

MISERY

Novel by: Stephen King

Screenplay: William Goldman

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MISERY

1.

FADE IN ON

A SINGLE CIGARETTE. A match. A hotel ice bucket that holds a bottle of champagne. The cigarette is unlit. The match is of the kitchen variety. The champagne, unopened, is Dom Perignon. There is only one sound at first: a strong WIND --

-- now another sound, sharper -- a sudden burst of TYPING as we

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

PAUL SHELDON typing at a table in his hotel suite. It's really a cabin that's part of a lodge. Not an ornate place. Western themed.

He is framed by a window looking out at some gorgeous mountains. It's afternoon. The sky is grey. Snow is scattered along the ground. We're out west somewhere. The WIND grows stronger -- there could be a storm.

PAUL pays no attention to what's going on outside as he continues to type.

He's the hero of what follows. Forty-two, he's got a good face, one with a certain mileage to it. We are not, in other words, looking at a virgin. He's been a novelist for eighteen years and for half that time, the most recent half, a remarkably successful one.

He pauses for a moment, intently, as if trying to stare a hole in the paper. Now his fingers fly and there's another burst of TYPING. He studies what he's written, then --

CUT TO

THE PAPER as he rolls it out of the machine, puts it on the table, prints, in almost childlike letters, these words:

THE END.

CUT TO

A PILE OF MANUSCRIPT at the rear of the table. He puts this last page on, gets it straight and in order, hoists it up, folds it to his chest, the entire manuscript -- hundreds of pages.

CUT TO

PAUL, as he holds his book to him. He is, for just a brief moment, moved. Now --

CUT TO

A SUITCASE across the room. PAUL goes to it, opens it and pulls something out from inside: a battered leather briefcase. Now he takes his manuscript, carefully opens the briefcase, gently puts the manuscript inside. He closes it, and the way he handles it, he might almost be handling a child. Now he crosses over, opens the champagne, pours himself a single glass, lights the one cigarette with the lone match -- there is a distinct feeling of ritual about this. He inhales deeply, makes a toasting gesture, then drinks, smokes, smiles. HOLD briefly, then --

CUT TO

A SIGN that reads "Sidewinder Lodge." Behind the sign is the hotel itself -- old, desolate. Now a '65 Mustang comes out of the garage, guns ahead toward the sign. PAUL is driving. As Chuck Berry MUSIC starts, he heads off into the mountains.

CUT TO

THE SKY. Gun-metal grey. The clouds seem pregnant with snow. Chuck Berry finishes with "MAYBELLINE," goes into "ROLL OVER, BEETHOVEN."

CUT TO

PAUL, driving the Mustang, the battered briefcase on the seat beside him.

CUT TO

THE ROAD AHEAD. Little dainty flakes of snow are suddenly visible.

CUT TO

THE CAR, going into a curve and

CUT TO

PAUL, driving, and as he comes out of the curve a stunned look hits his face as we

CUT TO

THE ROAD AHEAD -- and here it comes -- a mountain storm; it's as if the top has been pulled off the sky and with no warning whatsoever, we're into a blizzard and

CUT TO

THE MUSTANG, slowing, driving deeper into the mountains.

CUT TO

PAUL, squinting ahead, windshield wipers on now as Chuck Berry glides into "SWEET LITTLE SIXTEEN."

CUT TO

THE MUSTANG, rounding another curve, losing traction --

CUT TO

PAUL, a skilled driver, bringing the car easily under control.

CUT TO

THE ROAD. Snow is piling up.

CUT TO

PAUL driving confidently, carefully. Now he reaches out, ejects the Chuck Berry tape, expertly turns it over, pushes it in and as the MUSIC starts again, he hums along with it.

CUT TO

THE SKY. Only you can't see it. There's nothing to see but the unending snow, nothing to hear but the wind which keeps getting wilder.

CUT TO

THE ROAD. Inches of snow on the ground now. This is desolate and dangerous.

CUT TO

PAUL, driving. He turns Chuck Berry LOUDER.

CUT TO

THE SNOW. Worse.

CUT TO

THE ROAD, curving sharply, dropping. A sign reads:
"Curved Road, Next 13 Miles."

CUT TO

THE MUSTANG, coming into view, hitting the curve -- no
problem -- no problem at all -- and then suddenly, as the
road drops, there is a very serious problem and as the car
skids out of control --

CUT TO

PAUL, doing his best, fighting the conditions and just as it
looks like he's got things going his way --

CUT TO

THE ROAD, swerving down and

CUT TO

THE MUSTANG, all traction gone and

CUT TO

PAUL, helpless and

CUT TO

THE MUSTANG, skidding, skidding and

CUT TO

THE ROAD as it drops more steeply away and the wind whips
the snow across and

CUT TO

THE MUSTANG starting to spin and

CUT TO

THE MOUNTAINSIDE as the car skids off the road, careens
down, slams into a tree, bounces off, flips, lands upside
down, skids, stops finally, dead.

HOLD ON THE CAR A MOMENT. There is still the sound of the
WIND. And there is still Chuck Berry, belting out his
SONGS, the tape perhaps the only part of the car left
undamaged. The song "ROCK AND ROLL MUSIC" blares on and
on..."it's gotta be rock and roll music, if you wanna dance
with me..." Nothing moves inside. There is only the WIND
and the TAPE. The WIND gets louder.

CUT TO

THE WRECK looked at from a distance. The MUSIC sounds are only faintly heard.

CUT TO

THE AREA WHERE THE WRECK IS AS SEEN FROM THE ROAD. The car is barely visible as the snow begins to cover it.

CUT TO

THE WRECK from outside, and we're close to it now, with the snow coming down ever harder -- already bits of the car are covered in white.

CAMERA MOVES IN TO PAUL

He's inside and doing his best to fight it but his consciousness is going. He tries to keep his eyes open but they're slits. Slowly, he manages to reach out with his left arm for his briefcase --

-- and he clutches it to his battered body.

Chuck Berry SINGS on.

But PAUL is far past listening. His eyes flutter, flutter again. Now they're starting to close.

The man is dying.

Motionless, he still clutches the battered briefcase.

HOLD ON THE CASE. Then --

DISSOLVE TO

THE BRIEFCASE in PAUL's hands as he sits at a desk.

BELL (V.O.)

What's that?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

We are in New York City in the office of Paul's literary agent, BRYCE BELL. The walls of the large room are absolutely crammed with book and movie posters, in English and all kinds of other languages, all of them featuring the character of MISERY CHASTAIN, a perfectly beautiful, strong-looking woman. Misery's Challenge, Misery's Triumph -- half a dozen of them. All written by Paul Sheldon.

CUT TO

PAUL, lifting up the battered briefcase -- maybe when new it cost two bucks but he treats it like gold.

PAUL

An old friend. I was rummaging through a closet and it was just sitting there. Like it was waiting for me.

CUT TO

BELL. He doesn't know what to say.

BELL

(gamely)

It's ... it's neat, Paulie, some swell merchandise.

CUT TO

THE TWO OF THEM.

PAUL

When I wrote my first book, I used to carry it around in this while I was looking for a publisher. That was a good book, Bryce.

BELL

What'd it sell? -- six copies, or was it eight?

PAUL

I was a writer then.

BELL

You're still a writer.

PAUL

Bryce, I haven't been a writer since I got us into the Misery business --

BELL

(holding up the poster of
Misery's Child)

Not a bad business. This thing would still be growing, too -- the first printing order on Misery's Child was the most ever -- Misery Chastain was a gold mine. And you had to go and kill her. You killed a gold mine.

PAUL

-- Bryce -- we've been over this. If I hadn't gotten rid of her, I'd have ended up writing her forever. For the first time in fifteen years, I think I'm really onto something here.

BELL

Well fine, but just so you know -- you have a lot of fans out there, and when they find out that you killed off their favorite heroine, they're not going to say, "Ooh, good, Paul Sheldon can finally write what we've always wanted: an esoteric, semi-autobiographical character study.

PAUL

(passionately)

Bryce, please try and hear me. I'm leaving for Colorado to try to finish this --

(BRYCE is stopped)

-- and if I can make it work...

(beat)

I might just have something that I want on my tombstone.

(on the word

"tombstone"...)

CUT TO

PAUL'S TOMBSTONE -- the upside down car with the blizzard coming gale-forced and his motionless body trapped inside the car. The WIND screams. PAUL'S eyes flutter, then close.

HOLD

KEEP HOLDING as suddenly there's a new sound as a crowbar SCRATCHES at the door --

- and now the door is ripped open as we

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

A BUNDLED-UP FIGURE gently beginning to pull PAUL and the case from the car. For a moment, it's hard to tell if it's a man or a woman --

-- not to let the cat out of the bag or anything, but it is, very much, a woman. Her name is ANNIE WILKES and she is close to PAUL'S age. She is in many ways a remarkable creature. Strong, self-sufficient, passionate in her likes and dislikes, loves and hates.

CUT TO

PAUL AND ANNIE as she cradles him in her arms. Once he's clear of the car, she lays him carefully in the snow.

CUT TO

PAUL AND ANNIE, CLOSE UP, as she slowly brings her mouth down close to his. Then their lips touch as she forces air inside him.

ANNIE

Breathe!

(Their lips touch again.

Then --)

You hear me, I said breathe!!!

CUT TO

PAUL as he starts to breathe --

-- in a moment his eyes suddenly open wide, but he's in shock, the eyes see nothing --

CUT TO

ANNIE -- the moment she sees him come to life, she goes into action, lifting PAUL in a fireman's carry, starting the difficult climb back up the steep hill. As she moves away, she and PAUL are obliterated by the white falling snow.

DISSOLVE TO

THE WHITE OF WHAT SEEMS LIKE A HOSPITAL. Everything is bled of color. It's all vague --

-- we are looking at this from PAUL'S blurred vision.

And throughout this next sequence, there are these SOUNDS, words, really but they make no sense.

"... no ... worry ...
... be ... fine ...
... good care ... you ...
... I'm your number one fan ...

The first thing we see during this is something all white. It takes a moment before we realize it's a ceiling.

Now, a white wall.

ANNIE is standing beside the bed. She wears off-white and seems very much like a nurse. A good nurse.

An I.V. BOTTLE is next. The medicine dripping down along a tube into PAUL'S left arm. The other arm is bandaged and in a sling.

ANNIE again, now with pills in her hands.

CUT TO

PAUL. Motionless, dead pale. He has a little beard now. Eyes closed, he's shaking with fever.

PAUL
(hardly able to whisper)
... where ... am I ... ?

ANNIE is quickly by his side.

ANNIE
(so gently)
... shhh ... we're just outside
Sidewinder.

PAUL
... how long ...?

ANNIE
You've been here three days.
(relieved)
My name is Annie Wilkes and I'm --

PAUL
-- my number one fan ...
(And now the gibberish
words make sense)

ANNIE
That's right. Here ...
(now, as she brings the
pills close)
Take these.

PAUL
What are...?

ANNIE
It's all right, I'm a nurse.
(as she helps him to
swallow, as PAUL'S eyes
close)

DISSOLVE TO

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9A.

AN EXTERIOR OF THE PLACE. It's a farmhouse -- we're in a desolate area with mountains in the background.

THE HOUSE is set on a knoll so that PAUL's room, although on the first floor, is ten feet off the ground.

CUT TO

PAUL in the room. He's not on the I.V. anymore. His fever has broken. ANNIE enters, pills in her hands.

ANNIE

Here.

PAUL

... what are they ... ?

ANNIE

They're called Novril -- they're for your pain.

(She helps him take them)

PAUL

Shouldn't I be in a hospital?

CUT TO

ANNIE, a cool rag to his forehead.

ANNIE

The blizzard was too strong, I couldn't risk trying to get you there.

PAUL

Did you call a doctor?

ANNIE

I tried, but the phone lines are down.
(gently -- her fingers go
to his eyelids, close
them)

Now you mustn't tire yourself. You've got to rest, you almost died.

CUT TO

ANNIE. CLOSE UP. Sometimes her face shows the most remarkable compassion. It does now. HOLD on it briefly, then --

DISSOLVE TO

PAUL'S ROOM. He lies in bed. His fever is gone but he's terribly weak.

ANNIE
(pills in her hand; soft,
happy)
Open wide.

CUT TO

THE PILLS as her fingers lay them on PAUL's tongue. She gives him a glass of water from the nearby bed table.

CUT TO

PAUL. Swallowing eagerly.

CUT TO

ANNIE, watching him, sympathetically.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Your legs just sing grand opera when you
move, don't they?
(PAUL says nothing, but
his pain is clear)
It's not going to hurt forever, Paul, I
promise you.

PAUL
Will I be able to walk?

ANNIE
Of course you will. And your arm will
be fine, too. Your shoulder was
dislocated pretty badly. It was a
little stubborn, but it finally popped
back in.
(proudly)
But what I'm most proud of is the work I
did on those legs -- I don't think
there's a doctor who could have done any
better.
(And now suddenly she
flicks off the blanket,
uncovering his body)

CUT TO

PAUL, staring, stunned at the bottom half of his body as we

CUT TO

PAUL'S LEGS. From the knees down he resembles an Egyptian mummy -- she's splinted them with slim steel rods that look like the hacksawed remains of aluminum crutches and there's taping circling around.

From the knees up they're all swollen and throbbing and
horribly bruised and discolored. His legs have been
pulverized.

CUT TO

PAUL, lying back, stunned with disbelief.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

It's not nearly as bad as it looks. You have a compound fracture of the fibula in both legs, and the tibia in the left leg is fractured too. I could hear the bones moving, so it's best for your legs to remain immobile. And as soon as the roads open, we'll take you to a hospital

--

CUT TO

ANNIE. CLOSE UP.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

In the meantime, you've got a lot of recovering to do, and I consider it an honor that you'll do it in my home.

(HOLD on her ecstatic face. Then --)

CUT TO

MISERY'S PERFECT FACE. We're back in BELL'S office in New York. The office looks just the same, posters and many scripts all over. But he doesn't. He wears rumpled clothes, adjusts his horn-rimmed glasses.

He holds the phone and he is fidgety, insecure.

BELL

This is Bryce Bell calling from New York City, like to speak to the Sidewinder Chief of Police or the Sheriff.

MALE VOICE (OVER)

Which one do you want?

BELL

Whichever one's not busy.

CUT TO

A SMALL OFFICE IN SIDEWINDER with a view of the mountains.

A MARVELOUS-LOOKING MAN sits at a desk, by himself, holding the phone. In his 60's, he's still as bright, fast and sassy as he was half-a-lifetime ago. Never mind what his name is, everyone calls him BUSTER.

BUSTER

I'm pretty sure they're both not busy, Mr. Bell, since they're both me. I also happen to be president of the Policeman's Benefit Association, chairman of the Patrolman's retirement Fund, and if you need a good fishing guide, you could do a lot worse; call me Buster, everybody does, what can I do for you.

CUT TO

BELL in his office. He pushes the speakerphone, gets up, paces; he's very hesitant when he speaks about PAUL. Almost embarrassed.

BELL

I'm a literary agent, and I feel like a fool calling you, but I think one of my clients, Paul Sheldon, just might be in some kind of trouble.

BUSTER (OVER)

And just what kind of trouble do you think Mister Shelton might be in?

BELL

(correcting)

Sheldon. Paul Sheldon -- you know, the writer?

CUT TO

BUSTER. He rolls a penny across the back of one hand -- he's very good at it, doesn't even look while he does it.

BUSTER (OVER)

Oh sure. Mr. Sheldon. People sure like those Misery books.

BELL (OVER)

Yeah, well I'm sure you know how Paul's been going to the Sidewinder Lodge for years to finish his books.

BUSTER

Yeah, I understand he's been up here the last six weeks.

BELL

Not quite. I just called, and they said he checked out five days ago. Isn't that a little strange?

BUSTER

I don't know. Does he always phone you when he checks out of hotels?

CUT TO

BELL. Really embarrassed now.

BELL

No, no, of course not. It's just that when he's got a book coming out, he usually keeps in touch. So when I hadn't heard from him ...

BUSTER

You think he might be missing?

BELL

(shakes his head)

I hate that I made this call -- tell me I'm being silly.

CUT TO

BUSTER. He nods as a WOMAN enters, carrying his lunch. It's his wife, VIRGINIA. He nods to her as she begins putting his food on his desk.

BUSTER

Just a little over-protective, maybe --

(beat)

-- tell you what -- nothing's been reported out here --

(He puts Paul Sheldon's name with a ? on a 3 x 5 card)

-- but I'll just put his name through our system.

(He tacks the card to a bulletin board)

And if anything turns up, I'll call you right away.

CUT TO

BELL. Smiles; a genuine sense of relief.

BELL

I appreciate that. Thanks a lot.

CUT TO

BUSTER

BUSTER

G'bye, Mr. Bell.
(as he hangs up --)

VIRGINIA

We actually got a phone call, busy morning.

BUSTER

(smiles)
Work, work, work.
(gives her a hug)
Virginia? When was that last blizzard?

VIRGINIA

Four or five days ago. Why?

CUT TO

BUSTER. The penny flies across the back of his hand now. He doesn't look at it, stares instead out the window at the mountains.

BUSTER

(a beat)
... no reason ...
(HOLD ON BUSTER for a moment)

CUT TO

PAUL'S ROOM.

PAUL'S VOICE

(soft)
I guess it was kind of a miracle ... you finding me ...
(And now as ANNIE'S soft, sweet laughter is heard --)

ANNIE stands over him, finishing shaving him with a very sharp straight razor. She wears what we will come to know as her regular costume; plain wool skirts, grey cardigan sweaters.

ANNIE

... no, it wasn't a miracle at all ... in a way, I was following you.

PAUL

Following me?

CUT TO

ANNIE, concentrating on shaving him with great care. She has wonderful, strong hands.

ANNIE

(explaining, normally)

Well, it wasn't any secret to me that you were staying at the Sidewinder, seeing as how I'm your number-one fan and all. Some nights I'd just tool on down there, sit outside and look up at the light in your room --

(gently moves his head back, exposing his neck; this next is said with total sincerity, almost awe)

-- and I'd try to imagine what was going on in the room of the world's greatest writer.

PAUL

-- say that last part again, I didn't quite hear ...

ANNIE

(smiles)

-- don't move now -- wouldn't want to hurt this neck --

(shaving away)

-- well, the other afternoon I was out for a spin and there you were, leaving the Lodge and I wondered why a literary genius would go for a drive when there was a big storm coming.

PAUL

... I didn't know it was going to be a big storm.

ANNIE

Lucky for you I did.

(pauses)

Lucky for me too. Because now you're alive and you can write more books. Oh, Paul, I've read everything of yours, but the Misery novels ...

CUT TO

ANNIE. CLOSE UP.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I know them all by heart, Paul. All six of them. I love them so.

CUT TO

PAUL, looking at her. There's something terribly touching about her now.

PAUL

You're very kind ...

ANNIE

And you're very brilliant, and you must be a good man or you could never have created such a wondrous, loving creature as Misery Chastain.

(runs her fingers over his cheek)

Like a baby.

(smiles)

All done.

(starts to dab away the last bits of soap)

Annie starts cleaning up.

PAUL

When do you think the phone lines'll be back up? I'd like to call call New York and let my agent know I'm breathing.

ANNIE

Of course. It shouldn't be too much longer.

(gently)

Once the roads are open, the lines'll be up in no time.

(suddenly almost embarrassed)

Could I ask you a favor?

(PAUL nods)

I noticed in your case there was a new Paul Sheldon book and --

(hesitant)

and I wondered if maybe ...

(her voice trails off)

PAUL

You want to read it?

ANNIE
(quietly)
If you wouldn't mind.

PAUL
I have a hard and fast rule about who
can read my stuff at this early stage --
only my editor, my agent, and anyone who
saves me from freezing to death in a car
wreck.

ANNIE
(genuinely thrilled)
You'll never realize what a rare treat
you've given me.

CUT TO

PAUL. His eyes close briefly; he grimaces.

CUT TO

ANNIE, watching him, concerned. She glances at her watch.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Boy, it's like clockwork, the way your
pain comes -- I'll get you your Novril,
Paul -- I've just got to be sure you get
it every four hours on the dot. Forgive
me for prattling away and making you
feel all oogy.
(She turns, hurries out
of the room)

CUT TO

PAUL, watching her. She leaves the room but doesn't go far
outside.

ANNIE (CONT'D) (OVER)
What's your new book called?

PAUL
I don't have a title yet.

ANNIE (OVER)
What's it about?

PAUL
Why don't you read it and tell me what
you think it's about.

CUT TO

THE MANAGER'S OFFICE AT THE SIDEWINDER LODGE. Small, neat, one window -- outside, snow covers all.

BUSTER AND LIBBY, THE MANAGER, are going over books and records. LIBBY is an old guy, walks with a cane.

LIBBY

Nothing unusual about Mr. Sheldon's leaving, Buster -- you can tell by the champagne.

BUSTER

Maybe you can, Libby.

LIBBY

No, see, he always ordered a bottle of Dom Perignon when he was ready to go. Then he'd pay up and be out the door.

BUSTER

No long-distance phone calls, special delivery mail, anything at all out of the ordinary?

LIBBY

(head shake)

I don't think Mr. Sheldon likes for things to be out of the ordinary. Considering who he was and all, famous and all, he didn't have airs -- drove the same car out from New York each time -- '65 Mustang -- said it helped him think. He was always a good guest, never made a noise, never bothered a soul. Sure hope nothing happened to him.

BUSTER

So do I...

LIBBY

I'll bet that old Mustang's pulling into New York right now.

BUSTER

I'm sure you're right.
(But you can tell he's
not sure at all as we --)

CUT TO

A SPOON FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH BEEF BARLEY SOUP.

CUT TO

PAUL'S ROOM. He lies in bed. Sun comes in the lone window.
ANNIE sits on the bed, a large bowl of soup in her hands,
feeding him.

ANNIE

(almost shy about this)
I know I'm only forty pages into your
book, but ...

(She stops, fills the
spoon up again)

PAUL

But what?

ANNIE

Nothing.

PAUL

No, what is it?

ANNIE

Oh, it's ridiculous, who am I to make a
criticism to someone like you?

PAUL

I can take it, go ahead.

ANNIE

Well, it's brilliantly written, but then
everything you write is brilliant.

PAUL

Pretty rough criticism so far.

ANNIE

(a burst)
The swearing, Paul
(beat)
There; I said it.

PAUL

The profanity bothers you?

ANNIE

It has no nobility!

PAUL

Well, these are slum kids, I was a slum
kid, everybody talks like that.

CUT TO

ANNIE. She holds the soup bowl in one hand, the
muddy-colored beef barley soup close to spilling.

ANNIE

They do not. What do you think I say
when I go to the feed store in town?

"Now, Tony, give me a bag of that effing
pigfeed and ten pounds of that bitchly
cow-corn" --

CUT TO

PAUL, bemused by this.

CUT TO

THE SOUP, almost spilling as she gets louder; suddenly,
she's agitated.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

-- and in the bank do I tell Mrs.
Bollinger, "Here's one big bastard of a
check, give me some of your Christing
money."

CUT TO

PAUL, almost laughing as a stream of soup hits the coverlet.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(seeing the spill,
suddenly upset)

There! Look there! See what
you made me do!

CUT TO

PAUL -- his smile disappears.

CUT TO

ANNIE, and she is just totally embarrassed, almost blushing.
She's almost like a schoolkid, and suddenly very appealing.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Oh, Paul, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I
have this terrible temper.

CUT TO

PAUL, as ANNIE watches him. He nods, but something else is
also clear -- his pain has him.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(upset)
Please, forgive me --
(reaches quickly into a
pocket, takes out Novril)
-- here --
(gives him the pills and
some water)
-- you're the last person in the world I
want to see suffer.

CUT TO

PAUL. He takes the pills, swallows them down deeply, lies
back.

CUT TO

ANNIE, and she makes the sweetest smile.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I love you, Paul.
(more embarrassed than
ever)
Your mind. Your creativity -- that's
all I meant ...
(And, flustered, she
turns away as we --)

CUT TO

A ROAD IN THE MOUNTAINS. Piles of snow all around but it's
been ploughed enough so it's driveable.

CUT TO

A CAR coming into view. Up ahead is the road sign we've
already seen: "Curved Road, Next 13 Miles."

CUT TO

INSIDE THE CAR. BUSTER AND HIS WIFE VIRGINIA, VIRGINIA is
driving while BUSTER intently studies the terrain. He
reaches for a large thermos, pours some coffee, offers it to
her. She shakes her head. He begins to sip it.

VIRGINIA

This sure is fun.
(She puts her hand on his
leg)

BUSTER
(removing it)
Virginia, when you're in this car,
you're not my wife, you're my deputy.

VIRGINIA
Well, this deputy would rather be home
under the covers with the Sheriff.

CUT TO

THE CAR as suddenly it goes into a little icy spin -- she
fights it back under control.

CUT TO

INSIDE THE CAR.

BUSTER (CONT'D)
(suddenly)
Stop -- stop right here.

VIRGINIA
What? What is it?

CUT TO

THE CAR, skidding, slowing, stopping. BOTH OF THEM get out
this time, go to the edge of the road. Mountains of snow.
Nothing much else visible. Then BUSTER points --

BUSTER
Look at that broken branch there --

CUT TO

VIRGINIA, seeing it, unconvinced.

VIRGINIA
Could be the weight of the snow.

BUSTER
Could be -- or a rotten branch or a
mountain lion could have landed on it.
Could be a lot of things.
(And he steps off the
road, starts down)

CUT TO

VIRGINIA, watching him, worried -- it's very slippery.

CUT TO

Rev. 10/24/89

24A.

BUSTER, graceful, in great shape, navigating down easily.

CUT TO

THE TREE the car ran into. BUSTER reaches it. Studies it.

CUT TO

VIRGINIA, staring out after him -- she can't see him because the drop is both too steep and covered with trees and mounds of snow.

VIRGINIA
Anything down there?

BUSTER'S VOICE (OVER)
Yeah. An enormous amount of snow.

CUT TO

BUSTER. He's moved away from the tree now, going toward where the Mustang is buried.

CUT TO

THE MOUND OF SNOW with the Mustang inside.

CUT TO

BUSTER, making his slow way closer to it, closer, staring around.

CUT TO

THE AREA. Nothing to be seen -- everything is covered with mountains of snow.

You could have a house down there and not be able to see it. Just glaring white.

CUT TO

BUSTER, angry, frustrated, turning around and around and

CUT TO

BUSTER from another angle, from behind the mound with the Mustang inside --

-- and out of his sight, glistening in the sun, a bit of the door protrudes. But, of course, BUSTER can't see it.

HOLD ON BUSTER, in a sour mood, staring around as the edge of the door continues to glisten ...

CUT TO

VIRGINIA on the road as BUSTER makes his way back up, still ticked.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
(they move to the car)
You really think Sheldon's out there?

BUSTER
Hope not -- if he is, he's dead. Let's
go to the newspaper office
(as they get in the
car --)

CUT TO

ANOTHER CAR DRIVING BY - it's Annie in her Jeep -- neither she nor Buster notice the other.

CUT TO

THE DRAWING OF MISERY CHASTAIN WE'VE SEEN ALREADY -- the low-cut peasant blouse, the impossibly inviting look on her face.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

PAUL, eyes fluttering awake to see the hardback copy of his novel, MISERY'S CHILD, in ANNIE's hands. She's never been more excited -

ANNIE
They had it at the store, Paul -- there was a whole batch of them there. As soon as I saw it, I slammed my money down. I think I got the first copy.

PAUL
-- then the roads are open --

ANNIE
The one to town is, but that's about it. I called the hospital and talked to the head orthopedic surgeon. I told him who you were and what had happened. He said as long as there's no infection, you're not in any danger, and as soon as the road to the hospital is open, they'll send an ambulance for you.

(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

They say that it should be cleared by tomorrow afternoon.

PAUL

The phones are working?

ANNIE

Well, mine's still out. But the ones in town were working just fine. I called that agent of yours and told him you were okay.

(soft now)

Oh Paul, I peeked at the very beginning ...

(looks at him)

... what a wonderful first page -- just to read the name Misery Chastain ...

PAUL

I have to call my kids. And my sister must be going nuts.

ANNIE

...it's like a visit from my oldest, dearest friend.

PAUL

I was supposed to stop and see her in Chicago five days ago.

ANNIE

The agent said he would tell everyone you were okay. But I'm afraid you'll have to wait till tomorrow if you want to speak to anyone yourself. Now try and get some rest.

She starts to leave, stops at the door.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(she looks at him now
with almost a look of
wonderment)
Oh, Paul, what a poet you are ...
(as she leaves)

DISSOLVE TO

PAUL, watching as she enters, moves to him carrying a tray.

ANNIE
I made you my speciality, scrambled eggs
a la Wilkes. And I'm on page 105.
(she hands him a Novril)

PAUL
(he takes them)
I guess that means it's okay.

ANNIE
No. No, it isn't, it's --
(halts)
-- oh pooh, I can't think of any words.
Would "great" be insulting?

PAUL
I can live with "great."
(he starts, with effort,
to eat)

ANNIE
No, it's not just "great," it's
perfect, a perfect, perfect thing.
(as she turns, goes)

CUT TO

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - MID-AFTERNOON

Annie is clearing Paul's tray. She hands him his Novril; he quickly swallows them.

ANNIE
I'm up to page 185. I always get sad
when I pass the halfway point. Will you
do me a favor? I'd love it if you would
autograph my copy. I already have your
autograph on a picture--I got it through
your fan club--but it would mean so much
to me to get it in person.
(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I know you're right-handed, so don't worry if it's not so legible. I'll cherish it anyway.

As Paul signs the book:

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I don't mean to pry, but I've read in two magazines now where you were seeing this model who does those disgusting jeans commercials. And I said it can't be true. Paul Sheldon would never waste his time with a trampy woman like that.

PAUL

Well, you can't believe everything you read in magazines.

ANNIE

I knew it. I knew it wasn't true. Boy, how do they get away with printing stuff like that?

PAUL

You'd be amazed at what some people will believe.

He finishes the autograph, hands the book back to her.

ANNIE

Thank you so much.

PAUL

My pleasure.

DISSOLVE TO

THE WINDOW. Late-afternoon sunlight.

CUT TO

THE DOOR. It opens and guess what -- a sow lumbers in.

CUT TO

PAUL, kind of stunned as the female pig skitters its way around the room, excited, confused, slipping and sliding.

CUT TO

ANNIE, all smiles and happiness, laughing in the doorway.

ANNIE

I thought it was time you two should meet. Paul, say hello to my favorite beast in all the world, my sow, Misery.

PAUL

Misery?

CUT TO

THE PIG, snorting around the room.

CUT TO

PAUL AND ANNIE, watching it.

ANNIE

Yes. I told you I was your number-one fan.

PAUL

I'm getting to believe you.

ANNIE

This farm was kind of dreary, what with just the few cows and chickens and me --
(happy)

But when I got Misery here, everything changed -- she just makes me smile so.

PAUL

She's a fine ... uh ... pig is what she is ...

ANNIE

(scooping up the pig,
holding it tight as she
stands by Paul)

I'm on page three-hundred now, Paul, and it's better than perfect -- it's divine. What's the ceiling that dago painted?

PAUL

The Sistine Chapel?

ANNIE

Yeah, that and Misery's Child -- those are the only two divine things ever in this world ...

CUT TO

PAUL, watching as the pig skitters out of the room with ANNIE in pursuit, happily imitating the pig.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Woink! Whoink! Whuh -- Whuh --
WHOINK!

CUT TO

PAUL staring after them -- what the hell was that? Now --

CUT TO

THE WINDOW. Dusk. ANNIE'S VOICE is heard softly.

ANNIE (OVER)

When my husband left me...I wasn't prepared, it wasn't an easy time...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

ANNIE, standing staring out the window, her back to the room. In bed, PAUL is dealing with a bedpan, peeing.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

For a while I thought I might go crazy.

PAUL

I know how that can be. My last wife left me too.

ANNIE

I don't know about you, but what I did to get through it was I dove into work -- days, nights -- night shifts can be lonely at a hospital. That was when I first found Misery. She made me so happy. She made me forget all my problems.

(she smiles now)

'Course, I suppose you had a little something to do with that too.

PAUL

(There is a peeing sound)

Yeah, well...

(He is embarrassed)

ANNIE

(She isn't)

I just kept reading them over and over. I know when I finish this one--and I've only got two chapters to go--I'll just turn right to the first page and start reading it again.

PAUL

(slightly embarrassed)

I'm...

ANNIE

Done?

(She turns, moves to the bed)

PAUL

Yeah, thanks.

ANNIE

No problem.

As she takes the bedpan --

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Don't get me wrong. I'm not against marriage per se. But it would take a pretty special guy to make me want to go down the aisle again.

PAUL

Well, it's not something you should enter into lightly.

ANNIE

It boils down to respect. People just don't respect the institution of marriage anymore. They have no sense of real commitment.

CUT TO

PAUL -- attempts a smile. There is not much he can say to this.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Well, how does tuna casserole sound for dinner?

PAUL

Sounds great.

ANNIE

Okey-doke.

With that, she exits.

CUT TO

THE WINDOW. Moonlight.

CUT TO

PAUL. He's been dozing but now his eyes flutter awake as we

CUT TO

THE DOOR. It opens and ANNIE enters, comes to his bedside.

CUT TO

PAUL. Hard to see. He squints up as we

CUT TO

ANNIE, CLOSE UP, her face is ashen pale, the cords in her neck stand out. One vein pulses uncontrollably in the center of her forehead. She brings her hands up to her face -- they're rock-like fists. They open, close, open, close --

ANNIE

You ... you ... you dirty bird.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
She can't be dead. MISERY CHASTAIN
CANNOT BE DEAD!

PAUL
Annie -- Annie, listen --

ANNIE
Oh -- oh, you dirty birdie -- how
could you? --

PAUL
-- Annie, in 1871, women often died in
childbirth, but her spirit is the
important thing and Misery's spirit is
still alive --

ANNIE
(screaming)
-- I don't want her spirit! I
want her!! And you murdered her!

PAUL
I didn't --

ANNIE
Then who did?

PAUL
(quieter)
No one -- she just died -- she slipped
away, that's all.

CUT TO

ANNIE, and again her fists are rocks and they're raised high
and they could come crashing down on his crippled form but
then at the last moment, she turns with a cry, picks up a
metal pitcher and starts repeatedly slamming it against the
wall, SCREAMING, "No, no, no, no!" over and over as she sets
to work.

CUT TO

PAUL, watching it, helpless to do anything but that--just watch--and finally

CUT TO

ANNIE, her back to PAUL. She stops, taking great gasping breaths. Then, finally, she turns, head on her chest like some powerful red-eyed bull, and wordlessly she advances across the room until she hovers right on top of him and he could be dead in a blink, you can tell that from her eyes.

ANNIE

(her voice surprisingly
soft at the start)

I thought you were good, Paul, but
you're not good, you're just another
lying old dirty birdie and I don't think
I better be around you for awhile. And
you can forget about using the phone,
and don't worry about any doctors coming
out here either --

(at the door, she turns)

-- you're not going to call anybody or
see anybody. Goodbye, Paul.

CUT TO

PAUL, watching as she closes the door behind her. Then, for the first time, the rattle of a key as she locks it.

CUT TO

THE WINDOW. Darkness. From beyond, the sound of a CAR STARTING UP, GUNNING away.

CUT TO

THE ROOM. PAUL lies still.

-- he takes a deep breath and then begins his greatest effort of all: to force his body out of the bed, to make it move.

He's still weak from what he's endured, but that's not the main thing: it's the pain. Any attempt at movement and his legs scream. He sags back, lies there still a moment.

Slowly he tries to maneuver his body off the bed. He rolls over onto his stomach, then tries to lower himself onto the floor by moving down head first. His good arm hits the floor, and he is able to hold himself up but, realizing there is no way to get out of bed without causing tremendous pain, he girds himself and flings himself out of bed and comes crashing to the floor. The pain is excruciating. After he regains his composure, he slowly crawls toward the door.

He reaches up and tries the handle. It is in fact locked. He awkwardly tries to slam up against the door, but it is much too painful and to no avail. He crawls over to the window. He pulls himself up to the sill and for the first time is able to look out.

We see WHAT HE SEES: He is way too far off the ground to risk jumping. He slumps back onto the floor.

DISSOLVE TO

PAUL IN CLOSE-UP - DAY

He is wrapped in the blanket from the bed. A tremor hits him -- he manages a few deep breaths -- as it passes --

PAUL (OVER)

World-famous drug addict Paul Sheldon says there's nothing like total withdrawal to get those red corpuscles flowing ...

Now, from him --

CUT TO

BUSTER'S OFFICE. He sits alone at his desk, staring at the Boulderado newspaper spread in front of him.

CUT TO

THE NEWSPAPER'S FRONT PAGE. In a prominent spot on the top is what is most likely a book-jacket photo of PAUL. Above the picture is the following: "HAVE YOU SEEN PAUL SHELDON?"

CUT TO

VIRGINIA, entering, carrying some files.

VIRGINIA

Here's a list of all Sheldon's credit charges. Nothing after the Sidwinder.
(a glance at his dour face -- she indicates the photo)
Anything at all?

CUT TO

BUSTER. His eyes flick up to her. An almost imperceptible shake of the head. HOLD for a moment, then --

CUT TO

PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

CUT TO

PAUL, lying on the floor by the side of the bed.

He looks dead. He eyes are half closed. Skin the color of snow. The withdrawal has ripped him apart. He has not eaten or drunk anything in almost two days.

His lips are chapped and dry and swollen. He makes occasional SOUNDS. He could be entering delerium. He is a devastated, wounded creature.

DISSOLVE TO

FACES

They are distorted, and they come into view but briefly, then change into the next distorted face. All kinds -- there is no order to them -- young, oriental, female, male, pretty, sad, black, not so pretty, happy, white, old -- what we HEAR is this:

"...you've changed my life..."

"...I'm your number one fan..."

"...I'm a really big fan of yours..."

"...I'm your biggest fan..."

"...Don't ever stop writing those Misery books..."

"...I've read all your books, but the Miserys...
well..."

"...I'm your number one fan..."

"...you've given me such pleasure..."

"...I feel like you're writing just for me..."

AND NOW, IT GETS KICKED UP IN SPEED AND ALL GOES FASTER,
MANY TIMES OVERLAPPING.

"...I love you...I'm your number one fan...
I'm your biggest fan...We love you...
number one...love you...biggest...
love you...number one...number one...
you poor dear thing..."

THIS LAST WAS SAID BY ANNIE, OUT OF FOCUS, AND FOR A MOMENT
SHE STAYS THAT WAY -- then suddenly --

CUT TO

THE ROOM AS IT SNAPS BACK INTO FOCUS -- it is the next
morning -- ANNIE is standing by the bed, holding a tray of
food.

-- she wears a dark blue dress and a hat with a sprig of flowers. Her eyes are bright and vivacious -- the fact is, this is the prettiest ANNIE WILKES has ever looked.

ANNIE

What are you doing on the floor?

PAUL

I need water.

ANNIE

(putting down the tray
and helping Paul back
into bed)

It's my fault. If I'd had a proper hospital bed, this never would have happened. There you go. Comfy? You must be so hungry.

PAUL

Water...

ANNIE

Annie understands. And she'll give you everything you want, but you must listen first. Sometimes my thinking is a little muddy, I accept that. It's why I couldn't remember all those things they were asking me about in Denver when they put me on the witness stand.

Now she turns, goes to the doorway, keeping on talking -- she is never out of sight.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

But this time I thought clearly. I asked God about you and God said, "I have spared him so you may show him the way."

PAUL

Annie, please.

ANNIE

I'll give you food and water and I'll give you your Novril too, but first there's something you must do.

And she is wheeling something toward his bed. It's a charcoal barbecue, the kind you use in summer for cooking hamburgers. She holds several items in her arms: a box of Diamond Blue Tip wooden matches, a can of lighter fluid. And most noticeably, Paul's manuscript.

CUT TO

PAUL, lying there. His eyes are half-shut.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(sing-song)

Suh-prize.

(He opens his eyes,
stares, confused)

Oh, how you must be hurting.

(By him now, she kisses
his cheek)

But not for much longer, Annie promises.

CUT TO

ANNIE AND PAUL. He watches, mute, as she takes off the grill, puts the manuscript into the barbecue itself where the charcoal goes, spritzes it with lighter fluid, hands him the box of kitchen matches. The grill is close enough to the bed for him to reach out and drop a match.

CUT TO

ANNIE, looking at him.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

You must rid the world of this filth,
Paul. I know this may not be an easy
thing for you, but it's for the best.

PAUL

You want me to burn my book?
(She nods)

ANNIE

It's the only way.

CUT TO

PAUL.

PAUL

Fine, it's no big deal, but I've gotta
tell you; you're not ridding the world
of anything -- my agent's made dozens of
copies. There's gonna be an auction on
this, and every publishing house in New
York is reading it now.

CUT TO

ANNIE, watching him.

ANNIE

(quietly)

Then light the match, Paul.

PAUL

No big deal.

ANNIE

So you've indicated. Do it.

CUT TO

THE MATCHES. PAUL'S hands are starting to tremble now. He can't do it.

ANNIE

I know this is the only copy, Paul. When you were twenty-four you wrote your first book and you didn't make a copy because you didn't think anybody would take it seriously. But they did. And ever since you've never made any copies because you're superstitious -- it's why you always come back to the Sidewinder Lodge. You told that story to Merv Griffin eleven years ago.

PAUL

This book never would have survived without you. When it gets to New York, there will be a big auction, and whatever it brings we can split. God knows you're entitled to it.

ANNIE re-enters with a dustpan and broom.

ANNIE

This place is just a shambles ---- what
if company came and found it looking
like this? Can't have that.

PAUL sits in silence.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I'll be out of your way before you know
it --

CUT TO

ANNIE, sweeping the floor, humming away. Finally PAUL lets
out a groaning sigh.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Di you say something?

CUT TO

PAUL - he just stares at her.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Guess not.

She turns and goes merrily out the door.

DISSOLVE TO

PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

PAUL lies in bed. He is too weak to move. He just lies
quietly. After a few beats, we hear strains of TV GAME SHOW
THEME MUSIC. These sounds are not suprising. PAUL has
heard them before.

CUT TO

INT. ANNIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

It is much smaller than Paul's and filled with religious
bric-a-brac, pictures of Paul Sheldon, and a TV on a
portable stand. Annie lies in bed, under the covers, with
an open bag of Cheetos resting on her stomach and a big
quart-sized plastic bottle of Coke on the nightstand. As
she munches away, she is heavily engrossed in her favorite
TV show, "The Love Connection."

As Chuck Woolery extracts the embarrassing details of a couple's romantic interlude, we

CUT TO

PAUL - faintly hearing the sounds of the TV.

DISSOLVE TO

PAUL'S ROOM - MORNING

The door opens and ANNIE enters, carrying a tray with breakfast on it.

CUT TO

PAUL - in a state of semi-consciousness, watching her.

CUT TO

ANNIE - she crosses to the window and flips up the shade, blasting PAUL with the morning sunlight. His eyes crack open.

ANNIE

Morning.

(She flips open the shade)

CUT TO

PAUL - lying there.

CUT TO

ANNIE - starts to exit. Just as she reaches the door,

PAUL
(very weakly)
Okay.

ANNIE
What?

PAUL
Okay.

CUT TO

ANNIE -- she wheels the barbecue into position, then hands him the matches, watches as he fumbles with them.

ANNIE
I'm so glad you decided to do the right thing.

CUT TO

PAUL -- his hands are trembling. He closes his eyes, takes a deep breath, opens his eyes, manages to strike a match and as it lights --

CUT TO

THE BARBECUE as PAUL'S hand appears, drops the match on the fluid-soaked manuscript. For a moment -- nothing --

-- and then, KA-BOOM, the goddam thing practically explodes and

CUT TO

PAUL, staring, dazed, and as the flames leap higher

CUT TO

ANNIE, suddenly scared and startled at the heat and the size of the flames and the full baking heat and

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(crying out)
Goodness!

CUT TO

THE BARBECUE. The sound is LOUDER as the flames leap up and now charred bits of paper begin floating upward and

CUT TO

ANNIE, watching, as more bits of paper rise --

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Goodness -- Goodness -- Oh, my
gracious --
(and she starts trying to
catch them and --)

CUT TO

A PIECE OF BURNING PAPER in midair, floating against the gauzy curtain, and for a moment it looks like the curtain will catch fire and

CUT TO

ANNIE, panicked, racing out of the room, going "Goodness, heavens to Betsy," and

CUT TO

THE BARBECUE, and what's left of the book and

CUT TO

PAUL, and he cannot take his eyes off the disaster and

CUT TO

ANNIE, hurrying back in, carrying a big bucket, slopping water as she lifts the bucket and

CUT TO

THE LAST of the manuscript as the bucket of water is tossed onto it -- there's HISSING and steam and as the steam clears it all looks now like a log in a brackish pond.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Well, isn't that an oogy mess?

Annie brings the tray of food over to the bed. She places it on PAUL's lap. He uses all his remaining strength to devour what's on the plate.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Eat slowly now. Don't want to make
yourself sick.

As she starts to wheel the barbecue out, suddenly there is a new and different SOUND as we

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

PAUL, head turning toward the window and on his face suddenly, you can see it in his eyes -- hope.

CUT TO

ANNIE, taking a step toward the window, stopping for a moment. For the first time, there is a worried look --

-- because the sound we're hearing is a motor. A HELICOPTER MOTOR.

And it's getting louder. ANNIE goes to the window now, looks toward the sky as we

CUT TO

A HELICOPTER flying along.

CUT TO

INSIDE THE HELICOPTER AS BUSTER AND A PILOT sit in the machine. BUSTER has a pair of binoculars looped around his neck, a map rumped in his lap.

BUSTER
(pointing out)
That the Steadman farm up there?
(The PILOT nods. BUSTER
points again)
Then that must be the Wilkes place.
(Another nod. The PILOT
points down -- BUSTER
stares through the
binoculars)

CUT TO

WHAT HE SEES. ANNIE's Jeep parked in front of her house.

CUT TO

INSIDE THE HELICOPTER.

BUSTER (CONT'D)
That's no '65 Mustang.
(shakes his head)
There's nothing else out this way --
circle on back.
(As the PILOT starts to
change direction --)

CUT TO

ANNIE at the window, watching, as the helicopter turns, starts off.

CUT TO

PAUL, listening as the MOTOR sound recedes. The hope that was in his eyes isn't there now.

CUT TO

ANNIE, she turns to look at him, smiles, wheels the barbecue out to the door and stops.

ANNIE

In a couple of hours, I can give you a little more. And by tonight you'll be ready for a nice chicken dinner.

She goes.

CUT TO

PAUL. He finishes eating. Then he notices two Novril on his tray. He picks them up, stares at them, then deliberately tucks them under his mattress.

CUT TO

THE REMNANTS OF A CHICKEN DINNER. ANNIE's hands come in to remove the tray.

ANNIE

Good?

PAUL nods. Annie hands him two Novril.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I do believe the winters are getting shorter and shorter every year. People say it has something to do with the ozone layer. What do you think?

PAUL

I don't know.

ANNIE

Yeah, well it's a theory. Anyway, see you in the morning.

She exits. PAUL once again takes the two Novril and hides them under the mattress.

CUT TO

THE WINDOW. Coming up to dawn.

CUT TO

THE DOOR slowly opening.

CUT TO

PAUL -- his eyes pop open.

CUT TO

ANNIE, and she's pushing something, and for a minute we think it might be a wheelchair and we realize, it is a wheelchair.

ANNIE

(coming to him)

Oh, clumsy me -- I didn't mean to wake you. But I think it's time for you to start moving around a bit.

(She pushes the wheelchair up to the bed)

Here, let me help you. I know your legs are going to feel like they're on fire, but only for a little.

(She maneuvers PAUL out of bed and into the chair)

Can you stand it?

(She hands him some Novril)

Here. You just sit tight, and I'll set everything up.

ANNIE exits. PAUL quickly shoves the Novril under the mattress.

PAUL

Set what up?

ANNIE (O.S.)

Your new studio -- after all, writers do need a place to work.

PAUL

Work? You mean, write? What in the world do you think I'd write?

ANNIE re-enters carrying an old-fashioned black manual typewriter.

ANNIE

Oh, but Paul --

(flushed)

-- I don't think, I know! -- Now that you've gotten rid of that nasty book, you can go back to doing what you're great at --

(beat)

-- I got this typewriter for you and everything -- you're going to write a new novel -- your greatest achievement ever - Misery's Return.

CUT TO

PAUL. Stunned. He just blinks up at her.

PAUL

(after a beat)

Misery's Return?

ANNIE

I know you didn't mean it when you killed her, and now you'll make it right.

CUT TO

ANNIE. CLOSE UP. In an almost religious fervor.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Yes. It will be a book in my honor. For saving your life and nursing you back to health. I'll be the first one to read it.

(beat)

Oh, Paul, you're going to make me the envy of the whole world ...

CUT TO

PAUL

You just expect me to whip something off, that it?

ANNIE

(nods)

I expect nothing less than your masterpiece.

PAUL

You do understand that this isn't the ordinary way books get written -- I mean, some people might actually consider this an oddball situation.

She rolls him over to a table she has set up by the window.

ANNIE

I have total confidence in your brilliance -- besides, the view will inspire you.

CUT TO

THE WINDOW as the wheelchair approaches it.

This is the first time PAUL has seen where he is. The sky is innocent of clouds. There's a green forest climbing the flank of the nearest mountain. A plot of open ground between the house and the mountain. A neat red barn where the livestock stay. A Jeep Cherokee, maybe five years old. A Fisher plow.

And no neighbors in sight, no sign of a road; this is a desolate place.

ANNIE (CONT'D) (OVER)
You just inhale that. I'll be right back.

CUT TO

PAUL, staring out the window.

PAUL
(calling out)
I guess you don't get bothered by neighbors much.

ANNIE (O.S.)
Don't worry about that. You'll have total solitude so you can concentrate on your work.

PAUL
Great.

CUT TO

ANNIE in the doorway, carrying reams of typing paper, pencils, pens and sharpener.

CUT TO

PAUL, watching her -- it's all kind of amazing. She hands him a box of typing paper.

ANNIE
I got you this expensive paper to type on.

CUT TO

PAUL, looking at the paper. It's Corrasable Bond. An idea hits him; he masks it as best he can and

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(putting the rest of the
paper on the table)

And I got a great deal on this
fifty-pound clunker -- on account of
it's missing an "n." I told the
saleslady "n" was one of the letters in
my favorite writer's name.

PAUL

It's two of the letters in my favorite
nurse's name, Annie.

ANNIE

(embarrassed -- blushing)

You - fooler.

(turns, grabs up pens,
pencils, paper)

Did I do good?

PAUL

(gesturing to the box of
paper)

You did great, except there's just one
little thing -- I can't work with this
paper. It's Corrasable Bond, it
smudges. Maybe you could go back into
town and bring me some white,
long-grained mimeo.

ANNIE

But mine cost the most so I don't see
how it can smudge.

PAUL

(quickly taking a sheet
of paper, making a pencil
mark on it)

C'mere, I'll show you.

(As she approaches, he
rubs his thumb over the
pencil mark --)

ANNIE

(looking at it)

Well, it does smudge after all, isn't
that fascinating.

PAUL

I thought you'd be interested. I'd like
you to be in on everything, Annie. Not
just the finished book, but how it's
written.

ANNIE

Oh, Paul, thank you for thinking of me.

CUT TO

ANNIE. Smiling, taking the box of bond paper back.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(She can be so charming
when she wants)

Anything else I can get while I'm in
town? Any other crucial requirements
that need satisfying? Would you like a
tiny tape recorder? Or maybe a handmade
set of writing slippers? Or -- or --

CUT TO

PAUL. Glances over to her, starts to smile, then suddenly
the smile disappears as we fast

CUT TO

ANNIE. CLOSE UP. And the charm is a million miles gone --

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(screaming)

Geee-yahhh!!!

(And as she lumbers
forward --)

CUT TO

PAUL, trying to move but he's trapped as we

CUT TO

ANNIE, as she comes toward him, arms raised high, holding
the ream of typing paper over her head,

CUT TO

PAUL'S KNEES as the paper comes crashing down on them and

CUT TO

PAUL, as he jackknives half out of the chair --

CUT TO

ANNIE, glowering over him, her hair messy from the activity.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I went out of my way, Paul. I tried to do everything right for you. And you show no appreciation.

(moving in on him)

Well, I'll get you your precious paper, but don't ever even think about crossing me again, Paul, or I'll really hurt you. And if you want to scream, be my guest, scream all you want because nobody ever comes here, they all think Annie Wilkes is crazy, even if they did find me innocent!

(And as she whirls,
goes --)

CUT TO

THE DOOR as she slams it shut, locks it, stomps off and

CUT TO

THE WINDOW. ANNIE, in a parka, can be seen storming out in the direction where her Cherokee was parked. She gets in and drives off.

CUT TO

PAUL. He heaves a sign, reaches out toward his tortured knees, then drops his head. He sees something.

CUT TO

A BOBBY PIN on the floor.

CUT TO

PAUL, as he moves toward the bobby pin. Or tries to. It's brutally hard for him. The chair moves half a foot. Stops. PAUL strains again.

Another half foot. Another.

CUT TO

THE BOBBY PIN. The wheelchair is beside it now. PAUL reaches down for it. Can't make it. Tries again. Can't. He takes a deep breath, forces himself to bend, ignores the pain. The bobby pin is in his hands.

CUT TO

PAUL, inserting the bobby pin into the keyhole, beginning to jimmy the lock.

CUT TO

THE LOCK -- it makes a SOUND -- something has caught.

CUT TO

PAUL, excited, trying to force the bobby pin and he's doing great --

-- until it slips from his hands, falls to the floor again.

PAUL
(furious)
Shit --

CUT TO

THE BOBBY PIN. PAUL reaches for it. The pain has him. He reaches again, involuntarily cries out. But he grabs it, clutches it tight.

CUT TO

THE KEYHOLE. PAUL is trying to jimmy the lock a second time.

No luck.

CUT TO

PAUL. In wild frustration.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You've written how to do this -- now
do it!

CUT TO

THE KEYHOLE. There is a loud CLICKING sound.

CUT TO

THE DOOR as PAUL turns the knob. The door opens a crack.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(amazed)
What do you know.

CUT TO

PAUL trying to get out of the room -- but it's a bitch because in order to get to the lock he had to move the wheelchair up to the door and in order to get out, he's got to maneuver it out of the way of the door and every turn of the chair's wheels is an effort for him. He works at it and works at it but his energy is failing him. He's pale. perspiring. Finally he succeeds, barely forces his way into the hall --

CUT TO

PAUL, in the hallway outside. He looks around for a phone. Doesn't see one. He wheels himself over to the front door, tries it. It's locked from the outside.

PAUL (CONT'D)
What a surprise.

He looks off into the living room, and...

CUT TO

THE TELEPHONE!

CUT TO

PAUL, wheeling into the living room. Dark red predominates. It's a musty room. Over the mantel, a forbidding photograph of an older woman who resembles ANNIE, clearly her mother. The windows have bars on them.

As PAUL begins to wheel as fast as he can toward the phone --

CUT TO

To no one's surprise this door is also locked. He lies on the floor regaining his strength. He surveys the room. Pots hang from above, dishes are visible in an open cabinet. Then there are the drawers and cupboards -- what's inside?

He crawls over to a bank of three drawers with cupboards underneath. He checks the cupboards and discovers bags of Cheetos, potato chips, Slim Jims, etc., nothing of value. Perfunctorily he stuffs a bunch of Slim Jims in his sweatpants.

He then reaches up and opens the first drawer a few inches. Using the drawer, he pulls himself up to see what's inside -- nothing but dishrags and doilies. He lowers himself to the floor -- closes the drawer -- then opens the middle drawer.

He repeats his chinning maneuver. This drawer is the jackpot -- big sharp kitchen knives. He attempts to grab one of the knives but since he only has the use of one good arm, it is virtually impossible to let go of the drawer and grab the knife before falling back to the floor. After a futile attempt which leaves him flat on the floor, he gathers his strength for another try.

This time his fingers graze a knife handle, but no cigar. What's more, as he falls back this time, his head crashes against the side of a butcher block table in the middle of the kitchen, knocking him unconscious.

DISSOLVE TO:

PAUL - stirring. His eyes open. He clears his head, looks up and sees the open drawer. Thinks for a second -- opens the first cupboard and grabs a handful of paper-wrapped straws.

He moves over to the drawer and, using the straws, tries to flip one of the knives out of the drawer. After a couple of unsuccessful attempts, he hears the SOUND OF A CAR pulling up to the house. Quickly he puts the straws back, closes the cupboard drawer, slams the drawer closed and starts crawling towards the wheelchair. We hear the SLAM of a car door.

CUT TO

ANNIE, walking to the back of the Jeep.

CUT TO

PAUL, getting into the wheelchair and

CUT TO

ANNIE, reaching back inside the car, lifting out several large rectangular boxes of paper.

CUT TO

PAUL, straightened out now, forcing the wheelchair to move and now we're into a race, a crazed life-and-death race and the cuts go fast --

- and ANNIE closes the door of the car --

- and PAUL is suddenly stuck, there's no traction on the rug --

- now ANNIE, purchases in hand, starts away from the car for the house --

-- and now PAUL is finally moving toward the bedroom.

-- and ANNIE is moving swiftly toward the front door.

-- She drops one of the packages of paper.

CUT TO

PAUL, still biting down, churning his arms with all the strength he has left.

CUT TO

PAUL'S ARMS, aching, starting to turn to rubber.

CUT TO

ANNIE'S FEET, walking quickly across the snow-covered area in front of the house and

CUT TO

THE BEDROOM DOOR as PAUL gets through it, shuts its, and attacks the bedroom lock with the bobby pin and

CUT TO

ANNIE, unlocking the front door of the house and

CUT TO

THE BEDROOM DOOR as it locks and

CUT TO

THE FRONT DOOR, unlocking and

CUT TO

ANNIE balancing the bundles under her chin as she jiggles the key out of the front door lock and

CUT TO

PAUL, soaked.

ANNIE (OVER)
(her voice from the
hallway, close and
growing closer)
Paul, I've got your paper.

PAUL wheels to exactly where he was when she left him. He at last allows himself a sigh of relief, looks down, gasps as we

CUT TO

PAUL'S waistband -- a half a dozen Slim Jims ominously stick out.

CUT TO

THE DOOR as the sound of a lock CLICKING is heard.

ANNIE (CONT'D) (OVER)
Just the kind you asked for.
(And as the door opens--)

CUT TO

PAUL as his hands quickly shove the Slim Jims into his sweatpants. As he pulls his hands out, one Slim Jim flies out and lands in his lap. As the door swings open, he quickly covers it with his hand.

CUT TO

ANNIE, in the doorway, a strange look on her face.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Paul, you're dripping with
perspiration -- what have you been
doing?

PAUL
The Jane Fonda workout. You know goddam
well what I've been doing -- I've
been sitting here suffering. I
need my pills.

ANNIE
(tenderly, as she starts
toward him)
Poor dear -- I'll just put you back in
bed and then I'll get them for you.

PAUL
(exploding -- a real
child's tantrum --)
I want my pills now --

ANNIE
It'll only take a second.

PAUL
I want my pain to go 'way, Annie -- make
it go 'way, please Annie --
(she looks at him -- you
can't tell if she's
buying it or not)
-- please --
(beat -- she's still
undecided)
-- oh please ...

CUT TO

ANNIE. She stares a moment more, then turns, starts for the door.

ANNIE
(upset)
It just breaks my heart to see you like
this --

CUT TO

PAUL, watching, and the instant she is out the door in the hallway, he stuffs the Slim Jim into his pants.

ANNIE (CONT'D) (OVER)
(coming closer)
I've done a lot of thinking on the
drive --

CUT TO

ANNIE, entering the room, the Novril in her hand. She is genuinely contrite.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
-- and now I'm absolutely convinced that
the main reason I've never been more
popular is because of my temper. You
must be so mad at me. The truth now.

She hands him the pills. And rolls him over to the bed.

PAUL

Okay, I'll admit I was for a minute there. But I learned a long time ago that it doesn't do any good to hold a grudge. Besides, who doesn't let off a little steam once in a while.

CUT TO

PAUL, swallows the pills as she picks him up from the chair, puts him gently down in bed.

ANNIE

My genius needs his beauty sleep before he writes.

She hands him a pad and pencil.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Here, in case you think of any ideas.

PAUL

Yeah, well I wouldn't expect too much.

ANNIE

Don't be silly. You'll be brilliant. Think of me as your inspiration.

CUT TO

THE DOORWAY as ANNIE starts to it.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I have faith in you ...

(beat)

... my darling ...

On that she turns -- for the first time, a coquettish look comes to her face.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Catch this --
(She throws him a kiss --
it's grotesque)
-- ummmmm-wahhhhh.

CUT TO

PAUL, summoning up all his courage, he mimes catching it, forces a smile on. She waves, closes the door.

HOLD ON PAUL. The smile dies. He reaches in and pulls the two Novril capsules out of his mouth. Now --

DISSOLVE TO

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Paul lies in bed listening to the strains of "The Love Connection," coming from upstairs. As Chuck Woolery drones on, Paul is intently involved in folding a piece of paper from his pad. He is making a container of some sort. He finishes, then reaches down and grabs the Novril capsules that he has been stashing under the mattress.

Carefully, he opens one and pours it into the palm of his hand. First he smells it -- no odor -- then he takes a tiny bit on a finger and tastes it -- no taste. Then, he takes his paper container and empties the contents of all the pills into it, then places it under the mattress.

Now, what to do with the empty capsules, He thinks for a second, then -- what the hell -- he swallows them.

CUT TO

BRIGHT MORNING SUN AND THE SHADOW OF A HELICOPTER

CUT TO

INSIDE THE HELICOPTER. BUSTER and PILOT flying along. BUSTER is all bundled up as he stares out, using the binoculars --

CUT TO

SOMETHING SHINY reflecting the sun.

HOLD AS IT ALMOST BLINDS US -- we're looking at the part of PAUL'S mustang that was revealed by the snow when BUSTER almost found the car.

BUSTER
(to Pilot)
Walter, we could be skipping lunch today.

CUT TO

CRASH SITE. PAUL's car being hoisted by chains from the ground and as it starts to rise up into the afternoon air --

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

THE AREA BY THE CAR -- BUSTER is there and a bunch of STATE POLICEMEN and various MEDIA PEOPLE are there -- BUSTER stands with the STATE POLICE CHIEF watching as the car is hoisted via derrick: the sound of the powerful MOTOR lifting the car is enormous and as the car keeps rising higher and higher and PEOPLE take pictures and stare and

CUT TO

THE STATE POLICE CHIEF is addressing maybe a dozen REPORTERS. It's very cold. BUSTER stands slightly away from the group.

STATE POLICE CHIEF
The presumption must now be that Paul Sheldon is dead. We know he somehow crawled out of his car. But we have been unable to locate his body in the vicinity of the crash. We also know if anyone had found him they would have taken him to an area hospital. His body is undoubtedly out there buried somewhere in the snow. We'll find him after the first thaw -- unless the animals have gotten to him first.

(beat)
I'll take questions.

After the first sentence, a very cold and very unhappy BUSTER leaves the gathering.

CUT TO

PAUL'S CAR as BUSTER studies it, especially the area by the driver's side where there are still scratches visible from ANNIE'S crowbar.

VIRGINIA moves to him now. They exchange a glance, start walking together toward their car.

CUT TO

THE CHIEF, surrounded -- people are asking questions, raising hands for attention, and as he answers them --

CUT TO

BUSTER and VIRGINIA, close together, walking towards their car.

VIRGINIA

You don't think he's dead at all.

BUSTER

He might well be. But not the way they say. He didn't crawl out of that car by himself. You saw those dents on the door -- someone pulled him out.

VIRGINIA

It was an old car -- those dents could have been there forever.

BUSTER

There's two kinds of people that drive around in old cars: the ones that can't afford new ones, and the ones who wouldn't give 'em up for anything in the world. That second bunch don't drive around with twenty-five-year-old dents.
(as they drive off)

CUT TO

THE TYPEWRITER. The window is visible behind it. From this angle, it almost seems to be staring at Paul, broken "n" and all. Paul tests his wounded arm. He's able to raise it a few inches, but that's it.

CUT TO

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW; ANNIE is visible heading for the barn. For a moment she stops, turns to look back.

ANNIE

(calling out)

Don't be nervous --

(beat)

-- just remember, I'll treasure whatever you do.

(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(Now, as she turns again,
moves quickly away --)

CUT TO

THE TYPEWRITER.

CUT TO

PAUL. He rolls in a piece of paper, types briefly.

CUT TO

WHAT HE'S WRITTEN AND IT'S THIS:

"Misery's Return."

by Paul Sheldo

for Annie Wilkes

CUT TO

PAUL. Studying the paper. He takes it out, starts to roll in a new sheet.

CUT TO

THE MACHINE as the new sheet is rolled in.

CUT TO

PAUL. Stares at the blank page. He takes a deep breath, glances outside, then back to the paper.

CUT TO

THE BLANK PAGE.

CUT TO

PAUL, and now there's a brief light behind his eyes and suddenly he types a burst, stares at what he's written.

CUT TO

THE PAPER and these words: "fuckfuckfuckfuckfuck."

CUT TO

PAUL. He closes his eyes briefly, mutters something, kind of nods, opens his eyes, grabs for another piece of paper, rolls it in and starts mechanically to type.

DISSOLVE TO

A NEW PIECE OF PAPER with the words "Chapter Two" and a half paragraph of writing as we

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

PAUL WORKING in his room -- ANNIE stands alongside, the first pages of manuscript in her hands. It's later in the afternoon.

ANNIE

No, sorry, this is all wrong, you'll have to do it over again.

PAUL
(totally stunned)
What?

ANNIE
Paul, it's not worthy of you. Throw it
all out except for the part of naming
that gravedigger after me, you can leave
that in.

PAUL
I really value your criticism, but maybe
you're being a little hasty here --
there are some subtle nuances that you
may not have picked up on.

CUT TO

ANNIE dropping to her knees beside him -- she's suddenly
like a small child.

ANNIE
Oh, Paul, what you've written just isn't
fair.

PAUL
-- not fair? --

ANNIE
-- that's right -- when I was growing up
in Bakersfield my favorite thing in all
the world was to go to the movies on
Saturday afternoons for the chapter
plays --

PAUL
(It just comes out)
-- cliff-hangers --

ANNIE
(suddenly angry)
I know that, Mister Man -- they also
call them serials, I'm not stupid, you
know --

(And she's a child again)
(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

-- Anyway, my favorite was Rocket Man . . . and once it was a no-brakes chapter, the bad guys stuck him in a car on a mountain road and knocked him out and welded the doors shut and tore out the brakes and started him to his death and he woke up and tried to steer and tried to get out, but the car went off a cliff before he could escape and it crashed and burned and I was so upset and excited and the next week you better believe I was first in line and they always start with the end of the last week and there was Rocket Man trying to get out and here came the cliff and just before the car went off he jumped free and all the kids cheered --

(standing up now)

-- but I didn't cheer, I stood right up and started shouting, "This isn't what happened last week -- have you all got amnesia? -- they just cheated us -- this wasn't fair"

-- "

ANNIE. CLOSE UP. Still in her childhood reverie. Shouting:

ANNIE (CONT'D)

"He didn't get out of the cockadoodie car!"

CUT TO

PAUL, staring at her as she realizes she's been caught up. She almost blushes, speaks quietly:

PAUL

They always cheated like that in cliff --

(stops himself)

-- chapter plays.

ANNIE

But not you. Not with my Misery. Remember, Ian did ride for Dr. Cleary at the end of the last book, but his horse fell jumping that fence and Ian broke his shoulder and his ribs and lay there all night in the ditch so he never reached the doctor so there couldn't have been any "experimental blood transfusion" that saved her life.

(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Misery was buried in the ground at the end, Paul, so you'll have to start there.

(As she goes --)

CUT TO

PAUL, slumped, staring balefully at the typewriter. Dusk now.

DISSOLVE TO

PAUL'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Paul is at the table. He takes the Novril off his breakfast tray, wheels over to the bed, takes the paper packet from under the mattress and starts to empty the pills into it. He hears FOOTSTEPS coming down the hall. He smoothly replaces the packet, pops the empties into his mouth and wheels back to the table. A pause -- ANNIE enters to remove the tray.

ANNIE

What's the matter, Paul? You haven't written a word.

PAUL

I can't write this shit anymore.

ANNIE

Don't be silly. Of course you can.

PAUL

I'm telling you, I can't.

ANNIE

-- you can -- you have the "gotta" -

PAUL

The what?

ANNIE

The "gotta." You talked about it in Playboy magazine. Remember, you said there's a million things you can't do in this world: you can't hit a curve ball, you can't fix a leaky faucet or make a marriage work -- but there's one thing you always have and that's the power of the "gotta."

(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

You talked about how you can make a woman say, "I know he'll be here any minute and he'll be furious if I'm not dressed yet, but I've 'gotta' see how this chapter comes out." You said you can make a newlywed say, "I know she's waiting in bed for me, but I've 'gotta' see how this ends--" "I 'gotta' know will she live," "I 'gotta' know will he catch the killer who murdered his father--"

(beat)

You said you can make it so they gotta turn the page. You said it. I don't usually buy that magazine. I only got it 'cause they were interviewing you.

CUT TO

PAUL. CLOSE UP. BLINKING.

PAUL

(quietly)

What about a bee...?

ANNIE

What?

PAUL

Nothing.

CUT TO

THE KEYBOARD as the piece of paper slides in and the keys start to move. ANNIE stands there for a moment, then kind of backs out of the room.

DISSOLVE TO

THE WINDOW. It's a different time of day.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

PAUL in the wheelchair watching as ANNIE finishes reading.

PAUL

Well, is it fair? Shall I go on?

ANNIE

I'll kill you if you don't.

(Now, as she impulsively
kisses him on the
cheek --)

Oh, Paul, when Ian realized that the
reason they'd buried Misery alive was
because the bee sting had put her in
that temporary coma --

CUT TO

ANNIE, in a fervor.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

-- and when Gravedigger Wilkes remembered how thirty years earlier, the same thing had happened to Lady Evelyn-Hyde --

(hands clasped)

-- and then old Dr. Cleary deduced that Misery must be Lady Evelyn-Hyde's long-lost daughter because of the rarity of deadly bee-stings -- my heart just leapt.

CUT TO

PAUL, watching her. It's as if he had nothing to do with anything she's read as she goes on.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(grabbing PAUL)

I've known from the very first book that Misery had to be born of nobility and I was right! --

PAUL

(mumbling to himself)

That's interesting, since I didn't know it till this afternoon.

ANNIE

What?

PAUL

I'm glad you like it.

CUT TO

THE TWO OF THEM; she touches the pages as if they were gold, rubbing gently with the tips of her fingers.

ANNIE

Like it? I love it. Oh, Paul, can I read each chapter when you finish? I can fill in the "n"s.

(PAUL nods, and she's off again)

Will she be her old self now that Ian has dug her out, or will she have amnesia? --

PAUL

-- have to wait.

ANNIE

Will she still love him with that special perfect love?

PAUL

Have to wait.

ANNIE

(pleading)

Not even a hint?

(PAUL shakes his head)

CUT TO

ANNIE, spinning around the room like a happy child.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I'm so happy she's alive -- it's so romantic -- this whole house is going to be filled with romance -- I'm going to put on my Liberace records --

(stops, looks at PAUL)

-- you do like Liberace, don't you?

PAUL

(quickly)

Whenever he played Radio City, guess who was right there in the front row?

ANNIE

I'm going to play my records for you all day long -- to inspire you -- he's my all-time favorite --

(And with that, she starts to leave)

PAUL

Annie?

(She stops at the door)

Would you have dinner with me tonight?

She can't speak.

PAUL (CONT'D)

To celebrate Misery's return. I couldn't have done it without you.

ANNIE

Oh, Paul. It would be an honor.

ANNIE, dashes excitedly out of the room.

PAUL

(He listens in quiet
agony as in a moment the
sound of Liberace playing
"TAMMY" with orchestra
and chorus booms in from
beyond the door. Then
very quietly)

Jesus Christ.

CUT TO

INT. BUSTER'S OFFICE - DUSK

VIRGINIA is on the phone.

VIRGINIA

(into phone)

No, he's not here. I don't know where
he went. He never tells me anything
anymore. He's probably out having an
affair somewhere. Wait a minute. I
think I hear him coming.

BUSTER enters carrying a bagful of books.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

(to BUSTER)

It's Jim Taylor. He wants to know who
you've been having an affair with.

BUSTER puts the bag down, shoots VIRGINIA a look and grabs
the phone. VIRGINIA looks in the bag.

BUSTER

Hey, Jim, what's doing? Uh-huh...
uh-huh... Jim, we've been over this.
If you're gonna have benches in front of
your store, people are gonna sit on
them. Yeah, I don't like him either,
but every citizen has his constitutional
right to rest his dogs. I'm sorry.
Bye.

VIRGINIA

(looking through the
books, all paperback
Misery novels)

Well, whoever she is, she sure likes to
read a lot.

BUSTER

Virginia, I'm flattered you think I got that much energy. I just figured if I can't find Paul Sheldon, at least I can find out what he wrote about.

VIRGINIA

What do you expect to find--a story about a guy who drove his car off a cliff in a snowstorm?

BUSTER

It's that kind of sarcasm that's given our marriage real spice.

CUT TO

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

PAUL is sitting at a table that Annie has set up with her best china and silverware. It is as romantic as Annie Wilkes gets. ANNIE enters, carrying a basket of rolls. She sits and serves Paul.

ANNIE

I hope you like it.

PAUL

It looks wonderful.

ANNIE

It's nothing fancy.

PAUL

Sometimes the simplest meals can be the best.

They eat in awkward silence. Finally:

PAUL (CONT'D)

This is really very good. I've never had meatloaf this good.

ANNIE

My secret is I only use fresh tomatoes, never canned. And to give it a livelier flavor, I mix in some Spam with the ground beef.

PAUL

Oh.

(pause)

It's good.

After another pause:

PAUL (CONT'D)

Annie, I think we should have a toast.

ANNIE

A toast?

PAUL

Yes, to Misery. Can I pour you some wine?

ANNIE

Oh, yes, thank you.

PAUL pours two glasses of Gallo wine, then raises his glass.

PAUL

Wait, let's do this right. Do you have any candles?

ANNIE

Oh, I don't know. I think so. I'll go look.

She exits into the kitchen. PAUL quickly pulls something out of his pants--it's the packet filled with Novril powder. He empties it into her glass of wine, stuffs the empty packet back into his pants, talking the whole time:

PAUL

I really like the way you've done this room.

ANNIE (O.S.)

Thank you, but it's just things I picked up over the years.

PAUL

Well, it all came together quite nicely.

ANNIE

Well thank you.

PAUL

If you can't find any, it's okay. I just thought it might be nice.

ANNIE re-enters with two candles.

ANNIE

Are you kidding? If anyone ever told me that one day I'd be having a candlelit dinner with Paul Sheldon in my own house, I woulda checked both legs to see which one was being pulled.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Will these do?

PAUL

They're perfect.

She places the candles on the table. With a slight tremor in her hand, she lights the candles. PAUL raises his glass.

PAUL

To Misery and to Annie Wilkes, who
brought her back to life.

ANNIE raises her glass.

ANNIE

Oh, Paul, every time I think about it, I
get goosebumps.

They clink glasses. She goes to drink, then stops.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(trembling as she speaks)

The very thought that I could have
anything to do with Misery fills me with
such joy. In my whole life I've never
been this happy.

She starts to drink again, but her emotions have gotten the
best of her. Her hand shakes, and before she can take a
sip, the glass slides out of her hand and spills on the
table.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(wiping up the spilled
wine with her napkin)

Oh, God, what have I done? I'm so
sorry, Paul. I ruined your beautiful
toast. Will you ever forgive me? Here,
let me pour another one.

(She does)

Can we pretend this never happened? To
Misery?

PAUL

To Misery.

So they drink their wine.

CUT TO

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

The snow, although still present, has melted somewhat.

CUT TO

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - DAY

PAUL is at the typewriter. The manuscript has grown. He
finishes a page. Before he removes it from the typewriter,
he takes his injured arm out of the sling, flexes it.

It is more mobile than before. Then, testing his strength, he uses his arm to remove the page and place it on the pile.

Then he hears FOOTSTEPS coming down the hallway. Quickly, he puts his arm back in the sling and starts to place another piece of paper in the typewriter as ANNIE enters, holding some of the manuscript.

ANNIE

Paul, this is the best Misery you've ever written.

PAUL

I think you're right.

ANNIE

Tell me, the stranger staying at the inn--he's someone from Misrey's past. Am I right?

PAUL

(handing her new pages)
You'll find out.

ANNIE

This is so exciting.

She scurries out. Once he is confident she is gone, he takes his arm out of the sling and tries to lift the typewriter. It's a struggle, but he manages one lift. As he places it down,

CUT TO

INT. BUSTER'S DEN - NIGHT

BUSTER is at home, seated in an easy chair next to the fireplace, reading a Misery novel. It is RAINING outside. VIRGINIA enters with cocoa. She places a mug down next to Buster and sits on the sofa with hers.

VIRGINIA

Find anything?

BUSTER

I'm afraid Misery's got a real problem on her hands. Seems her true love--fella named Windthorne--has just discovered he is in fact royalty and cannot marry a commoner like herself. Looks like we're headed for a scandal.

CUT TO

OUTSIDE. Lightning! Giant deep rolls of THUNDER as RAIN begins --

CUT TO

TYPEWRITER being lifted out of frame, then back in, then out again.

CUT TO

PAUL'S ROOM. NIGHT. The pile of manuscript has doubled. Maybe two hundred pages. PAUL, with some effort, is pumping the typewriter up and down. Finally he places it back down and puts his arm back in the sling.

CUT TO

PAUL. Looking outside, briefly.

CUT TO

THE RAIN. Worse. The SOUND hits the roof of the house, hits the window.

CUT TO

ANNIE, lumbering in -- she's never looked like this: She's wearing her slippers and her pink quilted housecoat. Her eyes are without life. Her hair, loose and straggly, hangs around her face. Slowly, like a robot, she goes to PAUL who looks silently up at her.

ANNIE

Here's your pills.

(She drops them in his lap)

CUT TO

PAUL as the pills hit his chest, bounce into his lap.

PAUL

Annie, what is it?

ANNIE

(half turns away, turns back, gestures outside)

The rain ... sometimes it gives me the blues ...

CUT TO

ANNIE. CLOSE UP. And suddenly it's as if she's been turned off, gone lifeless.

CUT TO

PAUL, staring at her. No sound but the rain.

CUT TO

ANNIE, seen straight on. No light in her eyes.

She idly raises her hand to her mouth and pinches her lower lip between her thumb and first finger.

PAUL

Annie, are you okay?

As she turns her head to PAUL, we see that the pinching has caused her lip to bleed. She doesn't seem to notice, so blood runs down her chin. She slowly reaches into the pocket of her bathrobe and pulls out a 38 Special and points it at PAUL.

ANNIE

I have this gun, and sometimes I think about using it, but if I did something to you, that would be the end of Misery. Then I would have to do something to myself. Misery. That's all that's keeping us alive. I have to go away now.

Robot-like, she crosses to the door and leaves. As she closes and locks the door --

CUT TO

PAUL -- stunned, listening, waiting --

-- there is the sound of the front door closing --

-- then footsteps on the outside walk --

-- the sound of a car door opening and slamming shut.

Now comes the GUNNING of the motor.

CUT TO

THE WINDOW as ANNIE drives by, hunched over the wheel. The MOTOR sound grows fainter, faint --

CUT TO

INT. BUSTER AND VIRGINIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BUSTER and VIRGINIA are lying in bed. BUSTER is reading yet another Misery novel, Misery's Trial. Virginia is also reading.

BUSTER

"There is a justice higher than that of man. I was judged by Him."

VIRGINIA

What?

BUSTER

Misery was just acquitted.

VIRGINIA

That's nice.

BUSTER

(mutters under his
breath)

"There is a justice higher than that of man--I was judged by Him."

CUT TO

A KITCHEN DRAWER BEING PULLED OPEN -- it's filled with knives.

CUT TO

PAUL, who pulls himself up with his good arm and reaches in with the other and grabs a knife. It has a thin, sharp blade, a fat handle. It's lethal looking.

CUT TO

PAUL, holding the knife in his hand. He closes the drawer.

CUT TO

PAUL, wheeling his way into the study. Dark red still predominates --

-- but now the room is a zoo. There are dirty dishes stacked all around, and remnants of all kinds of food, mostly sweet things. Plates with most of a cake devoured, ice cream containers on the floor, empty two-liter bottles of Coke, bowls and plates but no cutlery, drying drips and splashes on the couch and on the rug.

CUT TO

A COFFEE TABLE with a book on it. It's entitled Memory Lane. It's a large scrapbook. Next to which is a copy of Newsweek, a roll of Scotch Tape and a pair of scissors.

CUT TO

PAUL, opening the book, which is as big as a folio Shakespeare play and as thick as a family Bible. The RAIN, which has been going on continually while he's been out, shows no signs of letting up. The THUNDER is as loud as ever.

CUT TO

THE FIRST PAGE OF THE BOOK as PAUL opens it. It's a newspaper clipping as is almost all of what follows. A small article: simply a birth announcement for Anne Marie Wilkes.

PAUL turns the page. This headline reads: "Bakersfield Accountant Carl Wilkes Dies in Freak Fall."

"USC Nursing Student Dies in Freak Fall." That's the headline on the next page.

Now: "Miss Wilkes is Nursing School Honors Graduate."

PAUL turns the page.

Manchester, New Hampshire, Union Leader: "Ernest Gonyar, 79, Dies After Long Illness."

Now that phrase seems to be what catches our eye -- "after long illness" is from the next article. "Long illness" from the one after that. Then, on the next page, a variation: "Short Illness."

PAUL, reading the short piece. It devastates him. He takes a breath, begins to put the book back precisely where he found it.

CUT TO

PAUL, steering his wheelchair towards the front door. He tries to position himself for a surprise attack of Annie, but he can't find a way to get close enough. The wheelchair is too cumbersome. He looks around and decides to head back to his room.

Unlike the front door, the door to his room opens in such a way as to give him good access to Annie, should she open it. He sits, knife in his lap, and waits.

DISSOLVE TO

PAUL, hours later -- the rain has stopped -- trying to stay awake. After a few beats, he hears something. It's the sound of a CAR PULLING UP. HEADLIGHTS can be seen flashing through the window. PAUL grips the knife. The sound of a CAR DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING, then FOOTSTEPS.

As the FRONT DOOR OPENS, PAUL girds himself for attack. The FRONT DOOR CLOSES, then a couple of FOOTSTEPS. Then silence. PAUL raises the knife into position. Then the FOOTSTEPS continue down the hall and up the stairs.

After a beat, we hear the TELEVISION. Someone is explaining how you can buy millions of dollars of prime real estate with no money down.

PAUL, defeated, wheels himself over to the bed, slips the knife under the mattress, and pulls himself onto the bed.

Lying on his back, he practices pulling the knife out from under the mattress almost like a quick draw. As the TV DRONES ON, PAUL lies staring up at the ceiling.

DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE-UP OF PAUL - eyes closed. The sound of RAIN is present again. There is a loud THUNDERCLAP which causes PAUL to stir and open his eyes.

He turns his head and another CLAP OF THUNDER is heard, LIGHTNING flashes and reveals ANNIE standing over his bed.

Before he can react, she jabs a needle into his arm, pulls it out and starts out of the room. PAUL tries to raise himself, but the power of the drug causes him to collapse, unconscious.

CUT TO

THE ROOM. EARLY MORNING. It's stopped raining, PAUL lies asleep. Now, surprisingly, we hear a VOICE we've never heard in the movie before -- loud -- for an instant we don't recognize the voice, then we do: It's LIBERACE talking to his audience on a record in his horrible nasal Milwaukee accent, going, "Thank you, thank you, what a wonderful thing it is for me to be back with you in Paris ..." PAUL stirs and awakens to discover that he is strapped to his bed. He can move his arms, but that's it.

CUT TO

ANNIE, is standing in the room, and she looks very together; her eyes are bright. Too bright. Way too bright.

She comes to the foot of his bed.

CUT TO

PAUL, groggy from being drugged, tries to clear the cobwebs.

ANNIE

When you first came here, I only loved
the writer part of Paul Sheldon. But
I've come to realize ...

(beat -- shyly)

I love the rest of him too. As much as
Misery loves Ian.

(beat)

I know you don't love me yet -- don't
say you do -- I mean you're a beautiful,
brilliant, famous man of the world; and
I'm ...

(sad)

... not a movie star type -- face it,
Paul, I am not every man's cup of tea --

ANNIE (CONT'D)

You'll never know the fear of losing someone like you if you're someone like me.

PAUL

Why would you lose me?

ANNIE

Your legs are getting better. Soon you'll be able to walk. What if you tried to get out of here when I was gone? --

PAUL

Why would I try to get out?

ANNIE

I don't know.

PAUL

I wouldn't.

ANNIE

(There is a pause -- now,
voice soft)

Paul, I know you've been out.

PAUL

I haven't.

Annie doesn't respond.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(right hand raised)

I haven't. I swear on my mother's grave.

ANNIE

In the first place, your mother's still alive, she lives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and in the second place, my little ceramic penguin in the living room always faces due south.

PAUL

I don't know what you're talking about.

CUT TO

ANNIE.

ANNIE

Paul.

CUT TO

PAUL, looking up at her -- he is totally honest and sincere. As he talks, his hand surreptitiously begins moving toward the mattress edge.

PAUL

I haven't been out. How could I get out? You lock the door every time you leave. Besides, I have no reason to get out.

CUT TO

ANNIE, as she brings the fat handled knife out of her skirt pocket, suddenly fires it at the wall and

CUT TO

THE WALL AND THE KNIFE sticking there, quivering.

CUT TO

ANNIE

Don't bother looking for it, it's sticking in the wall. I know you've been out twice, Paul. I saw the smudges you left in the doorway. At first, I couldn't figure out how you did it, but last night I found your key.

(She holds up the bobby
pin)

I also realize I left my memory books out, so I'm sure you know about the long illnesses. But you see, Paul, it's all okay.

And now a THUMP comes from the foot of the bed. Something is out of sight.

CUT TO

PAUL. Staring at her; waiting.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Last night it came so clear. Paul, do you know about the early days at the Kimberly Diamond Mine? Do you know what they did to the native workers who stole diamonds? Don't worry, they didn't kill them.

She picks up a 16-inch piece of 4 x 4 wood and wedges it firmly between his legs, just above the ankles.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

That would be like junking a Mercedes just because it had a broken spring -- no, if they caught them they had to make sure they could go on working, but they also had to make sure they could never run away. The operation was called hobbling, Paul.

CUT TO

ANNIE, as she walks slowly back to the foot of the bed.

ANNIE
I've figured how you'll never run
away --

And with that she reaches down out of sight and comes up holding a sledgehammer.

CUT TO

PAUL.

PAUL
I never had any intention of running
away.

CUT TO

ANNIE, making the 4 x 4 secure, adjusting PAUL's feet.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I admit that I've been out, but I wasn't
planning to run away.

ANNIE
-- now don't fuss --
(And a vacant look is
coming to her face
now --)

CUT TO

PAUL
I like it here.

CUT TO

ANNIE positions herself to the side of his right ankle.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I want what you want. Just the two of us, together --

ANNIE

Shh, darling, trust me --
(taking aim at his ankle)

PAUL

-- me writing and you taking care of me.

ANNIE

It's for the best.

She takes the sledgehammer back.

PAUL

Annie, for God's sake, please.

As ANNIE swings, the sledgehammer makes contact with the ankle. It breaks with a sharp CRACK.

CUT TO

PAUL, CLOSE UP, shrieking.

CUT TO

ANNIE, moving to the other side of the bed.

ANNIE

Almost done, just one more.

And as she breaks the other ankle, PAUL shrieks ever louder.

CUT TO

ANNIE. CLOSE UP.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

God, I love you ...

CUT TO

PAUL'S FACE. He is beyond agony.

FADE TO BLACK.

For a long moment, nothing.

Then ... a FAINT SOUND. After a moment, it begins to come more intrusive and we can tell what it is: a car horn HONKING.

FADE IN ON

THE SMALL TOWN OF SIDEWINDER AND ANNIE in her Cherokee, HONKING for another car to get a move on.

SIDEWINDER is one of those postcard towns that dot the Rockies.

CUT TO

A HAND AND A COIN MOVING ACROSS IT, from finger to finger.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BUSTER, sitting by the front window of his office reading The Rocky Mountain News.

He watches idly as ANNIE yells out the window to the car in front of her. THE DRIVER of the car yells back. ANNIE yells louder. THE DRIVER guns off and ANNIE pulls into the parking space next to the General Store.

CUT TO

ANNIE, getting out, shaking a fist after the other car, calling out, "You poop!" She glances around the street, sees BUSTER, takes no notice, enters the store.

CUT TO

BUSTER, staring after her. Now he glances at this paper. Now he lifts his eyes again. He continues to stare as we

CUT TO

VIRGINIA, in his office, tidying desk. BUSTER enters, looks angry.

BUSTER
Just leave it, all right?

VIRGINIA

Oh, I like that tone.

BUSTER

How many times do I have to tell you--I
have a system here.

(rooting through a pile
of papers)

Where the hell is that thing?

VIRGINIA

What thing?

BUSTER

That thing.

(finding what he's
looking for, a 3x5 card)

Here it is. Right where it's supposed
to be.

VIRGINIA

What is it?

BUSTER

I'm not sure. Maybe nothing.

VIRGINIA

It's good you found it.

BUSTER

There's that spice again.

As Buster leaves, Virginia goes back to tidying his desk.

CUT TO

A LARGE LIBRARY as BUSTER leaves his car, hurries inside
and

CUT TO

LIBRARY STACKS. BUSTER, wearing bifocals, sits pouring over
bound volumes of The Rocky Mountain News.

CUT TO

BUSTER, frustrated, puts one set of volumes down, picks up
another, starts through it as we

CUT TO

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS as the pages turn.

CUT TO

BUSTER, returning to his desk in the stacks with additional volumes.

CUT TO

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS as the pages turn --

-- only now they stop turning.

CUT TO

BUSTER, tense, adjusting his bifocals.

CUT TO

A SERIES OF HEADLINES pertaining to Annie Wilkes' murder trial.

CUT TO

A HEADLINE which reads, "NURSE ANNIE WILKES ACQUITTED."
BUSTER scans the ARTICLE: "After weeks of deliberation in the Wilkes murder trial..."

Under a PICTURE OF ANNIE leaving the courthouse, we see a CAPTION: "Wilkes told reporters on the courthouse steps, 'There is a higher justice than that of man; I was judged by Him.'"

CUT TO

BUSTER. He takes the 3x5 card out of his pocket.

CUT TO

THE CARD -- on it is printed the exact quote we just saw in the paper.

CUT TO

BUSTER, sitting there, staring at the quote.

BUSTER

Interesting.

(HOLD on his face,
then --)

CUT TO

PAUL, staring absently out the window. Both his ankles are set in splints.

CUT TO

ANNIE, carrying a bag of feed, comes into view. She slows, smiles waves --

ANNIE

Hi, Punkin.

CUT TO

PAUL, staring out at her.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Give us a smile?

(PAUL gives her the
finger. She laughs)

Such a kidder.

(As she exits our view--)

CUT TO

PAUL, lifting the typewriter and repeatedly raising it over his head, this time without any difficulty.

CUT TO

THE GENERAL STORE IN SIDEWINDER. Early afternoon. BUSTER enters. The place is empty. It's one of those wonderful spots that stocks pretty much everything in what seems like complete disarray. BUSTER goes to the coffee urn behind the counter, helps himself.

BUSTER

(to the guy who sits
behind the counter
nearby; these two have
known each other forever)

Hey, Pete.

PETE

Buster.

BUSTER

Answer me a couple things?

PETE

If I can.

BUSTER

Do you have any of those new Paul
Sheldon books?

PETE

We had a batch. Sold 'em all in three
days.

BUSTER

You wouldn't happen to remember if Miz
Wilkes bought one, would you?

PETE

Are you kidding? Every time that fella
writes a book, she makes me set aside
the first copy.

BUSTER opens the cash register, drops his coffeee money inside, closes the register.

BUSTER

Has she been buying any odd things lately?

PETE
 Miz Wilkes? Same old stuff.
 (beat)
 -- lest you call papers odd.

BUSTER
 Newspapers?

PETE
 (mimes typing)
 No, the typing kind.

CUT TO

BUSTER. CLOSE UP.

BUSTER
 Oh. That kind. Nothing odd about that.
 (He cannot hide his
 excitement now as we --)

CUT TO

ANNIE, entering PAUL'S room. He lies back in the wheelchair, eyes closed. From the start, his tone is different -- strong, he's in control.

ANNIE
 Paul, don't you think it's time for you to start writing again? It's been almost a week.

PAUL
 I don't know, it's weird, but a couple of broken bones hasn't done a whole lot for my creative juices. Get the fuck out of here.

ANNIE
 Don't talk like that to me.

PAUL'S VOICE
 (staring at her now)
 Why, what are you going to do?
 (spreading his arms wide)
 Kill me? Take your best shot.

ANNIE
 (taken aback)
 Why are you so mean, Mister-you'd-be-dead-in-the-snow-if-it-wasn't-for-me?

PAUL

Oh, no reason, you keep me prisoner, you starve me, you drive a sledgehammer into my ankles--

ANNIE

-- I'll drive a sledgehammer into your your man gland if you're not nicer --

PAUL

(He spreads his legs)
Be my guest.

ANNIE

(after a beat)
That's disgusting.

As she exits

He closes his eyes. HOLD ON PAUL. Then --

DISSOLVE TO

CUT TO

PAUL'S ROOM as ANNIE enters, carrying a glass of lemonade. Liberace is playing in the background. PAUL is asleep.

ANNIE

Paul, I think it's time we made up.
(sees he's asleep)
For when you wake up. It'll make you
feel all perky --

CUT TO

PAUL. Kind of shifts slightly but never wakes up.

CUT TO

ANNIE, standing there, watching.

ANNIE

Well, some of us have chores to do,
slugabed.

(And as she leaves the
glass of lemonade, goes
to the door --)

CUT TO

INT. ANNIE'S LIVING ROOM

ANNIE is changing a Liberace record on her stereo. She
turns up the volume.

CUT TO

PAUL -- asleep -- he stirs but remains sleeping.

CUT TO

ANNIE picking up a throw rug -- she crosses to the front
door, opens it, revealing BUSTER.

ANNIE

(gasping)

Oh, my!

BUSTER

Sorry, didn't mean to startle you. You
didn't give me a chance to knock.

ANNIE

(all charm)

I guess you can tell from my reaction
I'm not all that used to visitors out
here. What can I do for you?

BUSTER

I was just wondering if you happen to
know anything about Paul Sheldon.

ANNIE

(stammering)

What do you want to know?

BUSTER

Anything you can tell me might help.

CUT TO

ANNIE. The words pour out --

ANNIE

Well, he was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, forty-two years ago, the only child of Franklin and Helene Sheldon, mediocre student, majored in history --

CUT TO

BUSTER, watching her, surprised.

BUSTER

(cutting in)

Excuse me, that's not exactly the kind of information I was after. You see, he's been missing for nearly a month.

ANNIE

I know. It's so upsetting. I'm his number-one fan -- I've got all his books, every sentence he ever put down. I'm so proud of my Paul Sheldon collection --

(stops suddenly, almost embarrassed)

-- here I am, prattling on and my manners have just flown away -- I haven't invited you in.

BUSTER

Thank you.

ANNIE lets BUSTER in, closes the door, and crosses through the living room to the study. BUSTER lingers in front of PAUL's door, idly checking out the hallway.

ANNIE

'Course you must know about that
horrible accident.

BUSTER nods, enters the living room, and wanders into the
study. He checks out a bookcase that contains the complete
works of Paul Sheldon. One shelf below contains Memory
Lane.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Almost killed me too. I prayed when I
heard the news. I got down on my knees
and I begged for it not to be true.

CUT TO

ANNIE. So moved.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

You're going to laugh at what I'm about
to say, but go ahead, I don't care --
(beat)
-- when I was praying, God told me to
get ready.

CUT TO

BUSTER. Watching her. This isn't at all what he expected.

BUSTER

Get ready for what?

CUT TO

PAUL, and now for the first time, he stirs, seems about to actually wake -- but all he does next is shift positions -- he's still deep asleep.

CUT TO

ANNIE. CLOSE UP.

ANNIE

To try and be his replacement -- he gave so much pleasure to so many people and there's a shortage of pleasure on this planet these days, in case you hadn't noticed. I went to town. And I bought me a typewriter. And paper to type on. The same kind Paul Sheldon used.

(now almost whispering)

God told me, since I was his number-one fan, that I should make up new stories as if I was Paul Sheldon. I knew how he wrote, the kinds of words he used, the wonderful stories he told --

(moved)

-- I've spent the last three weeks trying to write like Paul Sheldon wrote --

(sad shake of the head)

-- but I can't do it right. I try and I try and I know all the words ...

(eyes closed in despair)

... but it's not the same.

CUT TO

BUSTER. He just stands there, watches her.

BUSTER

Well ...

(long pause)

... maybe it takes time to get the hang of it.

ANNIE

I could give you a couple of hundred pages of mine and you could tell me what you think.

BUSTER

I'm not much of a critic, but I'd be happy to give you an opinion.

ANNIE

That would be great. Tell you what--I'll go fetch them and you can take them home and call me when you've finished?

BUSTER

You wouldn't happen to have something to drink, would you?

ANNIE

Oh, look at me. You'd think I'd never had a houseguest before. How about a nice glass of lemonade?

BUSTER

Sounds good.

She exits into the kitchen. He lingers in the study for a beat, then goes into the hallway.

BUSTER (CONT'D)

Must get lonely, living out here all by yourself.

He spots the door to the cellar. He casually opens it and looks down into it.

ANNIE (O.S.)

I always say if you can't enjoy your own company, you're not fit company for anyone else.

BUSTER

(closing the door)

You got a point there --

As BUSTER moves down the hallway towards PAUL's room,

CUT TO

PAUL -- still asleep, stirring his arm, brushes the table, jiggling the glass of lemonade.

CUT TO

BUSTER in front of PAUL's room, just as BUSTER is about to put his hand on the doorknob.

CUT TO

ANNIE -- coming out of the kitchen with two lemonades.

ANNIE

Lemonade.

BUSTER moves toward ANNIE as she crosses into the study. He gets only halfway down the hall when we hear the sound of a GLASS BREAKING coming from PAUL'S room. BUSTER stops, glances toward the study and heads towards PAUL'S ROOM. He gently opens the door, revealing a now awakened PAUL SHELDON. The lemonade glass has shattered on the floor.

BUSTER

Mr. Sheldon?

And before PAUL can answer, there's the sound of a loud EXPLOSION. Seemingly from nowhere a hole is ripped through BUSTER'S chest. For a beat, BUSTER just stares straight ahead, then drops out of frame, revealing ANNIE, smoking shotgun in hand, standing behind BUSTER.

ANNIE

(to PAUL)

Now look what you've gone and done. If you'd just kept quiet, he'd be alive and we wouldn't have this oogy mess on our hands.

On PAUL'S reaction --

CUT TO

THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM. ANNIE is pushing PAUL in the wheelchair.

ANNIE

Don't feel bad, Paul. He was a trespassing, nosy, dirty bird. And he got what he deserved.

ANNIE stops the chair right by the basement door. She opens the door, then bends down to lock the wheels on the wheelchair.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I hope you understand why you have to go down there. I can't leave you up here...

CUT TO

PAUL, and suddenly he twists around and his hands go for her throat --

-- for a moment he has her but it's an awkward position he's in trying to turn his body around to face her but for a moment his hands are free on exposed throat --

-- then she rips free

-- then she tilts the chair up and

CUT TO

PAUL, as he starts to spin out of control down the stairs and it's not a huge staircase, this isn't the Paris Opera House we're talking about --

-- but it is a fall --

CUT TO

ANNIE WATCHING as PAUL grabs for the wooden bannisters to break his fall --

-- but his momentum is too much and the shock of it all came too suddenly and even though he manages to minimize it --

CUT TO

THE BASEMENT FLOOR as PAUL crashes down, lies stunned.

CUT TO

ANNIE, coming down a couple of stairs.

ANNIE

I don't think I'll ever understand you.
I cook your meals, I tend you
practically twenty-four hours a day and
where's the thanks I get? You try to
fight me. When are we going to develop
a sense of trust?

Now I have a lot to do. I've got to
get rid of the body. I've got to get
rid of the car, and there's more than a
little cleaning up that needs to be
done. So please don't make this any
more difficult than it has to be.

CUT TO

PAUL. In pain from the fall, he does his best to ignore it.

ANNIE, at the top of the stairs, turning off the light. We hear the SQUEALING of rats.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(barely visible)

Don't worry about the the rats, Paul,
you don't have to fear them -- I'm sure
they'll recognize you as one of their
own.

ANNIE exits, closing and locking the door behind her.

CUT TO

PAUL. Alone. The only light comes through a single barred window.

He spots the barbecue he burned his manuscript in. As he stares at it --

DISSOLVE TO

PAUL in the cellar. It is now night. After a beat, we hear a DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING, then FOOTSTEPS which stop outside the cellar door. Another beat, then the door is UNLOCKED and opened.

ANNIE
(in the dark)
Paul, are you awake?

The light is turned on, and Annie is found at the top of the stairs.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I have something important to tell you. You see, I've known for some time why I was chosen to save you. It's our destiny. You and I were meant to be together forever. But now our time in this world must end. That's why that sheriff died. It was a sign. Soon others will come. We must prepare for what must be done. Don't worry, Paul, it won't hurt. It will be beautiful.

With that, ANNIE turns and exits the cellar. PAUL'S mind races desperately. He looks at the barbecue again. Next to it is a messy table with a dozen jars and cans on it.

CUT TO

THE TABLE. One of the cans is lighter fluid.

CUT TO

PAUL. He stares at it for a moment -- an idea hits him --

-- now, PAUL struggles and crawls over to the table. He grabs the lighter fluid in his hands, jams it into the rear of his pants and scrambles back to where ANNIE left him.

CUT TO

ANNIE returning with a handgun and a hypodermic needle. She stops at the top of the stairs.

ANNIE

Now don't be afraid. I love you.
(She starts toward him)

PAUL

I know you do. I love you too, Annie.
(This stops her)
And you're right. We are meant to be
together. I know we must die. But it
must be so that Misery can live. I must
finish the book. We have the power to
give Misery eternal life.

ANNIE

But the time is tonight.

PAUL

It will be tonight. I promise. I'll
finish before dawn.

ANNIE stares at PAUL. She could go either way on this.
Then, without a word, she turns and goes back up the stairs.
We stay with PAUL, listening for sounds. Finally ANNIE
returns with the wheelchair. She places it at the top of
the stairs.

ANNIE

Here, Paul. I'll fix you something to
eat.

She exits. PAUL, for a moment hesitates, then realizes he
has no choice. He starts dragging himself up the stairs.

CUT TO

PAUL working. Typing like a madman, totally concentrated
on the white paper. His lips move but he's not even aware
of it.

ANNIE enters quietly, holding a few pages. She carefully
puts them back on the rest of the manuscript. He hands her
another chapter that he's finished.

PAUL

Three more chapters to go.

She looks at him now in an almost enthralled way.
Whispering --

ANNIE

The stranger at the inn, it's
Windthorne, her first love, isn't it?

PAUL

You'll know soon.
(Now he's back working
again as we)

CUT TO

PAUL. Night. He stops typing, rubs his eyes. For a moment, he sags, but he fights it. In a moment, he's typing like a madman again.

CUT TO

ANNIE enters with coffee and some more pages. She puts the coffee down for him, puts the pages back on the main pile.

ANNIE

(More excited now than
the last time)

It was Windthorne -- what does that do
to her love for Ian? --

(thinks)

-- Of course, if she hadn't thought
Windthorne was murdered she never would
have met Ian in the first place --

(PAUL glares at her, she
turns to the door)

Sorry, it's just that this is so
wonderful.

PAUL

I think so too.

ANNIE

This will be our legacy.

She starts to go.

PAUL

Annie.

She stops.

PAUL

We're almost done. I want everything to
be perfect. When I finish, I need three
things.

ANNIE

Don't you think I know -- one match, one
cigarette. And one glass of
champagne --

(thinks)

-- Dom Perignon.

PAUL

Two glasses.

As ANNIE exits.

CUT TO

PAUL. Later that night. He is beginning to fade. ANNIE
enters. She hands him back another batch of pages.

ANNIE

She can't leave Ian now -- not before
the coronation --

PAUL

The last chapter's almost done.

With that, she reaches into her pocket and pulls out a
cigarette and match, places them on the table.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You can get the champagne now.

She crosses to the door, stops.

ANNIE

Tell me at least who won the duel. Ian
or Windthorne -- it was Ian, right?

PAUL

You'll know everything in a minute. Get
the champagne.

As she exits, PAUL drops the manuscript to the floor, pulls
the lighter fluid from his pants, and starts dousing the
manuscript with lighter fluid.

CUT TO

ANNIE in the kitchen, taking the bottle of Dom Perignon out of the icebox, as she goes to the cabinet for glasses.

CUT TO

PAUL, finishing with the lighter fluid. He grabs the last chapter as ANNIE comes into the room. He smiles at her as we

CUT TO

ANNIE, stopping dead, frozen --

-- as PAUL is pouring lighter fluid on the last chapter.

ANNIE

What are you doing?

PAUL

I'm done, Annie. Remember how for all those years no one ever knew who Misery's real father was, or if they'd ever be reunited? Or if Misery would ever marry Ian?

(The lighter fluid is now soaking the last chapter held in his hand --)

Well, it's all right here.

CUT TO

THE MATCH as he strikes it and

CUT TO

ANNIE screaming --

ANNIE

Paul, you can't.

(And as her hands fly out beseechingly)

CUT TO

THE CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE -- it falls to the floor, explodes like a torpedo, shard of glass all over, curds of foam everywhere --

PAUL

-- Why not? I learned it from you --
(And on that --)

CUT TO

THE LAST CHAPTER as PAUL brings the match close to it and it bursts into flame. And PAUL, holding it like the torch it is. ANNIE starts moving forward now.

ANNIE

Not Misery -- not my Misery --

He drops the last chapter into the soaked manuscript and

CUT TO

THE MANUSCRIPT, as ka boom, it bursts into flame and

CUT TO

ANNIE, transfixed by the sight for a moment

-- and then she charges.

CUT TO

THE FIRE as ANNIE rushes to the book, stoops down, grabs it with both hands, brings the burning mass up to her body, both arms across it and

CUT TO

PAUL, grabbing the typewriter, raising it high above his head, then throwing it down on her with all his power and

CUT TO

THE TYPEWRITER, crashing into the back of her head.

CUT TO

ANNIE, screaming, driven to the floor by the blow, the book beneath her, and the flames fly up, her sweater is starting to burn and she's covered with shards of glass from the shattered bottle of champagne and some of the manuscript is hissing from the liquid, but she is able to struggle to her knees --

ANNIE

I'm going to kill you, you lying
cock-sucker --

As she struggles to her feet and starts to move away from PAUL, he quickly wheels the chair up to her and throws himself out of the chair, tackling her by the door. They wrestle on the floor.

Flames still around them, PAUL gets on top of her, grabs some burning pages, stuffs them into her mouth, shouting --

PAUL

Here. Here. You want it? You want it?
You can eat it -- eat it -- eat it till
you fucking choke -- you sick, twisted
fuck.

(And as he forces more
paper into her mouth --)

CUT TO

ANNIE, and she's hideous -- blistered, her hands claw at her blackened throat which is already starting to swell -- she makes horrible sounds. Shards of glass are in her hair, cut into her horrid face. Now a shriek and a tremendous jerk of her body and

CUT TO

PAUL, falling away to

CUT TO

ANNIE, still making the sounds as she gets to her feet and

CUT TO

PAUL, trying to crawl away after her.

CUT TO

ANNIE -- she takes a step away from PAUL, then another, then
--

CUT TO

THE DOORWAY, almost there. Paul's by a heavy metal based floor lamp as we

CUT TO

ANNIE'S HAND, grasping PAUL's left calf and

CUT TO

PAUL, with a death grip on the door jamb and

CUT TO

ANNIE, pulling herself up his body and

CUT TO

PAUL, trying to buck her off but he can't and

CUT TO

ANNIE, the stronger, relentless, moving up on him, and

CUT TO

PAUL, his grip broken and as he turns --

CUT TO

ANNIE, all-powerful, looming over him and

CUT TO

PAUL, hitting up at her and

CUT TO

ANNIE, swelling, and the blood pours down and if she feels his blows she doesn't show it and

CUT TO

PAUL, whatever energy he has left he uses now, trying to twist and strike and as his body moves --

CUT TO

THE METAL BASED FLOOR LAMP and

CUT TO

PAUL, grabbing the thing, suddenly bringing it across his body, clobbering ANNIE in the face and

CUT TO

ANNIE, startled by the power of the blow and for a moment she is stopped and

CUT TO

PAUL as with everything he has left he crunches her forehead with the sharp heavy metal base, just creams her as the air is forced out of her --

CUT TO

ANNIE. More and more blood. The SOUNDS that were roaring from her swollen black throat stop. Her eyes roll up into her head. For a moment all we see are the whites --

-- then she collapses on PAUL, a motionless mountain of slack flesh.

CUT TO

PAUL, scrambling free, pushing her off him, crawling for the door --

CUT TO

-- outside the door as PAUL crawls into view, makes it to the corridor, reaches back, closes the door, locks it. Safe, he leans against the door.

CUT TO

UNDER THE DOOR -- ANNIE's thick fingers appear.

CUT TO

PAUL, his back to the door.

CUT TO

ANNIE'S FINGERS, clutching out, clutching first at air, then grabbing the fabric of PAUL's shirt, starting to pull and

CUT TO

PAUL, screaming again, flailing out at the fingers. He pounds at them. Pounds with both hands.

The fingers stop.

PAUL stares at the motionless things. He pushes at the thick fingers, shoving them back out of sight under the door...

CUT TO

PAUL -- collapses, exhausted against the wall opposite the door. The dawn now --

DISSOLVE TO

THE FRONT DOOR SMASHING OPEN, revealing two cops with guns drawn.

THE POLICEMEN, hurry to PAUL. The YOUNGER COP kneels beside PAUL.

YOUNGER COP

It's the writer -- the dead one --

PAUL

(trying to keep himself
together)

-- right, I'm the dead one --

OLDER COP

Where's Sheriff McCain?

PAUL

He's dead. She killed him.

OLDER COP

Annie Wilkes?

PAUL

Yeah. She's in there. I think she's
dead.

CUT TO

THE OLDER COP, taking the key to the room, unlocks the door, throws it open and as he steps inside --

CUT TO

INSIDE THE BEDROOM. The OLDER COP has his gun ready to fire, but even with it tight in his hand, he's edgy as hell.

He looks around --

-- glass and bloodstains on the floor. The charred remains of a manuscript.

He kneels quickly, glances under the bed -- nothing.

He looks at the window -- smashed wide open. Just the frame and some pieces of glass --

He hesitates now as he sees the closet door. He swallows, then slowly moves to the door, gets a good grip on the knob, and as he throws the door wide open --

CUT TO

PAUL AND THE YOUNGER COP. Pause. the OLDER COP is in the doorway now.

OLDER COP

Mr. Sheldon? There's no one in the room.

CUT TO

PAUL. CLOSE UP. In shock. He's never looked this bad before. HOLD FOR A LONG MOMENT AS THIS LEGEND APPEARS:

One Year Later

DISSOLVE TO

THE POOL ROOM OF THE FOUR SEASONS RESTAURANT IN MANHATTAN.

PAUL enters, and he's never looked this good before. He's gained his weight back, his color is normal again. He walks with only a slight limp, uses an elegant cane. He appears to be, for the first time in the movie, a jaunty, happy figure.

PAUL goes to the table and suddenly breaks into a quick soft shoe move, smiles.

PAUL

Not bad for a guy who cancelled his Arthur Murray lessons.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Remember how you once said I live my whole life as if I'm in danger of being found out? Well, I truly believe I've managed to get that guy down on paper.

(He touches the book)

He's in here.

(beat)

Don't think I'm completely nuts, but I think in some way, Annie Wilkes, that whole experience, helped me.

CUT TO

THE TABLE. Lunch is over. Dishes and glasses are being cleared away.

BELL

Paulie, since you brought her up, I have to ask you this or I'd be drummed out of the agent's union -- what about a non-fiction book? The truth about what went on in that house.

PAUL

Gee, Bryce, if I didn't know you better I'd think you were suggesting I dredge up the worst horror of my life just so we could make a few bucks.

BELL

Now you've hurt me, Paulie.
(As PAUL glances
around --)

CUT TO

THE DESSERT TROLLEY, and some WAITERS beside it, a good distance away.

CUT TO

PAUL, gesturing for the trolley as a NEW WAITER moves in, takes the cart. A new WAITRESS to be more precise -- it's ANNIE. She begins to push the cart silently forward and as she does, she reaches down, pulls out a very long and very sharp knife.

CUT TO

PAUL AND BELL.

BELL (CONT'D)

I thought you were over it.

8 CONTINUED:

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CUT TO

PAUL AND ANNIE -- only it isn't ANNIE, just a WAITRESS. She stands by the trolley, the knife in her hand, ready to slice whatever anyone wants.

WAITRESS

Would you care for anything?

PAUL

(smiles)

Cut me something sinful ...

CUT TO

PAUL. The smile holds. In the background now, soft music: someone might be playing "Liberace."

HOLD ON PAUL.

FINAL FADE OUT.

THE END