated to do it, she frequently dug her fingernails into her palms so she wouldn’t drop off in the middle of class. She longed to either shower in coffee, or else sleep in Jughead’s arms, where she would surely be protected from harm.

No other nightmare had ever bothered her this much. Hell, she could remember dreams from childhood about a clown that would hide under her bed and whisper taunts to her when she was at her most vulnerable. But she was seventeen now. She had school, the Blue & Gold, and the River Vixens.

And Jughead. So there was no need to focus on stupid dreams.

Betty squared her shoulders and forced a smile. She would get over this.

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Jughead squeezed her hand as they headed over to a picnic table toward the edge of the schoolgrounds. She tried not to wince as even his gentle touch bit into her sore palms. “How are you feeling, Betts?”

“I…” She wanted to blurt it all out to him. She knew he would listen to her, take her seriously, yet also try to reassure her. But wasn’t she making a fuss about nothing?

“Betts? What is it?” He sat her down next to him on the bench and pulled her close. “You still worried about your dreams?”

Being in his tender but firm grasp lowered her hackles and blood pressure. She leaned against him and let herself relax. “I… yeah, I guess so. But I mean, I don’t want to bother you with it. It’s really not a big deal.”

“Hey, come on, Betty. If something’s bothering you I want to hear it, even if you think it’s silly.” He motioned to his unopened lunch. “See, I’m not even gobbling my sandwich.”

She smiled. “I appreciate it.” She took a deep breath and rolled up her sleeve. She held out her arm, and his eyes widened in horror as he took in her wounds.

Jughead sucked in a breath and ran his fingers in the air above her arm. “What happened?” he asked, brow furrowed in concern. “Did you have an accident?”

“Something like that.” Quickly Betty tried to relay her dream to him and what she’d seen when she woke up, along with the scratches on the window.

“Hmm. As for your arm, I guess you must have done something in your sleep,” he said, but she
thought she detected a hint of doubt in his voice. “And I might have scratched your window. Sorry if I did.”

She laughed. “After everything, that would be a relief, Juggie. Oh!” She tapped his knee. “Veronica had an idea to distract me from this crap. Her mother will be gone this weekend, and she’s invited us to stay over with her and Archie.”

“What, like a slumber party? Ooh, I can’t wait to wear my new nightie!” he trilled.

She elbowed him gently in the ribs. “Come on, Jug. She’s trying to be nice.” She laced her fingers through his. “I think it could be fun, you know? We can watch movies, and play games, and Ron even said she’d get in a bunch of food from Pop’s.”

“Damn that woman,” he said with an unconvincing growl. “She knows the way to my heart.”

“Hey!” Betty wrapped her arms tight around his waist and squeezed with all her might, not caring that it aggravated her scratches. “Watch it, buddy. I’m not sharing you. You’re all mine.”

Jughead’s eyes sparkled. “Ooh, I love when you’re jealous, Betts. It makes me feel all tingly inside.” He kissed her hair. “If it’ll make you happy, we can party like it’s—well, you know.”

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They had watched Sixteen Candles and The Breakfast Club on Veronica’s brand-new top of the line VCR while indulging in the very finest of Pop Tate’s cuisine. Now they were lounging in her spacious living room, drinking red wine and eating the brownies Betty had made for the occasion.

“Do you remember that kids’ song that was supposed to keep the Boogeyman away?” Veronica nudged Archie, who seemed more interested in caressing her sides and nuzzling her neck than participating in the conversation. “Archiekins, you remember it, don’t you?”

“Hmm?” he mumbled, rubbing his nose against her skin. “Remember what?”

“Loverboy is a bit too busy to think of kids’ songs,” Jughead drawled, and took another bite out of Betty’s brownies.

Veronica’s brow furrowed. “It’s rattling around in my brain. I can’t remember it.”

Betty shifted against Jughead, wrapping his arm around her waist more securely. “Let’s talk about something else, guys. We’re trying to forget about nightmares, remember?”

Veronica smiled as she playfully swatted Archie’s nuzzling face away from her neck. “You’re right, of course. Okay: who do you think is cuter: Tom Cruise or Matt Dillon?”

“Oh, for me it’s Matt Dillon,” Jughead said. “He’s, like, a total fox.”

“No way, Jug. Tom Cruise is the sexiest,” Archie declared, finally relinquishing his hold on Veronica to grab a brownie. “I’d love to be his wingman.”

Betty and Veronica exchanged smirks as the boys continued to joke around. Betty had to admit that she was more relaxed than she’d been since the nightmares had begun. She could fully believe, that in this bright, vibrant room, while she talked and laughed with her friends and boyfriend, she would have nothing but sweet dreams.

Veronica announced that she and Archie were off to bed. “It’s nearly two a.m. and I need my beauty rest,” she said with a wink. “You guys are free to sleep wherever. Just not my mom’s room
because that would be, like, weird.”

Betty smirked. “Don’t worry about us, Ron. You guys have a good night.”

“You too. Sweet dreams, Betty,” Archie said, giving her a sleepy smile.

Betty and Jughead ended up taking one of the guest rooms, and Betty snuggled into Jughead’s embrace as they lounged on the huge white bed.

“Everything’s gonna be okay, Betty,” he murmured, already half-asleep. “I’m here.”

“I know, Juggie,” she whispered, and squeezed his hand.

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They sat beneath a blazing blue and gold sky on a white blanket, indulging in chocolate-covered strawberries and caviar.

“Isn’t this lovely, darling?” Jughead held up a glass of white wine; it glinted in the sunshine. “Here’s to us, and all the happy days ahead.”

“Cheers,” Betty said. They clinked glasses.

Jughead’s gaze traveled down from her eyes, to her chest. He frowned. “Oh dear, Elizabeth. You’ve got red on you.”

“What?” Betty glanced down, and gasped.

Her new white cashmere sweater was covered in blood.

She began to scream.

Betty woke, her hands scrabbling at her chest, desperate to get off the blood-soaked sweater. She thought she’d never stop screaming.

But, she soon realized, there was no blood, and she wasn’t screaming.

Veronica was.

Chapter End Notes

Uh-oh. Spooky shiz is gonna get ramped up big-time in the next chapter! Thanks for reading!
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Once again I want to thank everyone for reading and leaving kudos and comments. Hope you enjoy this next chapter :-)

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Veronica shivered as she crept down the alleyway. It was cold, and windy. She didn’t know how she’d gotten out here. She thought she had been inside, safe and snug in bed with Archie. Maybe she’d gotten up to get a glass of water, then decided to take the garbage out.

No. That was Smithers’ job. He would have done it yesterday.

“Hello?” she called softly. “Archie? Are you out here?”

No response.

“Betty? Jughead? Is this some kind of prank? Why am I out here? I didn’t have that much to drink, did I?”

She heard a skittering against the fence and jumped back with a shriek.

A rat sniffed in her direction, then moved on in search of more easily conquerable food.

Veronica shuddered. “I need to get back inside.” Then she could worry about why she’d even gone out there in the first place.

But as she circled her building, she could see no doors. There was no entrance where there should have been.

Her heart began to hammer and her breathing grew labored. Maybe she was lost, and delirious.

No. This was her street. This was her house. But how could there be no doors? And what had happened to the windows? They had boards nailed in front of them, with crude graffiti spray-painted liberally across them.

A screech of metal on metal made her jump. She swung around, hackles raised. The street was empty. She couldn’t even hear a bird chirping. “Who’s there?”

She tried to stand tall as she waited for a response, willing herself not to tremble. At last she heard a chuckle, so loud, vulgar and deep that she felt as if she’d been doused with ice water. She gulped when she saw a man appear, more burnt flesh than human. He wore a battered, wide-brimmed hat, tatty dark trousers, and a red and green striped sweater. Veronica wondered how long it was til Christmas, then slapped herself on the mouth as if she’d spoken during church.

The man took a step forward. He flexed his hand, and Veronica saw the glove, with blades gleaming impossibly in the dark night. “What’s the matter, Ronnie? Can’t find your way home?”
“Who are you?” Veronica asked, her voice barely above a whisper. She began to back away, though she wasn’t sure how far she’d make it, given that her legs were quivering like Jell-O. “What do you want?”

He took a step forward. “What I want, little rich girl, is your soul.”

The fear in Veronica mixed with anger, and she put her hands on her hips, though she still quaked. “Look, asshole, I am a Lodge, and you don’t get to tell me what you want from me, and you sure as hell can’t have my soul.”

The man grinned; it was a revolting sight. His teeth were mossy, crooked and brown, like trees in a forgotten forest. “Veronica Lodge. So rich, beautiful… and arrogant. I’m going to enjoy breaking you.”

“S-screw you,” Veronica stammered.

He snarled at her, then charged, his bladed glove outstretched, ready to rake at her skin.

Veronica screamed and ran down the road. Someone had to be home. Someone must help her.

She hit the ground with a grunt as the man tackled her from behind. He wrenched her over until she was lying on her back.

“No, no, please no,” she said between gasps.

“You’re mine now, bitch,” he growled, and slashed her chest with his blades.

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“Ronnie! Ronnie, wake up!” Archie slapped her cheeks lightly as she thrashed around on the bed. “Come on, baby, wake up.”

“What happened, Archie?” Betty demanded as she and Jughead rushed into the room.

“She’s having a nightmare and she won’t wake up,” Archie said, his face pale and taut with worry. “And she—oh my god, her chest!”

Betty sucked in a gasp. Veronica’s delicate white camisole was soaked with blood. There were huge tears in it, as if she’d been slashed with knives.

Like a bladed glove.

Something was wrong. Something was severely fucked up. How could this be a coincidence?

“Shit, shit, shit, Ronnie!” Archie said with a whimper. “Wake up!”

“I’ll find a first aid kit,” Jughead said, and bolted out of the room.

“No, no, get off me, get away!” Veronica launched up and her eyes popped open. Her chest heaved as she gazed wild-eyed around the room. “A-Archie?” she asked in a small voice.

“Yeah, baby. I’m here.” He rubbed her shoulders haphazardly. “You’re gonna be okay, honey.” She gazed down at herself, and gave a strangled sob. “I’m bleeding.”

“The cuts don’t look that deep, Ron,” Archie said, though his voice betrayed his doubt. “Juggie’s getting the first aid kit.”
“Ron?” Betty took a timid step closer to her friend. “What happened?”

“Oh God, it was horrible. I’m never going to sleep again.” Veronica shuddered. “I saw this man—or maybe he was a monster, I don’t know. He wore a dirty hat. And he was wearing this utterly atrocious sweater—like, who the hell wears red and green when it’s spring?” She took a deep breath. “And he had a bladed glove. He slashed me with it.”

Betty’s hand flew to her throat. She sat on the edge of the bed, her legs trembling. She hadn’t told Veronica what her dreams had been about. So how had she described the exact same man who’d been in her dream? Who’d also slashed her?

She couldn’t deny it any longer. This wasn’t a coincidence. Something very fucking weird was going on.

Jughead returned with the kit, and Archie snatched it away from him and began to fuss over Veronica, murmuring and soothing her as he cleaned up the blood.

“Betty? You okay?” Jughead wrapped his arm around her shoulders as he sat next to her.

“No. This is weird, Jug. Really weird. First I get slashed by some crazy guy in my dream, then Veronica does too? And we both have wounds when we wake up. And the way she described him was exactly the way the guy in my dream looked. This isn’t possible. But it’s happening.”

Jughead shrugged, though she sensed his discomfort. “It’s probably just that Ron absorbed what you said, so it’s not that weird that she’d have a similar dream. The alcohol probably didn’t help.”

Betty gnawed her lip. “I didn’t tell her about my dreams. All I told her was that I was having nightmares. But I didn’t give her details. I didn’t tell her about the man.”

“Oh.” Jughead ran his fingers through his hair. “Well, um. Still—”

“Spare me your skepticism right now, okay? Once Veronica’s been patched up, we all need to have a talk.”

“Don’t you think that’ll make it worse?” Jughead whispered. “We don’t want you both to be freaked out.”

Betty arched a brow. “Freaked out? What, so now I’m just acting like a hysterical female?”

Jughead’s face fell. “Come on. That’s not what I meant, Betty. I know you both are scared about what’s happening, but we need to try to keep calm about it. Dreams can’t hurt you.”

Betty glared at him. “Tell that to Veronica,” she said, pointing at their friend, who had finally been bandaged up and was being comforted by Archie. “And tell that to me,” she said, showing him the marks on her arm once more.

He gnawed his lip. “All right. Why don’t we go make some hot chocolate or something and then we can all just try to work this out.”

Betty knew he didn’t think there was anything to work out. The girls had had some scary dreams, and either one had influenced the other, or it was just a weird coincidence.

She would prove him wrong.

She had to. Otherwise he might be next.
Chapter End Notes

Ooh, shit. It's getting darker in Riverdale. Thanks for reading!
Okay guys, this chapter gets a bit gruesome in places. FYI: The death of a child is mentioned/described (but not shown).

I should also note that although the story is largely inspired by and a tribute to Nightmare on Elm Street, I do deviate from the plot in some ways which may become more apparent in this chapter and the ones to follow.

Thank you to everyone who's read, commented, and left kudos.

“So what’s going on?” Veronica clutched her mug of hot cocoa as she huddled next to Archie on the couch. “Who is that man? Is he from a comic book or something? A movie?”

Betty shook her head. “I don’t know. I didn’t recognize him from anywhere.”

Betty and Veronica described the man in their dreams over and over for Jughead and Archie, but nobody could remember him from anywhere, real or otherwise. All they knew was that, by both accounts, Betty and Veronica had seen the same man.

“Maybe we watched some trashy horror movie that none of us can remember, but it stuck in your subconscious minds, and it’s just come out because of stress or something,” Jughead suggested.

Veronica scrunched her nose. “I’m not one for stress, or horror. I prefer to take life as it comes, and keep my entertainment lighthearted. But it’s possible, I guess.”

“Even if that creepy guy is from a movie or whatever, it doesn’t explain how Veronica and I both got injured in the exact same places where the guy attacked us in our dreams.” Betty strained not to dig her fingernails into her hands.

“You could have been acting out what you were experiencing in the dream,” Archie said with a shrug. “I know I’ve done that sometimes. One time I rolled out of bed and bruised my leg big-time because I was struggling to get away from a rat that was biting my leg in my dream.”

The rest of them shuddered.

“Yeah, I suppose so,” Veronica said, stroking her sleek black hair. “Coincidence combined with unfortunate reactions from us when we were asleep. I can’t imagine what else it would be.”

Betty could feel Jughead side-eyeing her, hoping she would agree that it was just a coincidence. “Let’s set aside the possibility of coincidence for the moment,” she said, and winced at Jughead’s groan. “Humor me,” she said, nudging him gently in the ribs.

“Of course, baby,” he muttered, and slung his arm over her shoulders.

“Okay. So let’s say Ronnie and I are dreaming about the same guy. No jokes from either of you,” she said, pointing at Archie and Jughead.

“We’re all ears, Betty,” Archie assured her.
“So we dream about the same guy, or at least a similar one. That’s okay. But what gives him the power to hurt us? I’m sorry, I just don’t believe I could have scratched myself hard enough to make myself bleed like that.” She thought of the wounds on her palms, fresh and otherwise, and blinked hard. Jughead squeezed her shoulder gently.

“Me neither,” Veronica said. “I do enjoy a good manicure, but I don’t give myself witch claws.”

“I was alone when it happened to me,” Betty said. “And Ronnie was….” She flushed when she realized what she was about to imply.

Archie hunched forward as he glared at her. “Hey, I didn’t do anything to my girlfriend. I was asleep, and I woke up when she started screaming.”

“Did she already have blood on her shirt?” Jughead asked.

“I… I don’t know, I think so. Everything was kind of blurry,” Archie mumbled, sitting back.

Betty’s stomach thudded. No. Archie wouldn’t have done anything to Veronica. And what were the odds that he’d injure her in exactly the way she’d been injured in her dream? “It’s not like Ronnie would have been screaming out instructions to you,” Betty blurted out.

“I don’t think I could handle that during her dreaming life as well,” Archie muttered.

“Hey.” Veronica scowled. “Gimme a break. I just got attacked by some kind of dream monster. Does that kind of thing happen every day in a little town called Riverdale?”

“Look, guys, it’s late,” Jughead said. “Why don’t we try to get some sleep for the rest of tonight, and then tomorrow we can go to the library and try to do some research on dreams.”

“There’s no way I’m going back to sleep tonight,” Veronica said. “No way in hell. Not even with Valium.”

“Yeah, cuz with Valium you’d find it a lot harder to wake up,” Jughead pointed out. Everyone glared at him. He rolled his eyes and slouched back against the couch. “Well, I’m going to sleep, anyway.” He turned to Betty. “Betts?”

She hesitated.

“Come on, babe. I’ll protect you,” Jughead said softly, rubbing her knee. “Just a few hours and then we can get up and have a nice big breakfast.”

She gave him a rueful smile. “You would think about food, even now.” She blew out a breath. “I don’t know. I mean, I guess I should, but I just… maybe I’d feel better sleeping in the daytime. Less scary. You go ahead and sleep though, Jug.” Jughead had told her once that he rarely dreamed, and if he did, it was about burgers, or her. He confessed he’d once had a dream that they were engaged, and her mother had cooked a big meal for them, and everything had been cozy, like some sort of 50s sitcom.

“Well, I’m staying up with Ronnie,” Archie said, cradling Veronica in his arms.

Jughead eyed Betty for a long moment. “Come lie down with me,” he said at last. “It’ll help me feel better.”

If she’d lost even an ounce of warmth for him earlier, it came flooding back in abundance. She stroked his face. “Okay.”
He wrapped his arm around her as they headed back to the guest room.

Veronica gripped Betty’s hand as she was walking past. “I hope Jughead’s right,” she said softly. “Because we’ve all got to sleep sometime.”

Betty squeezed back. “I know, V. I know.”

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“I am reading some very enteresting theengs from Seegmund Freud on dreams, mein fraulein,” Jughead drawled. He nuzzled Betty’s neck. “Perhaps you vould like to deescuss them vith me on my couch?”

She giggled. “Cut it out, Jug. We’re trying to be serious here.” And yet she leaned into his touch and closed her eyes. She’d managed to get a couple hours of sleep that night, and dreamt of nothing more than cuddling kittens, and kisses with Jughead. Surely she’d be fine if she just took a nap here in the library? No Boogeyman would bother to go there. The library was too boring for violence and death.

“Um, guys? I think we got something.” Archie waved them over to the microfiche machine, where he and Veronica had been poring over articles.

“What is it, Arch?” Jughead asked, suddenly alert and concerned. He and Betty huddled behind Archie and Veronica and peered at the screen.

“Do you remember her?” Archie pointed at the picture of a timid-looking brunette girl, possibly four or five years old. “She looks kind of familiar, doesn’t she? I wonder if she went to Riverdale Elementary.”

Betty bit her lip as she read the headline of the news article: “Missing Baker Girl Found Dead.” She moved her lips silently as she read. Jennifer Baker, aged 6, was found dead in a ditch on Miller Road, after having been missing for nearly forty-eight hours. Her mother, Carolyn Baker, told police that before the child went missing, she had been complaining of being followed by a man in a striped red and green sweater and a battered hat. There have been no arrests made as of yet.

A striped red and green sweater. It couldn’t be, could it?

They all gaped at each other. Betty dug her nails into her palms, until Jughead took hold of her hand.

“This is so fucked up,” Veronica murmured.

“Did they ever find the guy who did it?” Jughead asked. His voice was tight.

“I don’t know. Let me check.” Archie scrolled through several more rounds of microfiche, then blew out a breath. “Fuck.”

Betty clung tightly to Jughead’s hand as she gaped at the picture glaring across the screen.

“That’s him!” Veronica said, and clapped her hand over her mouth as if she’d sworn.

“Oh, God,” Betty whispered.

He had tight, curly blond hair, and a snake-eyed smirk as he stared into the camera, as if he would harm the photographer too. He couldn’t, because in the photo he was wearing handcuffs.
And a battered hat, along with the red and green sweater.

Betty tore her gaze away from the nauseating photograph, and forced herself to read the article.

*Alleged Child Murderer Found Dead in Abandoned Warehouse*

Fred Krueger, the man who was released after being arrested for the alleged kidnapping and killing of six-year-old Jennifer Baker, was found dead in the old Parker Industries building on Fifth Street. His face and body were badly burned, and dental records had to be used to identify him.

A wave of nausea washed over Betty. She clutched her stomach. “God, I feel so sick.”

“This is horrible,” Jughead murmured as he rubbed her back absently. “But this explains it, doesn’t it? We were little when this happened, but we must have heard about it on the news, or from our parents. Or even saw one of these articles. Something must have triggered memories in the two of you, and you both dreamed about him.”

“I…I guess so, yeah,” Betty said. She was hypersalivating, a warning that she had seconds to make it to a toilet. “Excuse me,” she muttered, and rushed to the bathroom to vomit.

Once she’d emptied her stomach and washed her face, Betty leaned her forehead against the cool glass of the mirror and closed her eyes. “Are you still here?” she murmured.

“I never left, Betty.”
Hi everyone, thanks for reading and leaving kudos and comments. Gotta warn you now, there is a character death in this chapter. It's done in a surreal horror movie sort of way, so I don't think it'll give anyone nightmares. But it'll be fairly obvious when it's about to happen, if you want to avoid it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Betty’s blood turned to ice. She didn’t dare open her eyes. No, no, she didn’t want to see the melted, scarred, horrible man who had killed a child and wanted to kill her and her friends. Keep your eyes closed Betty don’t look don’t look don’t look

“You can’t hide from me, Betty.” She heard him growl. “Open your eyes, bitch. Face me.”

“No. Go away. You’re not real. You can’t be real. Leave me alone.”

He yanked her hair and she cried out in pain, her eyes wrenched open. Her eyes watered as he forced her to look at him. “Oh God,” she whimpered as she took in his burned, sneering face. His stench was overpowering. He smelled of smoke, filth, and the fear of his victims.

“You want to know God? This is God,” he rasped, waggling his blades. He nicked her cheek, and a drop of blood appeared.

Her mind raced. She must be dreaming. This couldn’t be real. He wasn’t here with her in the library, while her friends waited outside for her.

“I’ve been waiting a long time for this, little girl. You think you’re so clever. You’re at the top of your class, you’re a journalist, a cheerleader. But you’re nothing compared to me. And I’m gonna finish what I started.”

“Not if I finish you first,” Betty whispered.

She turned the hot water knob on, and thrust her hand underneath the gushing steaming water. The hot water pierced her skin, and she began to scream.

“Betty? Are you okay? Oh God, did you pass out? Come on, Betty, wake up.” Was that Ronnie’s voice?

Betty blinked as she took in her surroundings. She was kneeling on the floor in a stall, clutching the toilet seat. The bowl was filled with… “Oh, ugh,” she said, and struggled to her feet, with Veronica helping her.

“You’re telling me. You must have passed out when you were puking.” Veronica said, wrinkling her nose. “We need to get you a toothbrush and fast.”

Betty nodded woodenly, scarcely hearing what her friend said. “I dreamed of him again.”

“What?” Veronica paled as she clutched Betty’s elbow. “You were only passed out for like what, a minute?”
“It was enough.” Betty cracked her knuckles, and Veronica winced. “His face looked like a lasagna that had been in the oven too long. He said sick, nasty things to me. I never felt a dream so real in my life. There’s no way it was a coincidence. You and Archie and Juggie can believe that if you want, but I know better.”

“Hey. I believe you. I believe myself. The boys will come around, if they haven’t already.” Veronica touched her hand, and Betty gasped in pain.

“What is it?”

Wordlessly, Betty showed Veronica her hand. It was bright red, and throbbing. It was the hand she’d thrust under the hot water to get away from the Boogeyman.

From Fred Krueger, child killer.

Betty cleared her throat. “I turned on the hot water in my dream to wake myself up and put my hand in it. That’s how I got away from him.”

“There’s a cut on your cheek,” Veronica said.

Betty headed to the mirror, and nodded grimly. It was where he’d cut her. “I don’t know what the hell is going on, Ron, but we’ve got a serious problem here. All of us. We’re getting the boys, some books, and a boatload of coffee.”

* * *

They’d spent the rest of the afternoon in Veronica’s apartment, since her mother was still gone. Each of them had drunk a large mug of coffee. Betty had insisted on no alcohol, lest it make them sleepy. They had Madonna’s *True Blue* playing just a tad too loud, and they were all leaning against the counters in the kitchen, in case they got too comfortable.

None of it was helping much.

Jughead was pale as he rubbed her arms gently, taking care to avoid the area where she’d been slashed. “I’m sorry I wasn’t there to help you, Betts.”

“It’s okay, Juggie,” she said, patting his hip. “You couldn’t really follow me into the girls’ bathroom. And I helped myself, anyway.”

“I just wish you hadn’t had to hurt yourself to do it,” he murmured, wrapping his arms around her waist and kissing her neck. In spite of the exhaustion and fear, arousal zinged through her body. She wanted to lead Jughead back to the bedroom and make sweaty, raw love to him, and just forget about all of this. She wanted to feel awake, and alive.

She settled for twisting around and kissing Jughead deeply, until Archie made gagging noises.

“Man, this is boring. Can’t you at least play some Run DMC?” Archie grumbled.

“I don’t have any of their CDs,” Veronica informed him with a sniff.

She has CDs, while the rest of us are still using records and tapes, Betty thought ruefully. Then she wondered why she cared. Because they were all tired; that’s why she cared. It was only going to get worse.

“What are we going to do on Monday when we have to go back to school?” Jughead asked,
voicing her next thought. “We’ll be falling asleep in class. Like, even more than usual.”

“I’m definitely suffering from not getting my beauty rest,” Veronica said. “I’m starting to get eyebags, and my hair looks like I brushed it with a weedwhacker.”

Betty gnawed on her lower lip. “Maybe we should sleep in shifts. Like, two of us can sleep for a little while, and then the other two can wake them up after an hour or something and then switch.”

“But you said Fred Krueger came to you after you’d passed out for just a minute,” Jughead said. “An hour could be… bad.”

“Well, that’s why the other people would be watching. So if we start acting out, they can wake us up.”

“I think it’s a good idea,” Archie said. “I’m pretty zonked from staying up all night with Ronnie. The coffee hasn’t really done much. How about she and I take the first shift and you guys wake us up after an hour?” He smacked his fist into his palm. “And if Krueger wants to try me, he’ll get these bad boys waiting for him.”

“I don’t know if fists will work against knives, buddy,” Jughead told him patiently.

“I’m not scared. Mine are made of steel, man.” Archie kissed his knuckles.

Veronica rolled her eyes, then glanced at Betty. “Why don’t you guys grab some Freud or Jung or whatever and come with us. There’s plenty of room for you to lounge in my boudoir while Archiekins and I sleep.”

“Gosh, Ronnie, this is starting to get a little too kinky for me,” Jughead said. “I’m feeling kind of funny in my belly.”

“Jug,” Betty chided gently, though she couldn’t hide a smirk. She turned to Archie and Veronica. “Don’t worry, guys. We’ll take care of you.”

“Betty, that’s not helping,” Veronica said with an eyeroll. She nodded at Jughead, who was clearly slaphappy, his eyes filling with tears as he shook with silent laughter.

“Uh-oh. I think you need to sleep too, Juggie,” Betty said, rubbing his back.

“No way. Two people asleep, two people on watch,” Archie said. “That’s how it goes.”

“Okay, okay. Let’s go.”

They trudged to Veronica’s bedroom, Betty and Jughead armed with Freud, Jung, and more coffee. Jughead wanted to use a spray bottle in case anyone needed waking up, but everyone else nixed the idea.

Veronica and Archie flopped onto the bed, not even bothering with the covers, while Betty and Jughead sat on the window seat.

“Sleep well, guys,” Betty said, her stomach beginning to twist with unease. Maybe this wasn’t such a good idea. She had wanted them all to stay up as long as possible.

*But maybe it would be better to take short naps. If we stay awake until we’re exhausted, then it might be harder to wake up next time.*

Not to mention the fact that none of them had any clue what they were dealing with. Her parents
had always told her that dreams, however scary they might be, could never hurt you. How could this simple childhood truth be wrong? What other monsters were real, then?

Betty sighed, and leaned against Jughead, who was leafing through *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

“I’m glad you’re here, Juggie,” she whispered, and kissed him.

“Nowhere I’d rather be,” he whispered back. He pressed his soft, warm lips against hers and she swallowed a moan. She knew they ought to be watching Archie and Ron for any signs of disturbance in their sleep. But it had been too long since she and Juggie had even been able to just make out for a while. Their friends were fast asleep. What harm could it do? If anything it would rev her up, not make her tired, right?

The book, coffee, everything was forgotten as Jughead wrapped his arms around her, holding her tightly as he kissed up and down her neck. “Mmm, Juggie,” she moaned as she ran her fingers all over his back. “So good.”

He growled low as his hands traveled up and down her body, stopping to caress her breasts. Betty arched into his touch and pulled him closer to her. He could never be close enough.

Do this, a voice urged her. *You’re under so much stress. Juggie will make you feel better. And you can make him feel better too.*

Right now, she wanted to feel anything other than fear, nausea, and dread. “I want you,” she whispered, and Jughead lifted her up from the window seat without a word.

*They’ve been fine all this time. They’ll be fine for another ten minutes. Maybe Krueger’s asleep, too.*

She smiled at Juggie as he carried her into the guest bedroom. “I’ve missed you, Betty,” he said, his voice husky, and her lower body throbbed as he set her down on the bed.

“I’ve missed you too, Jug.”

Her breathing grew louder, more urgent as he took off his beanie, then his shirt. She wanted to lick up and down his chest and abs, and feel his warm body on top of hers.

Betty whipped off her top and flung it on the floor as she kicked off her shoes. “Come here.”

Jughead was now down to his boxers. His eyes were pure fire as he pounced onto the bed—and her. His hands went up her skirt, and she moaned as he squeezed her ass gently. She thrust against him, glorying in his steadfast control as he thrust back, his dick hard and thick against her body.

“Take me, Juggie,” she whispered.

*"Ah, now this is what I call living.” Archie folded his arms behind his head as he leaned back against the beach chair. The sun shone and the winds blew gently. He wondered dimly where Ronnie was, but decided he didn’t mind a little alone time. He sipped on a pina colada and sighed. “Yum.” He tilted back the chair a bit further. The chair jerked back, sliding back into the sand. “Whoa.” He chuckled. “Didn’t know this was a carnival ride too.”*

*The chair seemed to thrust itself back further, and Archie scrambled out of it. “What the hell?!”*

*He watched as the lounge chair got sucked into… holy shit, was that quicksand?*
This wasn’t normal. This was just a regular beach. It shouldn’t be happening here.

But it was happening, and he realized it was because he was dreaming. Shit.

He pinched his arm hard. “Okay, Arch, wake up now.”

Nothing happened. The sun still twinkled merrily and the water glowed a tender blue. “Fuck.”

Archie grunted as something jabbed him in the back. He only managed a feeble croak before he pitched forward into the hungry, beckoning sand.

He landed feet-first, and immediately began to sink. “Help! Somebody help me!” Archie thrashed around, and still when he saw a shadow loom over him.

A filthy chuckle made him shudder. “Aww, poor Archiekins. I bet you’ve got a sinking feeling about this.”

“You,” Archie spat out as he struggled to keep his head out of the sand. “You hurt Ronnie and Betty. And you killed that girl. Sick bastard.”

“Oh, I did a lot worse than that. I’d like to say your death will be quick—but then I’d be sandbagging you.” Krueger chuckled again as he brought his boot down, closer and closer to Archie’s head.

“Jughead? Betty? Where are you? Get me out of here! Wake me up!” Archie scrabbled at the sand, even as he recognized the futility of his actions, and his despair rose as his body sank. “Wake me up!”

* *

Betty’s back arched as Jughead thrust inside her. “Oh, Juggie. Yes, yes, Jug!” Her euphoric cries spurred Jughead on as she clung to his hair. He reached down and rubbed her clit as he continued to push inside her. Betty was beginning to think the situation couldn’t possibly be more erotic, until Jughead bent down to suck her nipples while she moaned helplessly. He could keep her here for the rest of the night and she wouldn’t complain.

* *

“Betty! Jughead! Ronnie! God, someone please help me!” The sand had nearly reached Archie’s neck. “Fuck you guys,” he whispered, and closed his eyes as Krueger brought the boot down.

* *

Jughead shuddered hard as he came inside Betty. “I love you,” he whispered, gazing at her, lust-riddled and vulnerable.

Betty’s eyes welled up. “I love you too,” she whispered back. They kissed as if their lives depended on it.

They broke apart when they could no longer breathe. “We’d better check on them,” she said finally.

“Yeah,” he muttered.

They put their clothes on and headed back to Veronica’s room.
And jumped back, as Veronica was kneeling on the edge of the bed, rocking back and forth.

She was alone in the bed.

“Veronica? Where’s Archie?” Betty asked, stomach curling in unease. How long had she and Juggie been gone?

Veronica whipped around, and Betty gasped. Her eyes were bloodshot and her face was stained with tears.

“What the fuck?” Jughead uttered. He pointed at the bed, and Betty realized for the first time that there was a huge, round indentation in the bed, where Archie had been sleeping, as if something huge and invisible were sinking in it. While they all stared at it, it suddenly, unnaturally snapped shut.

Oh God. No no no no no. This couldn’t be happening.

Veronica let out a strangled, anguished cry. “Archie’s dead.”
Thanks to everyone for reading and leaving kudos and comments. Shit just got real, what's gonna happen now?? Also should note that there is a brief, non-graphic description of the death of a child, so just a heads-up if you want to avoid that.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“You were supposed to wake us up!” Veronica screamed, rushing Betty and Jughead. “You were supposed to wake him up! Why didn’t you help him?” She clawed at them both, gouging Betty’s cheek, and smacking Jughead in the face. “You smell like sex! That’s what you were doing instead of staying with us to keep us alive! You bastards!”

“Veronica, calm down, please! We need to figure this out,” Betty cried, though she knew her words were useless and futile. What the hell was she even figuring out? This shit wasn’t even supposed to be possible! Dreams couldn’t hurt you. Dreams couldn’t *kill* you.

“Maybe Archie just stepped out somewhere,” Jughead said, holding Veronica back, though she had already sagged in defeat in his arms.

“You saw what just happened with the bed,” she said, tears dripping down her face. “Krueger did something to him.” She whimpered. “I woke up, and saw his hand sticking up from the bed before he disappeared. He just vanished. He was suffering right beside me and I didn’t even know.”

“Oh God, Ronnie,” Betty said. She wrapped her arms around Veronica, as did Jughead. She could barely breathe. She had a wild notion to check under the bed, as if Archie would be there, staring up at them with a smirk at the funny joke he’d just played. But she knew there would be nothing.

Veronica clung to them for a minute, then shoved them away. “I’m done with you both,” she said, her voice pure ice. “Right now, Archie is either being tortured by Krueger, or he was killed by Krueger. The two of you had one job. It was to keep an eye on me and Archie. And now thanks to you…” She looked away and bit her lip hard.

“We were…” Of course she couldn’t deny what she and Jughead had done. Betty’s eyes welled up. Their friend had died needlessly. She hadn’t experienced death since her sister Polly had died when Betty was only two years old. “I’m so sorry, Ronnie,” she whispered.

Veronica glared at her. “Not as sorry as I am. And not as sorry as you’re going to be. Now get the fuck out of my house.”

“But we need to call the police, or, or our parents or something,” Betty protested. “We need help.”

“I’ll handle it. Get out of here before I break your bones. And don’t ever ruin my final word again, Betty dear.”
“God, poor Arch.” Jughead was shaken and pale as he and Betty huddled up in his bedroom. FP was still at work. Jughead had stated darkly that he was relieved his mom and Jellybean weren’t around to have to deal with any of this. “Like, do you think he’s trapped somewhere?”

“I have no idea.” Betty groaned. “God, Jug. I feel so sick with guilt. If we hadn’t been fooling around in the other room...” How could she conceive that her friend had died in such a strange way? How could any of them accept that he had been swallowed up by a bed? Had Krueger dragged him down to hell? “It’s our fault.”

Jughead swallowed hard. “I know, Betty. You think that hasn’t been going over and over in my mind? Archie was like a brother to me. I’ll never get another friend like him.”

“Maybe he’s not dead,” Betty whispered, her throat thick.

“I don’t think we can count on that. Krueger is a murderer. And he obviously wants revenge for what happened to him.” Jughead touched her shoulder. “We need to find out what exactly went on the night he was killed.”

“Then maybe we can exorcise him,” Betty said slowly.

“Oh yeah, I’ll just hurry over to Catholic school and become a priest,” Jughead said.


Just then the phone rang. Betty and Jughead stared at each other, eyes wide.

“It’s not like it’ll be him,” Betty said after a couple rings. “Better answer it.”

Jughead nodded and hurried over to the phone. “Hello?” He paused, then made a face. He held out the phone to Betty. “It’s your mom.”

“Mom—”

“Hello, Elizabeth. Imagine my surprise at finding you at the Jones house. Stand by the window so we can wave to each other.”

Betty flinched. “Mom—”

“No. You told me you were sleeping over at Veronica’s. I called her so I could tell you to come home early tomorrow because we have company coming in the afternoon. Miss Lodge informed me that you *and* Jughead were no longer with her, and that furthermore she hoped you’d both rot in hell. I told you to choose your friends more carefully, Elizabeth. And I want you to come home now.”

Betty closed her eyes. How could she possibly make her mother understand? “Jughead and I are working on something really important right now, Mom.”

“Oh, really? That wouldn’t be making me a grandmother at a far too early age, would it?”

“No!” Betty blushed. “It’s—it’s for school.”

“Then you may have him over tomorrow, with your bedroom door open, or working in the living room. You know, I do like the Jones boy, Betty, but you do not need to see him every waking second of the day.”
“Elizabeth, don’t make me drag you out of that house and make a scene. We Coopers do not make scenes.”

Betty sighed heavily. “Okay, Mom. I’ll be home in a minute.”

“I’ll give you three so you can gather up your things. But no more than that, Elizabeth.”

“Gee, thanks, Mom,” Betty muttered, and hung up.

“It’ll be okay, Betts,” Jughead murmured, wrapping his arms around her. “I’ll come to your window later. I’m not gonna let anything bad happen to you.”

Her eyes prickled with tears. “We let something bad happen to Archie. And what’s gonna happen to Ronnie now?”

Jughead nuzzled his nose against her neck. “I don’t know, Betts. We’ll work it out though. I promise.”

Betty sighed. She wanted to kiss Jughead, but hadn’t their lust been what had gotten them into this mess in the first place? She broke away from him. “I’ll see you later, Jug.” She headed out of his room, and turned around once she’d reached the hallway. “And remember—don’t fall asleep.”

* 

Alice took hold of Betty’s chin and frowned. “You look exhausted, Betty. Have you slept at all this weekend? You’re going to bed early tonight.”

“Okay, Mom.” Betty didn’t bother to mention that shortly after she’d gotten home she’d snuck a coffee grinder and a forgotten half-full jar of Folgers into her closet.

“So what happened to make Veronica so angry with you? Did you get a stain on her brand-new Calvin Klein jeans?”

Betty tried to smile. “She just… I think we spent a little too much time together this weekend. You know how it gets when you’re just cooped up somewhere.”

“Yes, I can imagine the Lodge shack would certainly give you cabin fever,” Alice said. She touched Betty’s cheek. “Is that a cut? Did she do that to you?”

Betty flinched as she remembered Krueger vowing that he wasn’t done with her, and nicking her face in the library bathroom. And then Veronica had lashed out and scratched her. She’d never forgive Betty and Jughead. And Betty couldn’t blame her. “No. I must have done it myself.”

“Elizabeth. You’re lying.” Alice’s face softened. “Fights between friends are normal, but if she’s physically attacking you, you shouldn’t be making excuses for her.”

“I’m not!” Betty pulled away from her mother. “Geez, just give me a break, will you? I told you I did it by accident.”

“And your hand’s red,” Alice said, just noticing. “Did you scald it? What on earth happened over there?”

“Krueger did it, all right?” Betty snapped, then covered her mouth.

Her mother’s face clouded over. She stood. “Well. Just make sure you keep applying antiseptic to
those scratches. I’ve got some work to do. Get to bed soon.”

“Hang on a second.” Betty’s heart dropped to her belly. “What was that?”

Her mother huffed. “What was what, Elizabeth?”

“That look, when I said Krueger’s name. Fred Krueger, Mom. Fred Krueger. That means something to you, doesn’t it?”

Alice rolled her eyes, but Betty could see the effort behind it. “I don’t know what you’re jabbering about, but I think it’s time you got some sleep. I’ll warm some milk up for you.”

“No!” Betty shouted. “I don’t need any goddamn milk!” Her nails dug into her palms for just a second, but she forced herself to take a deep breath. “Tell me what you know about Fred Krueger.”

“I don’t know who you’re talking about,” Alice said. Her face was pale.

Betty sighed. She gripped her mother’s arms gently. “Please, Mommy. I need to know what’s going on here. I need your help.”

Alice dropped onto the edge of the bed. She closed her eyes for a moment and breathed out heavily through her nose. “How did you hear about him?”

Betty hesitated. “At the library,” she said at last. It was somewhat true.

Her mother arched a brow. “He just, what, sort of jumped out at you?”

Betty bit her lip hard. “You could say that, yes.”

“Explain, Betty.”

She sighed. “I don’t know if I can. You won’t believe me.” She could just imagine her mother’s expression after telling her the whole story. She’d have her shipped off to a nuthouse run by nuns. But she had to say something. “It’s just… look, we know there was a man named Fred Krueger who killed a little girl—well, allegedly, they said. And then he was killed in a fire. And now we’re… we’ve seen him. Me, Jug, Ron, and…” she swallowed hard. “Archie.”

Alice shook her head. “You can’t have seen him, honey. He’s dead. He died a long time ago, when you were little.”

“I know. He was killed. But he’s come back, somehow.”

“That isn’t possible, Betty. Once you’re dead, you’re dead.”

Betty huffed. “Do you know what happened to him, then? Do you know who killed him?”

Her mother closed her eyes again, and at last nodded. “I need to explain something to you first, though. Your sister Polly…” her mother hesitated.

A lump formed in Betty’s throat. “I wish I’d gotten to know her.” Betty had precious few pictures of the two of them together; the last had been taken just a few days before Polly had died.

“And I’ll always be desperately sorry that you two didn’t get to grow up together and become best friends. And you’ll understand…” Her mother swallowed hard.

Polly didn’t die in a car accident like we told you,” Alice said. “Krueger killed her.”
Betty’s mouth went dry. She couldn’t speak. She couldn’t breathe. Her mother wrapped her arms around her and held her close. “But he got away with it, honey. We couldn’t prove it was him. So the police told us to accept that it had just been a tragic accident. And then when he got away with killing that other girl—and God knows how many others—well.” Alice took a deep breath, and blew it out. “We couldn’t let him get away with it any longer.”

Betty let the implication of her mother’s words sink in as her bones grew cold. “So you…”

“Some of the other parents got together with your father and me. And we killed him, honey. So don’t you worry, baby. He can’t ever hurt you.”

Betty swallowed back bile. “You killed someone?”

“He deserved it, honey. He was never going to pay for what he did. So we had to exact our own justice.”

Tears scalded Betty’s eyes. Of course Krueger must be guilty. He was clearly a horrible man; thing, beast, whatever he was. But she hated that her parents had to put themselves in harm’s way, and had faced the prospect of prison.

Her mother stroked her hair, and said, “Honey, I think they know it was us that did it. And they know they screwed up. We were never questioned. I can’t imagine we ever will be.” As if reading Betty’s thoughts.

Betty knew that even though she had no clue why Krueger had powers after death, and how the hell he’d gotten into their dreams, she had no choice: she had to avenge Archie and her sister’s deaths, and finish what her mother had started. “Get ready to burn again, Krueger,” she whispered.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Things are beginning to come to a head in Riverdale. I agonized over this chapter and changed a lot, so sorry if there are any errors. I may not update as quickly as I normally do as I've got birthday stuff planned for the next few days. :)
As always, thanks to everyone who's read, commented, and left kudos :)

Veronica cursed for the fiftieth time that evening. She hated having to lie. She, unlike her father Hiram Lodge, who was serving time in prison for shady deals on Wall Street, was no liar. But she knew the time would soon come when she would have to lie her ass off. For when Mr. Andrews realized that his son was nowhere to be found (not Veronica’s house, nor Betty’s, Jughead’s, or the Chock’lit Shoppe), he would naturally wonder what Archie’s girlfriend wasn’t telling him. The only thing she could say in all honesty was that Archie was no longer here.

So far, she hadn’t heard anything from his father. Maybe he was out having fun with his buddies. Maybe he trusted that Archie would be safe with Veronica (apart from one particular kind of trouble they could get themselves into). Maybe he didn’t care as long as he got to school on time on Monday.

She swiped away an angry tear. God damn Betty and Jughead to hell for making her endure this. For making her feel helpless and frantic and devastated, and condemning Archie to either a horrific, insane death or torture.

She, Betty, and Jughead would be the first to be questioned by the police after Mr. Andrews’ search for his son proved to be fruitless. And what exactly were they supposed to tell the cops? “Yeah, he just disappeared into the mattress like it was quicksand, it was the darnedest thing!” As much as she hated Betty and Jughead at the moment, she couldn’t, and wouldn’t point the finger at them.

To ease her shaking limbs, she opened her mother’s liquor cabinet and got herself a snifter of brandy. After sipping a little too much, her nerves calmed a little.

She had to think of a plan. This was more intricate than organizing a sleepover with girls who all half-hated each other, or a cocktail party for her father’s clients.

She couldn’t save Archie from a gruesome death. But if she could find some kind of proof that Krueger was real, that he had come back to hurt people again, then maybe she could save herself and others. Including Archie’s soul.

The phone rang, and she jumped a mile. Her hand over her heart, she picked up the phone. “Hello?” she croaked.

“Hi sweetie, how is everything?”

“Oh, Mom,” Veronica said, sinking into the couch. “It’s just you.”

“What’s the matter, Ronnie? You sound upset.”
“No, I’m okay,” she said, though she longed to spill out everything to her mother. As if she could fix everything like it was a skinned knee.

“No, Veronica. You can’t fool me. What’s going on?”

She bit her lip hard. “I just… I had a fight with Betty. It was… pretty brutal.”

“Aw, I’m sorry to hear that, baby girl. But I’m sure you’ll make up. You always do. You two have been best friends since you were little.”

“Yeah,” Veronica said, blinking hard.

“The two of you used to sing a song together to keep the Boogeyman away, do you remember that?”

Veronica’s heart thudded. That was the song she’d been trying to remember the other night, what felt like a hundred years ago, when they were all sitting around having fun. “I—I was trying to remember it, actually. How did it go?”

“Oh God, you want me to remember the whole thing?” Her mother laughed. “I think it was something like… “One, two, uh… he’s coming for you. Three, four better lock your door…”

Veronica’s head began to throb. “Five, six, grab your crucifix, seven, eight better stay up late.”

“That’s it. I always wondered if you kids had heard about… well. Never mind. I’ll be home tomorrow night, sweetie.”

“Wait a second, Mom. Where did the song come from? How did we learn it?” Her heart was in her throat.

“I thought you made it up.” Her mother sounded tense. “Maybe just to deal with things you were scared of. The monster under the bed, you know?”

She wasn’t buying her mother’s vagueness. Veronica hadn’t made it up. And it hadn’t been, “He’s coming for you”. It had been “Freddy.” Freddy’s coming for you.

Had they battled him before, as children?

“I have to go, honey,” her mother said, her voice shaky. “I’ll see you soon.”

“Okay,” Veronica whispered. “I love you. Bye.” She kept the phone to her ear, even after her mother had hung up, as if she could maintain that connection with her.

She hadn’t slept since her interrupted nap, when the love of her life had disappeared, and Betty and Jughead had proven themselves to be traitors. Or at the very least, incompetent, sex-obsessed morons.

The books on dreams they’d checked out from the library still lay strewn across her bedroom. She wasn’t sure she needed them. Veronica had always been street smart, though she did reasonably well at school. And she had a feeling the dictionary wasn’t going to stop Krueger.

So she poured herself some more brandy, and thought. Hard.

She didn’t want to give up on Archie. But though she feared the ache in her chest would never go away, it would be easier to just assume he was dead, rather than clinging to cruel hope. At the very least, she could bring his body back to their world, where he belonged.
But the only way she could get to Krueger, and to Archie, was to go to sleep.

Veronica shivered. Could she bring herself to deliberately enter Krueger’s world?

What other choice did she have? Betty and Jughead had proven themselves to be useless. She was on her own.

And she was beginning to develop a theory. If it worked, then it was possible she could protect herself. She just needed to be prepared.

She wouldn’t think of what would happen if she was wrong.

Veronica got up from the couch and headed to the bathroom. She opened the medicine cabinet, and got out a bottle of pills. Hermione Lodge. One pill per night, for sleep.

She smiled grimly. She just needed a few more supplies, and then she’d be ready for Freddy.

* *

Betty winced as the bitter grains of coffee stuck in her throat. She chased it back with a bit of water. It was quicker than having to wait for the coffee to brew.

Her heart was beating too fast. She’d heard too much caffeine could kill a person. What would happen to her then? Would she go to heaven, or would she be trapped in Krueger’s nightmares forever?

She couldn’t think of that. She had to think of her friends, and of righting the wrong she’d committed.

Her mother’s words, her grim tale of revenge, continued to echo in her mind. She and the neighbors had killed Krueger. That had probably included Jughead, Veronica and Archie’s parents.

Veronica and Archie had no brothers and sisters. But what if they’d been killed by Krueger, as Polly had been?

A soft knock on her window startled her. She drew back the curtains and smiled to see Jughead on the other side. She opened her window as quietly as she could and stepped back as he eased himself inside.

“Hey.” He wrapped his arms around her and squeezed gently. “How you doin’, Betts?”

She drew away from him and sat him down on the bed next to her. “I have to tell you something, Jug.” As quickly as she could, she relayed what her mother had told her about Krueger, including what he’d done to her sister Polly.

Jughead went pale, and he clutched Betty’s hands. “Oh my God, baby, I’m so sorry. I… God, when I think about anything happening to Jellybean I want to break something. I can’t even imagine what you’re going through right now.”

Betty blinked back tears as she leaned into Jughead, who automatically wrapped his arms around her. “I know. And I hope you never have to. That’s why we’ve got to do something, Jug. I can’t let him get away with this.”

“I’m with you one hundred percent, babe.” He shook his head. “You know, I wouldn’t be surprised if my parents were involved in his death. Or at least my dad would’ve been.” He eyed
her cautiously. “I can’t feel sorry for Krueger. Unless… I mean, he was released. You don’t think he could be innocent?”

“No,” Betty said firmly. “When I looked into his eyes in that bathroom, I saw pure evil. I know he’s guilty.”

“Not sure that would hold up in court,” Jughead said wryly. “But I take your point. And I’m with you.”

“Great,” Betty said, giving him a quick kiss on the cheek. She couldn’t allow herself more. Not until she’d righted this somehow. “Most of the dream books are at Ronnie’s house, but to be honest, I don’t think Freud or any other psychiatrist would be prepared for what we’re facing.”

“Well, I brought a book with me just in case,” Jughead said, digging it out of his jacket pocket. It was one she didn’t recognize: *Dream Archetypes and Their Application in Reality*. “I’ve had it out from the school library for a while now,” he said. “Probably owe some fines on it.”

Betty gnawed her lip as she flipped through the book’s index, as if she would see Krueger’s name blazing out at her. “Do you think Krueger could be an archetype? I mean, he was a real person.” Or was he? Maybe he’d always been a monster, masquerading as a human being.

“Only one way to find out,” Jughead said, nodding at the book. “Time for study hall.”

Veronica smiled and waved to her adoring fans as she stepped out of the limousine.

“Ms. Lodge! Ms. Lodge, can we get a picture?”

“Of course, darling,” she trilled as she sashayed over to the photographer from *Vanity Fair*. She put her hand on her hip and thrust her chest out for the camera.

Flashbulbs continued to go off, and screaming fans begged her to come to them so they could get autographs and pictures. Her gut twinged. Something wasn’t right about this situation. Was she due at another premiere? Had she been invited to a dinner that it was essential to attend if she wanted to get her next role? Hadn’t Elton John wanted her to come over for a party?

“Ronnie baby!” Her heart leapt when she saw the familiar freckled face emerge from a sea of human penguins with cameras. He held out his arms.

“Archiekins!” Veronica rushed over to him as quickly as she could in her Versace stilettos and flung her arms around him. She pulled back to gaze at him. “What are you doing here? I thought you were…” She felt her brain cloud over. Where had he gone?

“I just had to go away for a little while, but now I’m back to stay with my little lambiekins,” Archie crooned. “You look so beautiful tonight,” he continued, putting his hand on the small of her back.

“Oh, Archie,” Veronica said, wincing as his nails scraped against her low-backed dress. “When did your nails get so long?”

“The better to stab you with, my pretty!” he growled.

“What? Archie, what are you talk—” Suddenly Veronica remembered everything. She remembered what had happened to her beloved Archiekins. And what she’d set out to do tonight to avenge him.
She shoved that son of a bitch Krueger away from her and backed away, while he mockingly kept his façade of Archie. She tossed off her shoes, and held one out as an impromptu weapon. “Nice try, asshole. The only person who’s getting stabbed tonight is you!”

He chuckled as he transformed back into Krueger, melted flesh and all. “You think I’m scared of a spoiled teenage princess? I could destroy you in a second.” He flexed his bladed glove. “I’m going to enjoy making you pay for what your town did to me.”

“That had nothing to do with me,” she snapped. “And you deserved it. You’re a filthy child-killer.”

“Enough talk,” he snarled, and lunged at her.

She shrieked and jumped back. Be brave. Remember the plan. Veronica reached into her purse and slashed his face with a knife. He grunted in irritation.

She pulled out her mother’s little pearl-handled pistol from her chic dress pocket (all the rage in Paris). “I’ve got you now, you hideous bastard,” she said, feeling a thrill zing through her.

His eyes went wide, and suddenly the burns on his face disappeared. He looked like the man in the newspaper article again. “No, please don’t, Veronica. I’m innocent. You don’t know what they did to me. It was so horrible. I never did anything to those girls. You’ve got to believe me.”

Girls. He’d said girls. Only one girl had been mentioned in the article. “I don’t believe you.”

He grinned, and even without his burned visage, his teeth were grimy. “Polly want a cracker?” he cooed, making her shudder.

Polly. Betty’s sister? But Betty had always said she died in a…

“You son of a bitch,” she hissed, and shot him in the chest three times.

Krueger grunted and staggered back, then fell to the ground.

Veronica smiled grimly. “Rot in hell, you filthy beast.” She blew lightly on the barrel, then put the gun in her purse.

She squared her shoulders. “Okay, Ronnie. Time to find Archie.”

Krueger shot to his feet, and Veronica screamed. She backed away on trembling legs as he stalked toward her, slow and sure. “Sorry, cupcake, but your little boyfriend is dead. He was at the beach, and got sucked into a little problem he couldn’t claw his way out of.” His black eyes gleamed as he licked his lips. “I’m your boyfriend now, Ronnie.”

She got the gun out and shot the rest of her bullets at him, but they did nothing. “Help me,” she whispered.

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Betty set the book down with a sigh. “I don’t think we’re gonna get anywhere with this. I think I should just go in there, Jug. I need to try to get Krueger into our world. Maybe if I do that, he’ll die, or at least be powerless. Maybe it’s only our dreams that give him life, and once we’re all awake, he’ll just… I don’t know, evaporate.”

Jughead nodded grimly. “I’m going with you.”
“No. You need to be here to wake me up.” She saw him blanch at that, and squeezed his hand gently. “You won’t fail me, Juggie. I know you won’t. Drink more coffee. Listen to music. Do whatever you have to do to stay awake.” And alive.

“I don’t want to just stay awake, Betty. I want to help you,” Jughead protested. “I want to protect you. Like I—like I didn’t do for Archie,” he said, his face flushing with guilt and shame.

“You *will* be protecting me, out here.”

Jughead shook his head and sighed. “Okay. I’m going to trust your judgment here. What do you want me to do? Besides stay awake, I mean.”

Betty rubbed her hands together uneasily. They were still sore, and now trembling with nerves. Jughead wrapped her hands in his and kissed them. She felt her heart swell. She wanted to be brave and strong for him. “Okay. I want you to wake me up in an hour. I’m going to try to bring Krueger out into our world.”

“How are you going to do that?” Jughead asked, looking queasy.

She smiled. “Remember when I was on the boys’ wrestling team in sixth grade?”

“How could I forget?” He groaned. “You put me in a half-nelson on the playground.”

Betty giggled. “Well, I guess I’m going to have to come out of retirement.”

“You’re gonna try to wrestle Krueger?” Jughead asked doubtfully.

“I’m gonna fight dirty,” Betty said with a smirk, hiding the pulsing fear inside her.

“I’m sure you will, babe.” Jughead kissed her forehead.

“Okay.” Betty shoved away her fear, got into bed and wrapped the covers around herself. “I’m pretty tired. I think I actually had too much coffee; it’s had an opposite effect on me.”

“Right. Sure you don’t want me to sing you a lullaby?” Jughead joked, but she noted his shaky hands and furrowed brow.

Betty’s resolve caved in. “Cuddle me for a bit. But just for like five minutes so you don’t fall asleep too.”

“You don’t have to ask me twice,” Jughead said, leaping onto the bed and wrapping his arms around her securely. He pressed his nose, then his lips against her neck. “I love you, Betty.”

She swallowed hard. “I love you too, Jughead.”

“Sleep well.”

* 

“Mommy, where are we going?” Betty shivered as she huddled up in the backseat of the family Buick.

“Quit asking questions, Betty. We’re in a hurry.”

Mommy sounded hoarse, like she had a cold. And she was driving like she was holding something in her hands at the same time.
She glanced at the seat next to her, where her older sister Polly was.

Or should have been. What sat in her place was a tiny skeleton.

Betty jolted back into the present, and remembered what she had come here to do. “You son of a bitch!” she screamed, and lashed out at Krueger, who was cackling as he zigzagged the car through a cemetery.

“Careful, Betty. You wouldn’t want to end up like pretty Polly, would you?” he roared, and rammed into a headstone.

The car jerked to a stop, and Betty was flung through the opened door. She landed on the ground with a grunt, and curled up like a fetus.

Krueger wrenched her onto her back, and straddled her. She bit back bile as she smelled his stench.

He opened her clenched fists, and touched the tips of his blades into the crescent moon shaped wounds on her palms. “You’re looking for an escape from life, Betty,” he crooned. “You hate it. Why don’t you just give in? I’ve even got a nice little grave dug for you already.” He pointed to the tombstone he’d knocked over, and her heart shuddered when she saw that it bore her name.

“No,” she said, fighting back tears. “You’re wrong. I have everything. I have family, friends, and a boyfriend I love with everything inside me.” She swallowed hard. “And I have a sister. You took her away from me. But I’m going to take her back now, along with everyone else you’ve ever hurt.”

“And how are you gonna do that, bitch?” he said with a snarl.

She swallowed hard. Her mind was frozen, yet racing at the same time. What could she say? What could she do?

Her mother had always told her bad dreams couldn’t hurt her. How could she be wrong? How could this be happening?

“I don’t believe in you,” Betty blurted out.

His hideous face morphed into one of panic. Betty’s heart began to lift.

Then Krueger’s face twisted back into a malicious grin. “Prepare to die, Betty.”
Okay gang, I'm wrapping this one up. I'm tired. Time for sleep. Haha. Thanks again to everyone who stuck through to the end, and who left comments and kudos along the way. Much appreciated.

Jughead kept glancing at his watch. Betty had only been asleep for maybe ten or fifteen minutes, and she seemed peaceful enough, but Jughead could barely resist the urge to wake her up. What was happening inside her head right now?

And not just inside her head, but in some other weird dimension where apparently dreams could hurt you. Christ. Nothing at Riverdale High had ever prepared him for that. Not even all the naps he’d taken during Miss Grundy’s class could have made him ready for this.

But Betty, who wasn’t exactly the Karate Kid, no matter what she might think of her wrestling skills, had been willing to go in and risk her life to help her friends.

“You’re a fucking coward, Jughead Jones,” he whispered. He should never have let her go in there alone to face that bastard.

And, he realized with a sinking heart, he’d been the only one not to encounter Krueger in his dreams. Archie had paid the price. Who knew what was happening with Veronica. And Betty… his sweet, beautiful Betty had gone in there alone.

What would happen the next time Jughead fell asleep? Would there be no sign of Krueger and he’d snooze on blissfully? Or would Krueger spring from the shadows and kill Jughead as well? Maybe he should find out.

Betty didn’t need him to stay awake. She needed him with her, in there, up against Krueger.

Jughead went through the stuff on Betty’s bureau until he found her pig-shaped alarm clock. She’d said she was going to fight Krueger, but who knew how long that could take, or if she’d be successful?

He’d set the alarm, and then they’d both wake up, and hopefully they’d both have Krueger and would have done some damage to the bastard too. The cops could re-arrest him and make it count this time.

He shook his head. “You really are sleep deprived, Jones. They can’t arrest a walking corpse.”

But who could know? Maybe Krueger would set a precedent. Or maybe they’d decide that it hadn’t really been Krueger who had died in the fire.

Jughead shook all fancies from his head, set the alarm for an hour later, and settled down in the chair. “I’m coming, Betty,” he murmured, and pulled his beanie down over his eyes. Sleep.
Betty fought back waves of nausea as she struggled to breathe. *Fight. You’ve got to fight back. For Juggie, Ronnie, and Archie.*

Krueger snarled as he brought his clawed glove down toward her face. “Die, bitch.”

Betty thumped her hand against his chin, causing him to grunt and fall backward. She scrambled to her feet and began to kick and stomp on his knees. With a grunt, she pulled up half of the broken tombstone and flung it at Krueger’s chest. He doubled over in pain, groaning and swearing.

This was more WWF-style wrestling than Greco Roman, but she was more than happy to play dirty against this son of a bitch.

Suddenly Krueger sat up, like Michael Myers in Halloween. Betty wondered bleakly if he were real too. Maybe all monsters were real. “You think you’re so clever,” Krueger growled. “Too bad none of that is going to help you when I slice up your face.”

*Wake me up, Juggie. Wake me up.*

Nothing happened. It was only her and the melted face murderer of her sister. Betty swallowed hard. “Fight me.”

Krueger paused for a moment, then chuckled. “You’re a stupid girl. I like that about you. Your friend Veronica was stupid, too. She thought she could take me on, but now the only thing that’s left of the little princess is her tiara.”

Betty went white. “What have you done to her? Where is she?”

He sneered. “You want to see your little friend? Well then, Miss Cooper, allow me to oblige!” He tossed a doll’s head at her, and she caught it on instinct.

Except it wasn’t a doll’s head. It was Veronica’s head.

*Jughead sighed and leaned back against the booth as he polished off his tenth burger. “This is heaven.”*

He was seated at the Chocklit Shoppe, with only Pop Tate cheerfully cooking away burgers for him. He had an assortment of milkshakes, and nice crispy French fries to accompany them.

“You want anything else, sugar?”

Jughead looked up in irritation at the interruption, and gaped. “Betty.”

She was dressed in a short, hot pink waitress outfit, the tops of her breasts peeking out from the tight uniform. She winked at him and did a little shimmy.

He shoved the burgers aside, put his hands on her waist and pulled her onto his lap. “You’re more appetizing than burgers and milkshakes any day, sweetheart.”

“Well aren’t you a charmer,” she cooed, running her long, pointed red nails over his chest. “How’d you like me to feed you some burgers, baby?”

He’d been loath to admit it, but having Betty feed him hamburgers was his second-favorite fantasy, right behind… well. He blushed to think about it. It would be too rude to ask for.
“Oh, is this what you want, baby?” Betty undid her blouse, revealing her golden, luscious breasts.

Jughead groaned. “You’re delicious, Betty.”

“Hmm, not quite.” Betty grabbed a vanilla milkshake and dumped it all over her chest. “Now I’m delicious. Time for dessert,” she crooned, pushing Jughead’s head toward her breasts.

Jughead’s entire body was throbbing as he licked the whipped cream and ice cream off his girlfriend’s tits. He moaned his appreciation with each mouthful. He was going to have to reward her for this later, when they both…

Wait a second. Wasn’t he supposed to be doing something important right now? And so was Betty. What was it? He reluctantly pulled away from his glorious dessert, trying to think.

“Don’t ignore me, Juggie. I need you to take care of me now,” Betty said, ripping off her top the rest of the way and smashing Jughead’s face against her tits.

He blubbed as he tried not to suffocate in the mixture of creams and sauce and succulent flesh. If he didn’t know any better, he’d swear Betty was *trying* to make him choke in this avalanche of ice cream.

“What’s the matter little piggy, is that too much ice cream for you?” Betty’s voice had gone raspy and weird.

Jughead jerked his head up and pushed away from her. “Betty, I—” He choked and sputtered on the cherry that had fallen back in his mouth. He managed to spit it out. “Geez, Betty, since when did you get so aggressive?”

His mouth dropped open when he saw how askew her makeup was. She looked like she was wearing a wig, too.

And her red nails had turned into claws. “B-Betty?” he whispered, chills going down his spine.

“Sorry, buddy. Betty’s gone bye-bye!” she snarled.

Not she, but he, Jughead realized, as his girlfriend’s face melted into the pizza-like, grisly remains of one Fred Krueger. “You,” Jughead whispered, feeling the blood drain from his face. He was finally meeting him face to face. His father must have been part of the murderous mob after all.

“Surprise! You want some more ice cream, Juggie?” Krueger asked with a snarling grin.

Jughead shuddered. He’d never have ice cream again. “What have you done with Betty, you bastard?”

Krueger sneered and leered and flexed his claw. “She’s with your other little friends, Veronica and Archie. They’re having a slumber party. You might say they’re dead to the world.”

Jughead’s stomach revolted. Krueger was lying. He must be. Betty had to be okay.

“But who cares about them?” Krueger growled, waving his hand grandiosely. “Wouldn’t you rather have dinner?”

Jughead cried out as he realized he was now strapped to a buffet table, which was covered in all his favorite dishes: hamburgers, pizzas, hot dogs, cake, and pies.

“Let me out of here!” he cried. He jerked against his bonds, to no avail. Maybe he could eat his
way out. His doctor had once remarked that he seemed to be able to ingest an astonishing amount of calories without gaining weight. Maybe he’d be okay.

*Get real, Jughead. He’ll never let you free. You’re fucked.*

He shuddered in horror as the food began to move on its own, and crawled toward him steadily.

It had become sentient. All the food he’d scarfed down over the years was now going to take its revenge on him and eat him alive. He was going to become a Jugburger, and his blood would be the ketchup.

He began to struggle against his bonds again, for the hamburger was closest and was beginning to sniff at his arm. Suddenly he heard a huge crack, and one of the walls of the room he was in fell down. A lithe, feminine figure emerged from the dust. “Hey! Krueger! I’m not finished with you!”

Jughead lifted his head up, still struggling to get out of his trap, and sucked in a breath. Betty? Was it really her?

If they ever made it out of this, he wondered if he could ever look at her again without wondering if she would suddenly transform into Krueger. In the middle of making out, or in the middle of having sex…

“Come back for more, have we?” Krueger chuckled, and Jughead found that he could suddenly wriggle free of the straps.

*His attention isn’t on me. Maybe he can only focus on one of us at a time.*

If Betty kept him distracted, maybe he could do something to help the two of them.

“Yeah. You ran away before I could kick your ass,” Betty said, glaring at him. “Gonna try with my boyfriend instead? I don’t think so. Come back here and fight me, pussy.”

“No, Betty,” Jughead whispered, but he glowed inside at his girlfriend’s boldness and bravery.

Krueger roared with laughter. “I like a feisty bitch.” He rubbed his hands together. “Come to papa, Betty.”

Jughead cried out as Betty was suddenly engulfed in a giant tongue. The wriggling, slimy muscle wrapped around her, as if it had a right to, and it enraged him. She cried out as she struggled against it.

Jughead sprang from the table, grabbed a knife from the utensils, and slashed at the tongue. “Get the fuck away from her, you sick freak!”

The tongue squealed and slunk away. Jughead put his hands on his knees, breathing hard. “Betty,” he choked out. “Are you okay, baby?”

“I had it under control, Juggie, but thank you,” Betty said, caressing his face. “You’re my hero.”

He chuckled. “I had to do something for you. I couldn’t just let you have all the fun here.”

She rolled her eyes. “Oh yeah, it’s been loads of fun. Next time you can take on that guy from *Friday the 13th*, okay?”

Jughead opened his mouth to reply, but found that he couldn’t talk. He felt an odd pain in his stomach, and looked down. He gaped as a huge set of claws poked out through his stomach. He
choked on the spurting blood as the pain tore through his body.

“Juggie!” Betty screamed.

Jughead tried to say something. He had to reassure her. That was his job: to make sure Betty was always safe and happy. But he couldn’t do anything. “B—Betts,” he grunted, and slid to the floor, as everything went black.

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Betty wailed in agony as Jughead slid to the floor in a pool of his own blood. Krueger had vanished.

She knelt to the ground and cradled her boyfriend. “Juggie. Juggie, please get up,” she cried, holding him in her arms. She touched her forehead to his. “I’m so sorry this happened. I love you,” she whispered. “I love you so much.” Her tears slid down her cheeks and pooled onto his, so that he looked as if he were crying as well.

She’d failed them all. Polly. Archie. Veronica. And the love of her life, Jughead.

Why had the nightmares started with her? Had she somehow opened up some kind of portal or gateway for Krueger to merge the world of the living and the world of the dreaming?

Maybe her mother had been the one to take the first step in killing Krueger. Or the last.

But Betty knew she had to face up to one thing: It was up to her to finish it, even if she finished her own life in the process.

Betty swallowed hard, stood tall, and straightened her ponytail. Krueger wouldn’t let her mourn for long. He would return to torment her, and glory in his triumph over her and her friends. The last thing she should do was at least get one more dig in before he killed her.

“Come on, Krueger,” she said, cracking her knuckles. “Quit stalling. Let’s finish this once and for all.”

A giant mirror loomed in front of her, shiny and with gilded edges. She saw herself, fingering the tiny key necklace she always wore, looking solemn.

“You can’t win, Betty,” she heard herself, the other her, say. “Your soul belongs to me now. But don’t worry.” Her lips stretched into a wide grin. “You’ll have plenty of company.” Her face morphed into Krueger’s, and his arm reached through the glass and slashed through it, causing it to explode everywhere.

Betty grabbed a huge shard of glass and slashed Krueger’s face with it. He grunted and flinched. 

*Take that, motherfucker.*

She grabbed more glass, not caring how it cut and bled her hands. She would gladly die if she could do even a little more damage to him. She continued to fling and slash as Krueger tried to block her blows.

Then she tackled Krueger, knocking him on his bony ass, and tried to grip him in a bear hug. She’d strangle him if she could. He grunted as he slashed at her face, but she held on as tight as she could.

And then the alarm went off.
Betty gasped as she found herself back in her bedroom. “Jughead?” she whispered.

But of course he wasn’t there. She clutched her chest as her heart bled. He must have set the alarm for her. His last kindness toward her. “I love you, Juggie.”

“I love you too, Betty,” she heard a voice whisper.

She gasped. “Juggie?”

Betty screamed as a whirling of stinking blades and a dirty red and green sweater launched itself at her.

“Not today, Betts,” Krueger growled as he knocked her to the floor.

Betty screamed as she punched and kicked at Krueger wherever she could land in a blow. To her delight, he seemed even more bothered by her attacks than he had in her dream. Maybe here, in her world, he was only a man. A sick man who needed to die. Again.

Betty poked him in the eyes with her fingers and he shot back with a roar.

“Elizabeth, what in the hell is going—” Her mother went pale as she stood in the doorway.

“Mom, help me. Krueger’s back,” Betty cried, running to her mother and clutching her arm.

Her mother seemed rooted to the floor. “How is this possible?”

Krueger wrenched himself to his feet. Alice flung Betty behind her. “Get out of the house, Betty,” her mother said.

“I’m not leaving you,” Betty vowed. “No way in hell.”

“Now I have two blondes to play with,” Krueger growled. “Polly want a cracker?”

“You son of a bitch!” Alice threw herself at Krueger, beating and kicking at him. She cried out when Krueger jabbed her in the neck with his bladed glove.

Everything seemed to happen in slow motion, though Betty knew this was no dream. She was awake. She watched as the blood spurted from her mother’s neck like a drunk geyser. Betty ran toward her mother, though it felt as if her limbs were made of molasses. Krueger roared with laughter as Alice slid to the floor.

Her mother had always told her dreams couldn’t hurt her. Fred Krueger was a dream. He couldn’t hurt her mother. He couldn’t hurt Betty, or her friends.

She had to try. “I don’t believe in you,” Betty said, and suddenly she wasn’t underwater. “I believe in my family and friends. I believe in my mother, Polly, Archie, Veronica, and Jughead.”

She took a deep breath. “I don’t believe in you, Fred Krueger. You have no power over me. You’re nothing. You’re shit.”

She turned her back on him, willing herself not to tense up or run away. She could feel him coming closer, and bile rose into to her mouth. She could feel his stinking breath invade her nostrils.

And then there was nothing. Betty held her breath, expecting him to return, laughing at her hope and relief. She turned around, and saw that she was alone. Then everything went up in white.
Betty stretched in her bed and sighed. “That’s the best night’s sleep I’ve ever had,” she said. Her muscles felt well-rested and full, and her skin was dewy and warm.

She took a luxurious hot shower, and put on her sunflower dress, a long-time favorite. Her mother had made pancakes for breakfast, and she enjoyed them with fresh-squeezed orange juice.

She heard a car horn beep cheerfully outside. That was Archie’s jalopy. She hurried out of the kitchen, slinging her backpack over her shoulder. “Bye, Mom!” she called as she headed toward the front door.

“Bye, sweetie! Have a good day in school!” her mother called, sounding chirpier than a bluebird.

Betty opened the front door and saw Jughead standing on the front porch. “Hey, Betts,” he said, wrapping his arms around her. “I missed you. Did you have a good night?”

Archie sat gunning the car, while Veronica waved from the front passenger’s seat. The sun was shining and the sky was clear.

Betty smiled. “Yeah, I did. I slept like a baby.”

Jughead slung his arm around her shoulders as they headed toward the car. Alice came onto the porch to wave them off.

Betty beamed at her mother as she climbed into the backseat of the car next to Jughead. They all waved as the top to Archie’s car pulled over them.

“Who touched the button?” Archie asked as the others continued to wave. “I wanted to leave it down.”

“We thought you put it up, Arch,” Betty said, her stomach sliding into unease. She shrieked when the leather top of the car turned to red and green stripes. Slash marks appeared at the top.

She grabbed the door handle but it locked automatically. The rest of her friends realized their predicament as well and yanked at the door handles and beat at the windows, to no avail.

“Mom!” Betty screamed. “Help us!”

But Alice continued to wave blithely, as if everything were fine. Am I going crazy? Betty wondered, in hysterics. Can’t she see what’s happening?

Suddenly the glass on their front door broke, and Alice Cooper was yanked inside through the door, while the four of them could only scream helplessly for her, and for themselves.

Betty thought she might pass out as the car began to close in on them, crushing them.

“I was out of the dreams!” Betty cried as she beat at the windows. “I was out! I defeated him! Mom! Mom! Help us! Mom!”

But it was futile.

* 

Three little girls, all dressed in white, began to skip rope in a field. The sky was cloudy, and a crow flew overhead. A deep, rumbling chuckle seemed to reverberate in the air.
One, two, Freddy's coming for you
Three, four, better lock your door
Five, six, grab your crucifix
Seven, eight, gonna stay up late
Nine, ten, never sleep again

End Notes

Thanks for reading! Just a warning for future chapters; it is horror, so it will likely get more gory.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!