

"MISERY"

by

William Goldman

Based on the Novel by

Stephen King

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, just for a brief moment, moved.

CUT TO:

A SUITCASE across the room. PAUL goes to it, opens it and pulls something out from inside: a battered red 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:

LODGE - DAY

PAUL--exiting his cabin. He stops, makes a snowball, throws it, hitting a sign.

PAUL

Still got it.

He throws a suitcase into the trunk of his '65 MUSTANG and, holding his leather case, he hops into the car and drives away.

CUT TO:

A SIGN that reads "Silver Creek Lodge." Behind the sign is the hotel itself--old, desolate. Now the '65 Mustang comes out of the garage, guns ahead toward the sign. As "Shotgun" by Jr. Walker and the Allstars starts, he heads off into the mountains.

CUT TO:

THE SKY. Gun-metal grey. The clouds seem pregnant with snow.

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.

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 tape, expertly turns it over, pushes it in and, as the MUSIC continues, 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.

CUT TO:

THE SNOW. Worse.

CUT TO:

THE ROAD, curving sharply, drop ping. 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, 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 the music coming from the tape, perhaps the only part of the car

left undamaged. 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 is, 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. The MUSIC continues on.

But PAUL is far from 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.

SINDELL (O.S.)

What's that?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

We are in New York City in the office of Paul's literary agent, MARCIA SINDELL. The walls of the large room are absolutely crammed with book and movie posters, in English and all other kinds of other languages, all of them featuring the character of MISERY CHASTAIN, a perfectly beautiful woman. Misery's Challenge, Misery's Triumph--eight 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:

SINDELL

(searching for a compliment)

It's... it's nice, Paul. It's got... character.

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, Marcia. I was a writer then.

SINDELL

You're still a writer.

PAUL

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

SINDELL

(holding up the cover art 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--over a million.

PAUL

Marcia, please.

SINDELL

No, no. Misery Chastain put braces on your daughter's teeth and is putting her through college, bought you two houses and floor seats to the Knick games and what thanks does she get? You go and kill her.

PAUL

Marcia, you know I started "Misery"

on a lark. Do I look like a guy who writes romance novels? Do I sound like Danielle Steel? It was a one-time shot and we got lucky. I never meant it to become my life. And if I hadn't gotten rid of her now, I'd have ended up writing her forever.

(touches his briefcase)

For the first time in fifteen years, I think I'm really onto something here.

SINDELL

I'm glad to hear that, Paul, I really am. But you have to know--when your fans 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)

Marcia, why are you doing this to me? Don't you know I'm scared enough? Don't you think I remember how nobody gave a shit about my first books? You think I'm dying to go back to shouting in the wilderness?

(beat)

I'm doing this because I have to.

(Marcia is stopped)

Now, I'm leaving for Colorado to try to finish this and I want your good thoughts--because 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-force 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--

-- nd 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 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. She slowly brings her mouth down close to his. Then their lips touch as she forces air inside him.

ANNIE

(Their lips touch
again. Then--)

You hear me--Breathe! 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.

An I.V. bottle is next, the medicine dripping down a tube into PAUL'S LEFT ARM. The other arm is bandaged and in a sling.

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

CUT TO:

PAUL. Motionless, dead pale. He has a little beard now. Eyes barely open, 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 Silver Creek.

PAUL

How long...?

ANNIE

You've been here two days. You're gonna be okay.

(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. I'm also a nurse. Here.

(Now, as she brings the pills close)

Take these.

She helps him to swallow, as Paul's eyes close.

DISSOLVE TO:

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 hand.

ANNIE

Here.

PAUL

What are they...?

ANNIE

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

(helps him take them)

ANNIE applies a cool rag to his forehead.

PAUL

Shouldn't I be in a hospital?

ANNIE

The blizzard was too strong. I couldn't risk trying to get you there. I tried calling, but the phone lines are down.

PAUL tries to test his left arm.

ANNIE

(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.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE UP ON PILLS IN ANNIE'S HAND

ANNIE (O.S.)

Open wide.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM

He lies in bed. His fever is gone, but he's terribly weak.

CUT TO:

ANNIE. As she lays the pills 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

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, but I finally popped it back in there.

(proudly)

But what I'm most proud of is the work I did on those legs. Considering what I had around the house, I don't think there's a doctor who could have done any better.

And now suddenly she flicks off the blankets, 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 kness up they're all swollen and throbbing and horribly bruised and discolored.

CUT TO:

PAUL, lying back, stunned with disbelief.

ANNIE

It's not nearly as bad as it looks. You have a compound fracture of the tibia in both legs, and the fibula 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, I'll take you to a hospital.

CUT TO:

ANNIE: CLOSE UP

ANNIE

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 SINDELL's office in New York. The office looks just the same, posters and manuscripts all over. But she doesn't.

She holds the phone and she is fidgety, insecure.

SINDELL

This is Marcia Sindell calling from New York City. I'd like to speak to the Silver Creek Chief of Police or the Sheriff.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Which one do you want?

SINDELL

Whichever one's not busy.

CUT TO:

SMALL OFFICE IN SILVER CREEK

...with a view of the mountains.

A MARVELOUS LOOKING MAN sits at a desk, by himself, holding the phone. In his sixties, 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, Ms. Sindell, 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:

SINDELL in her office. She pushes the speakerphone, gets up, paces; she's very hesitant when she speaks about Paul. Almost embarrassed--

SINDELL

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

BUSTER

Paul Sheldon? You mean Paul Sheldon the writer?

SINDELL

Yes.

BUSTER

He's your client, huh?

SINDELL

Yes, he is.

CUT TO:

BUSTER'S OFFICE

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

People sure like those Misery books.

SINDELL

I'm sure you know Paul's been going to the Silver Creek Lodge for years

to finish his books.

BUSTER

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

SINDELL

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:

SINDELL, really embarrassed now.

SINDELL

No, no, of course not. It's just that his daughter hasn't heard from him, and when he's got a book coming out, he usually keeps in touch. So when there was no word from him...

BUSTER

You think he might be missing?

SINDELL

(shakes her head)
I hate that I made this call--tell me I'm being silly.

CUT TO:

BUSTER. He nods as a WOMAN enters, carrying lunch. It's his wife, VIRGINIA. She begins putting the food down on a table for the both of them.

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 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:

SINDELL. She smiles, a genuine sense of relief.

SINDELL
I appreciate that. Thanks a lot.

CUT TO:

BUSTER

BUSTER
G'bye, Ms. Sindell.

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 blizzard?

VIRGINIA
Four or five days ago. Why?

CUT TO:

BUSTER. The penny flies across the back of his hand. 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...

ANNIE's soft, sweet laughter is heard. She 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?

ANNIE concentrates 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 Silver Creek, 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 cabin--

(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 on my way home, 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

I know them all by heart, Paul, all eight 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 have to call my daughter, and I should call New York and let my agent know I'm breathing.

ANNIE

It shouldn't be too much longer.

(gently)

Once the roads are open, the lines'll be up in no time. If you give me their numbers, I'll keep trying them for you.

(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

Boy, it's like clockwork, the way your pain comes--I'll get you your Novril, Paul. Forgive me for prattling away and making you feel all oogy.

She turns and goes out of the room.

CUT TO:

PAUL, watching her.

ANNIE

What's your new book called?

PAUL

I don't have a title yet.

ANNIE

What's it about?

PAUL

(fast)
It's crazy, but I don't really know, I mean I haven't written anything but "Misery" for so long that--you read it you can tell me what you think it's about. Maybe you can come up with a title.

ANNIE

(in the doorway)
Oh, like I could do that?

CUT TO:

THE MANAGER'S OFFICE AT THE SILVER CREEK 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, Federal Express packages--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 is and all, famous and all, he doesn't have airs. Drives the same car out from New York each time--'65 Mustang--said it helps 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 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, Wally, give me a bag of that
effing pigfeed and ten pounds of
that bitchly cow-corn"--

PAUL is amused by this.

CUT TO:

THE SOUP, almost spilling as she gets more agitated.

ANNIE

--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 some soup hits the coverlet.

ANNIE

(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.

ANNIE

Oh, Paul, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.
Sometimes I get so worked up. Can
you ever forgive me? Here...

She hands him his pills and starts to clean the soup off the
coverlet. Then she makes the sweetest smile.

ANNIE

I love you, Paul.
(more embarrassed
than ever)
Your mind. Your creativity--that's
all I meant.

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 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. Suddenly, it goes into a little icy spin--she fights it back under control.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE CAR

BUSTER

(suddenly)

Stop--stop right here.

VIRGINIA

What? What is it?

CUT TO:

THE CAR, skidding, slowing, stopping. BOTH OF THEM get out, 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.

He steps off the road, starts down.

CUT TO:

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

CUT TO:

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

CUT TO:

THE TREE that 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 (O.S.)

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 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

(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--

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

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM

The door opens and ANNIE enters.

ANNIE

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to wake you.

PAUL

It's fine.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

Paul's 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 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.

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.

(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

My daughter must be going nuts.

ANNIE

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

PAUL

I was supposed to be home for her birthday three days ago.

ANNIE

Your agent said she would tell her you were okay. But I'm afraid you'll have to wait until tomorrow if you want to speak to her yourself.

She starts to leave, stops at the door.

ANNIE

(She looks at him now
with almost a look
of amazement)

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
75.

PAUL

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

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

CUT TO:

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,
but it would mean so much to me to
get it in person. 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

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 this 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 getting 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...

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

ANNIE

Woink! Whoink! Whuh-Whuh-WHOINK!

CUT TO:

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

CUT TO:

THE WINDOW. DUSK.

ANNIE'S VOICE is heard softly.

ANNIE

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

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

ANNIE, standing at the window, her back to the room.

In bed, PAUL is dealing with a bedpan, peeing.

ANNIE

For a while I thought I might go
crazy.

PAUL

I know how that can be.

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. I did a
lot of reading. That was when I first
discovered 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.

There is a peeing sound.

PAUL

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 front
page and start reading it again.

PAUL

I'm...

ANNIE

(She turns around,
moves to the bed)

Done?

PAUL

Yeah, thanks.

ANNIE

No problem.

As she takes the bedpan...

ANNIE

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 any more. They have no sense of real commitment.

CUT TO:

PAUL, attempting to smile. There is not much he can say to this.

ANNIE

I'd love to stay here and chat, but I'm right at the end and I gotta find out what happens.

PAUL

Well, I hope you like it.

ANNIE

Of course I'll like it. Misery's about to have her child. What's it gonna be, a boy or a girl? Ooh, don't tell me.

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.

ANNIE

You...you dirty bird. She can't be dead. Misery Chastain cannot be dead!

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

No one--she just died--she slipped away, that's all.

ANNIE

(screaming)

She slipped away? She slipped away?
She didn't just slip away. You did it. You did it. You did it. You did it. You murdered my Misery.

And now she has lifted a chair--it's heavy but she's very strong--and she raises it and turns on Paul, and it's high above her head, and PAUL realizes that this might be it, she might shatter him with it, crunch his skull--and that's just what she seems she's about to do--and then she swings it, not against him but against the wall, and it shatters and she's panting from the effort as she turns on him again, her voice surprisingly soft.

ANNIE

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.

(she crosses to the door, then stops)

And don't even think about anybody coming for you, not the doctors, not your agent, not your family--because I never called them. Nobody knows you're here. And you better hope nothing happens to me because if I die, you die.

CUT TO:

PAUL, watching as she closes the door behind her. Then there is a RATTLE OF A KEY and the sound of the door to his room LOCKING.

CUT TO:

ANNIE, getting in her Cherokee and gunning away.

CUT TO:

THE ROOM

PAUL lies still. He looks around the room and listens for sounds. All he hears are the SOUNDS OF A WINTER NIGHT in the mountains. After a few beats, he takes a deep breath and then begins his greatest effort of all: to force his body out of 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 back over to the bed, realizes there's no way to climb back in, then grabs

the blanket from the bed, wraps it around himself, and closes his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

BUSTER'S OFFICE. DAY.

He sits alone at his desk on the telephone, staring at the Rocky Mountain Gazette 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?"

BUSTER is on the phone with Marcia Sindell.

BUSTER

No, Ms. Sindell, there's no point in coming up here now. Everything that can be done is... Yes, we're working closely with the state police, and the FBI has been informed. Right... Right... As soon as we know anything we'll let you know. No, it's no bother. Call anytime. Bye, Ms. Sindell.

VIRGINIA enters, carrying some files.

VIRGINIA

Here's the list of all Sheldon's credit charges. Nothing after the Silver Creek.

(With a glance at his dour face, she indicates the photo)
Any calls?

BUSTER

Just from his agent.

CUT TO:

BUSTER. His eyes flick up to her. An almost imperceptible shake of the head.

HOLD FOR A MOMENT, then--

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 Misery's... 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--

CUT TO:

THE ROOM, AS IT SNAPS BACK INTO FOCUS--ANNIE is standing by the bed. It is dusk.

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?

(crossing to the bed)

It's my fault. If I'd had a proper hospital bed, this never would have happened. Here, let me help you back in.

(She lifts him back into the bed, which causes considerable pain)

I know this hurts, but it'll only take a few seconds. There you go. Comfy?

PAUL

(in pain)

Perfect.

ANNIE

You're such a kidder. I have a big surprise for you. But first there's something you must do.

PAUL

I don't suppose I could have a little snack while I wait for the surprise?

ANNIE

I'll get 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 on the witness stand in Denver.

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

ANNIE

But this time I thought clearly. I asked God about you and God said "I delivered him unto you so that you may show him the way."

PAUL

Show me the way?

ANNIE

Yes.

She exits and re-enters 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:

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. The grill is close enough to the bed for him to reach out and drop a match.

PAUL

When I mentioned a snack, I was thinking more along the lines of a cheese and crackers kind of thing.

CUT TO:

ANNIE, looking at him.

ANNIE

Paul, this is no time for jokes. You must rid the world of this filth.

She hands him the box of kitchen matches.

PAUL

You want me to burn my book?

ANNIE

(she nods)

Yes.

PAUL

You want me to burn my book?

ANNIE

I know this may be difficult for you, but it's for the best.

PAUL

This isn't difficult, 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. So if you want me to burn it, fine. You're not ridding the world of anything.

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 Silver Creek Lodge. You told that story to Merv Griffin eleven years ago.

PAUL

You know, Annie, 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.

(pause)

God knows you're entitled to it.

ANNIE

Oh, Paul. This isn't about money. It's about decency and purity. It's about God's values.

PAUL

You're right. You're right. I don't know what I was thinking. I'll tell you what. It doesn't have to be published. Nobody ever has to see it. I'll just keep it for myself. No one will ever have to know it exists.

ANNIE

As long as it does exist, your mind won't ever be free. I think you should light the match, Paul.

There is a long silence. PAUL doesn't move.

ANNIE

Can't you see it's what God wants?

She's holding the can of lighter fluid in her hand as she speaks and absentmindedly flicks a few drops of the fluid on the bed.

ANNIE

You're so brilliant. I would think you'd certainly be able to see that.

(More drops fall on the bed)

We're put on this earth to help people, Paul. Like I'm trying to help you.

PAUL watches as the fluid continues to drop on the bed.

ANNIE

Please let me help you.

CUT TO:

PAUL. His hands shaking. Almost robot-like, he strikes one. It flames.

ANNIE

You're doing the right thing, Paul.

CUT TO:

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

--and then, KABOOM, the goddamn 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
(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
Goodness--Goodness--Oh, my gracious--

And she starts trying to catch them.

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"--

CUT TO:

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

CUT TO:

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

CUT TO:

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

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
Well, isn't that an oogy mess?

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

CUT TO:

PAUL, head turning toward the window.

CUT TO:

ANNIE taking a step toward the window, stopping for a moment. 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

BUSTER and a PILOT are in the machine. Buster has a pair of binoculars looped around his neck, a map rumpled in his lap.

BUSTER
(pointing out)
That's the Steadman place up there.
(The pilot nods. Buster
points again)
The only other place up here is the
Wilkes farm.

Another nod. The PILOT points down. BUSTER stares through the binoculars.

WHAT HE SEES: ANNIE'S JEEP parked in front of her house.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE HELICOPTER

BUSTER
That's no '65 Mustang. 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.

CUT TO:

ANNIE, staring out the window.

ANNIE

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. Here's your Novril.

(she wheels the
barbecue to the door;
stops)

How does tuna casserole sound for dinner?

PAUL

Great.

She exits. PAUL takes the two Novril, stares at them, then deliberately tucks them under his mattress.

DISSOLVE TO:

PAUL'S ROOM. NIGHT.

As PAUL is finishing the last of his tuna casserole. There are two Novrils on his tray. We hear strains of TV GAME SHOW THEME MUSIC. These sounds are not surprising. Paul has heard them before.

CUT TO:

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, 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. He has now finished eating. He takes the two Novril from under the mattress. He then undoes the sheet, takes his fork and delicately pokes a hole in the mattress, then stuffs all four pills back into the hole.

DISSOLVE TO:

FARMHOUSE

Coming up to dawn.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S DOOR slowly opening.

CUT TO:

PAUL, staring at the door.

CUT TO:

WHEELS, seen from underneath the bed, being rolled around the foot of the bed. We realize PAUL is in a wheelchair with ANNIE pushing him.

ANNIE

See, isn't this nice?

PAUL

Great. I've always wanted to visit the other side of the room.

ANNIE

And look what I've got for you. An electric razor so you can shave yourself now.

PAUL

If I knew this was gonna be the surprise, you could've gotten me to burn all my books.

ANNIE

(She hands him some
Novril)

Now don't josh. This is a very big day for you, Paul. Here. You just sit tight, and I'll set everything up.

ANNIE exits.

CUT TO:

PAUL, quickly shoving the Novril into the mattress.

PAUL

Set what up?

ANNIE

That's the big surprise. 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

Oh, but Paul!

(flushed)

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

(beat)

--you're going to write a new novel-- your greatest achievement ever-- Misery's Return.

CUT TO:

PAUL. Stunned.

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

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

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.

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. This is a desolate
place.

ANNIE

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

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.

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

ANNIE

(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 could 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

Thank you for thinking of me.

(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?

PAUL

No, just the paper will be fine.

ANNIE

(suddenly very agitated)

Are you sure? 'Cause if you want, I'll bring back the whole store for you.

PAUL

Annie, what's the matter?

ANNIE

What's the matter? I'll tell you what's the matter. I go out of my way for you. I do everything to try and make you happy. I feed you, I clean you, I dress you. And what thanks do I get? "You bought the wrong paper, Annie. I can't write on this paper, Annie." Well, I'll get your stupid paper, but you just better start showing me a little more appreciation around here, Mister Man.

With that, she throws the ream of paper in PAUL'S LAP, causing considerable pain.

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 sigh, reaches out toward his tortured knees, then drops his head. He sees something.

CUT TO:

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, ignoring 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
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

(amazed)

What do you know, it actually works.

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

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 photograph of a six-year-old ANNIE, with her mother and father in front of the family car--a new 1952 Buick. These were happier times.

The windows have bars on them.

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

CUT TO:

THE PHONE as PAUL at last grabs for it, gets it, punches the "operator" button--

PAUL

Operator...

(nothing)

...OPERATOR...

(wildly frustrated)

...Shit!

He shakes the phone. It's terribly light. He picks it up, turns it over--it's hollow, just a shell of a telephone. He stares at it for a long moment, shaking his head, the disappointment plain.

PAUL
You crazy bitch...

He puts the phone back on the table.

CUT TO:

THE GENERAL STORE. DAY.

Annie exits the store, carrying new paper, hops into her Cherokee and drives off.

CUT TO:

THE STUDY, as PAUL enters. He looks around.

It's stuffed with heavy, graceless furniture as well as lots of coffee tables covered with knickknacks. As he, with effort, wheels across it--

CUT TO:

A shelf of BOOKS. PAUL SHELDON books. EVERY Paul Sheldon book.

CUT TO:

PAUL, pausing, looking at her collection. The only book on the shelf that isn't his is a large scrapbook. The title on the back reads "My Life."

He glances back at the shelf as he forces his wheelchair across the study, and we

CUT TO:

A SMALL TABLE with little ceramic doodads on top. The wheelchair hits it, one of the doodads topples--it's a penguin, fragile looking, and as it's about to fall to the floor and shatter--

CUT TO:

PAUL, grabbing for it, catching it, putting it back where it was. He continues his slow way across the room and

CUT TO:

THE HALLWAY.

Out in the hallway, on his way toward the kitchen, PAUL

notices a door to his right. He wheels over and surprisingly it opens. However, this is not a door to the outside of the house, only a storage pantry. He looks around--nothing but canned goods, potato chips, cereals and large plastic Coke containers, etc. Just as he is about to close the door, he notices an open cardboard box. He opens the flap and sees all kinds of prescription drugs. Among them are a couple of strips of Novril encapsulated in blisters. He grabs them and stuffs them into his sweatpants. Now he closes the pantry door and heads to the kitchen.

CUT TO:

THE KITCHEN

As PAUL approaches it. He starts to wheel his way in, but he has trouble.

He backs up slightly, wheels forward again--

--but the door is too narrow for the chair to fit through. He pounds his fists on the chair arm, staring as we

CUT TO:

THE BACK DOOR. It's at the far end of the kitchen leading to the outside. It seems somehow less formidable than the front door did. The windows around the kitchen are barred.

CUT TO:

PAUL, staring at the kitchen door--

--then without warning, he makes his move, starting to lower himself out of the chair

gently to the floor--

--only it doesn't work that way. It's too awkward, he doesn't have the strength to maneuver properly--

--and his body tilts awkwardly out of the chair, slams hard against the hard floor.

CUT TO:

PAUL, crying out in pain as he lands. He lies there for a moment. Little droplets of sweat are on his forehead now. He is hurting.

He closes his eyes, gathering strength--

--and then slowly, very slowly, inch by inch, he moves his body across the floor toward the kitchen door.

CUT TO:

THE KITCHEN DOOR. It's still a long way away.

CUT TO:

PAUL, ignoring his pain, his awkwardness, making his body move.

CUT TO:

THE KITCHEN DOOR. Closer now.

CUT TO:

PAUL, growing pale, but he won't stop, and now the door is just ahead of him, and with his good arm he reaches out and up and grabs the doorknob--

CUT TO:

THE KITCHEN DOOR. Locked solid.

CUT TO:

PAUL: CLOSE UP. The disappointment and anger is plain on his face. His arm drops. He lies still for a moment, panting from his effort. Then--

CUT TO:

PAUL, and his eyes are wide for a moment. You can feel his wild excitement, as we

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

Sitting on the counter: A SET OF CARVING KNIVES sticking out of a slotted wooden block.

They seem to be out of reach, but that doesn't stop him. He starts to crawl over to the counter.

CUT TO:

THE ROAD

ANNIE is driving along in her Cherokee. She is heading home.

CUT TO:

THE KITCHEN

Now at the counter, PAUL tries to pull himself up with his one good arm, but even though he is able to chin himself up to the top of the counter, he is still unable to reach the knives. He makes a desperate attempt which sends him crashing to the floor.

As he starts to force his way up again--from outside there

comes a sound--the motor of a car.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE ANNIE'S

ANNIE, driving up to the house.

CUT TO:

THE KITCHEN

PAUL, throwing himself back to the floor, starting a wild crawl back across the kitchen toward the wheelchair and

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE ANNIE'S

ANNIE, getting out of her Jeep and

CUT TO:

KITCHEN

PAUL, crawling, crawling and

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE ANNIE'S

ANNIE, walking around to the back of the Jeep and

CUT TO:

KITCHEN

PAUL, scrambling wildly up into his wheelchair, starting to get it turned and

CUT TO:

ANNIE'S

ANNIE, opening the back of the Jeep and lifting out several rectangular boxes of paper and

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--

-- ow 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.

-- he drops one of the packages of paper.

CUT TO:

PAUL, still biting down, churning his arms with all the strength he has left. PAUL'S ARMS, aching, start 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 it, 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 (V.O.)
(her voice from the
hallway, close and
growing closer)
Paul, I've got your paper.

CUT TO:

PAUL. He wheels to exactly where he was when she left him. He at last allows himself a sigh of relief.

CUT TO:

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

ANNIE

Just the kind you asked for.

And as the door opens--

CUT TO:

PAUL--looking down. Paul's waistband--a half a dozen strips of Novril ominously stick out.

As the door swings open, he quickly covers the Novril with this hands.

CUT TO:

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

ANNIE

Paul, you're dripping with perspiration, your color is very hectic--what have you been doing?

PAUL

You know goddamn 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... Let's get you back in bed and 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...

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 Novril into his pants.

ANNIE (O.S.)

(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

...and 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

Well, I don't hold grudges. After
all, who doesn't let off a little
steam once in a while.

CUT TO:

PAUL putting the pills in his mouth, as she picks him up from the chair and puts him gently down in bed.

ANNIE

My genius needs his rest before he
writes.

She hands him a pad and pencil.

ANNIE

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

I have faith in you...
(beat)
...my darling...

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

ANNIE

Catch this--
(she throws him a
kiss--it's grotesque)
--ummmm-wahhhh.

CUT TO:

PAUL, summoning up all his courage, as he mimes catching it and 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--

CUT TO:

THE SOUND 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 dents 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 toward their car.

VIRGINIA

You don't think he's dead, do you?

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:

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 in 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. He then places the packet back in the mattress.

CUT TO:

THE TYPEWRITER. DAY.

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, followed by MISERY, the pig. 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.

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, staring 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 enters, the first pages of manuscript in her hands. It's dusk.

ANNIE

I'm sorry, Paul. This is all wrong, you'll have to do it over again.

PAUL

(totally stunned)

What? What happened to "I'll treasure whatever you do?"

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.

ANNIE

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)

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

"HE DIDN'T GET OUT OF THE COCKADOODIE CAR!"

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

As she goes--

PAUL

Look at this, I've got Lizzie Borden for an editor, here.

PAUL slumps, staring barefully at the typewriter.

DISSOLVE TO:

OUTSIDE THE FARMHOUSE. NIGHT.

DISSOLVE TO:

OUTSIDE THE FARMHOUSE. NEXT MORNING.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM. DAY.

PAUL is at the table. He takes the Novril off his breakfast tray, wheels over to the bed, and stuffs them into the mattress. He hears FOOTSTEPS coming down the hall. He smoothly 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 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." Remember, you talked about it in Playboy magazine. 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."

PAUL

I said that?

ANNIE

You said you can make it so they

gotta turn the page. You know, "I
'gotta' know will she live," "I
'gotta' know will he catch the
killer." "I gotta see how this chapter
ends." 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 quietly
backs out of the room.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE WINDOW. It's late afternoon.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

PAUL in the wheelchair watching as ANNIE finishes reading.

PAUL
Well, is it fair? Should I keep going?

ANNIE
You better. 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
--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

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

PAUL

(mumbling to himself)
Yeah, yeah...

CUT TO:

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

ANNIE

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

Misery's alive! Misery's alive. Oh, 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, who
do you think was right there in the
front row?

ANNIE
I'm going to play my records 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.

PAUL
Would you have dinner with me tonight?

She can't speak.

PAUL
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 wheels over to
the bed, pulls the packet of Novril powder out from the
mattress and stuffs it in his pants. The sound of Liberace
playing "Tammy" with orchestra and chorus booms in from beyond
the door.

PAUL
Jesus Christ.

CUT TO:

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

(to Buster)

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

CUT TO:

BUSTER. He 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. I don't like him either, but I'm not going to come over there and tell him to move. Give my best to Denise. 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

Now, you see, it's that kind of sarcasm that's given our marriage real spice.

CUT TO:

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. And so do you.

ANNIE
Oh...

They eat in awkward silence. Finally:

PAUL
I've never had meatloaf this good,
what do you do to it?

ANNIE
My secret is I only use fresh
tomatoes, never canned. And to give
it that little extra zip, I mix in
some Spam with the ground beef.

PAUL
Oh.
(pause)
You can't get this in a restaurant
in New York.

After another pause:

PAUL
Annie, I think we should have a toast.

ANNIE
A toast?

PAUL
Yes, to Misery. Let me pour you some
more wine.

Paul pours more of the Gallo wine, then raises his glass.

ANNIE
To Misery.

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 the packet filled with Novril powder from his pants. He empties it into

her glass of wine, stuffs the empty packet back into his pants, talking the whole time:

PAUL

Did you study decorating, or do you just have a flair?

ANNIE

Oh, you. I just picked things up over the years.

PAUL

Well, it certainly says you.

ANNIE

You really think so?

PAUL

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

ANNIE re-enters with a candle.

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. Will this do?

PAUL

It's perfect.

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

PAUL

To Misery and 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.

And with that, her emotions having gotten the best of her, she knocks over the candle. In trying to right the situation, she places her glass back down, and as she reaches for the candle, she knocks over her glass, spilling the wine.

ANNIE

(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:

OUTSIDE THE FARMHOUSE. DAY.

The snow, although still present, has melted somewhat. And
starting now and continuing throughout is this: the sound of
typing.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM

PAUL, working at his typewriter.

CUT TO:

THE MANUSCRIPT. Growing.

CUT TO:

ANNIE'S BEDROOM. DUSK.

ANNIE, in her room. Reading and loving it.

CUT TO:

BUSTER'S DEN. NIGHT.

BUSTER sitting in his den reading a Misery novel by the fire.
VIRGINIA brings him a cup of tea.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM. DAY.

PAUL, the sling off, moving his injured arm. It's more mobile
than before. Testing his strength, he uses his arm to remove
the page and place it on the pile. He puts in another page
and continues to type.

CUT TO:

ANNIE, entering Paul's room, carrying a chapter. Handing him

a cup of tea.

ANNIE

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

PAUL

I think you're right.

CUT TO:

THE PILE OF PAPER. Bigger.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE BARN

ANNIE, out by the barn. She stares in at the house. Framed
in the window is PAUL, working. She smiles, enters the barn.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM. NIGHT.

He stretches but only briefly, then back to his typing.

CUT TO:

THE KITCHEN

ANNIE, cooking happily away, reading a chapter.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM

PAUL, arm out of the sling. He manages to lift the typewriter
once, sets it back down, puts the sling back on.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM. LATER.

ANNIE, bringing a tray of food.

ANNIE

I think it's so wonderful that Misery
would sacrifice her title to take up
the cause of her people. That's true
nobility.

Paul hands her some new pages. As she exits,

CUT TO:

BUSTER'S OFFICE

BUSTER, in his office reading. He is alone.

CUT TO:

ANNIE'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Annie is reading by the fire. Her pig Misery sits beside her, staring at the pages.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM. DAY.

His fingers just fly, faster than he's ever typed and

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Paul, staring and

CUT TO:

THE PILE, growing, growing and

CUT TO:

PAUL'S FINGERS

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM

PAUL, ripping open a new ream of paper...

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM. DUSK.

His lips move silently. He's not even aware of it as he nods and...

CUT TO:

THE PAPER IN THE TYPEWRITER, line after line being written.

INTERCUT WITH:

Paul's face at DAY, NIGHT, and DUSK in rapid succession, ending with

CUT TO:

ANNIE'S FARMHOUSE. NIGHT.

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 on the table.

CUT TO:

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

PAUL

Annie, what is it?

CUT TO:

ANNIE

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.

ANNIE

When you first came here, I only loved the writer part of Paul Sheldon. But now I know I love the rest of him too. As much as Misery loves Ian.

(beat)

I know you don't love me--don't say you do--you're a beautiful, brilliant, famous man of the world; and I'm...not a movie star type. You'll never know the fear of losing someone like you if you're someone like me.

PAUL

Why would you lose me?

ANNIE

The book is almost finished. Your legs are getting better. Soon you'll be able to walk. You'll be wanting to leave.

PAUL

Why would I want to leave? I like it here.

ANNIE

That's very kind of you, but I'll bet it's not altogether true.

PAUL

It is.

She slowly reaches into the pocket of her bathrobe and pulls out a .38 Special.

ANNIE

I have this gun, and sometimes I think about using it.

She is absentmindedly clicking the empty gun.

ANNIE

I better go now. I might put bullets in it.

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

CUT TO:

PAUL, stunned, listening, waiting--

--here 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:

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 will be judged by Him."

VIRGINIA

What?

BUSTER

They're hauling Misery into court.

VIRGINIA

That's nice.

BUSTER

(mutters under his breath)

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

CUT TO:

ANNIE'S KITCHEN.

The kitchen KNIVES on the counter.

CUT TO:

PAUL, now using both arms, forcing his body up toward them.

This isn't easy, it was a bitch the first time he tried it, but nothing's going to stop him now. He's leaning against the cupboard, using it for balance--

--his balance starts to go but he won't let it as we

CUT TO:

THE KNIVES, AS HIS HAND grabs the largest one, a fat-handled sharp beauty and

CUT TO:

PAUL, and you can sense the relief as he begins to lower himself to the floor.

CUT TO:

THE STUDY

PAUL, back in his wheelchair, knife in his lap, carefully opening drawers of little tables, looking inside. He closes them, moves on, unmindful of the rain. Now--

CUT TO:

THE SHELF OF PAUL SHELDON BOOKS. As before--

--except the "My Life" scrapbook is gone.

CUT TO:

PAUL, glancing around--

--and there it is, on a coffee table in the living room. Also on the table are a roll of Scotch tape, a pair of scissors, and a copy of Newsweek. Paul wheels toward the table and the book, which is as big as a folio Shakespeare play and as thick as a family Bible.

CUT TO:

THE LIVING ROOM

PAUL, opening the book.

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: "Investment Banker 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."

Now we're in Pennsylvania: "New Hospital Staff Announced."

And here come those phrases again on page after page--"After Long Illness." "After Long Illness."

"After Long Illness."

CUT TO:

PAUL, transfixed; he keeps on turning the pages--the states keep changing, moving west. Pennsylvania to Minnesota, Minnesota to North Dakota. And always the clippings reporting deaths and deaths and--

--and now we're in Colorado. "NEW HEAD MATERNITY NURSE NAMED." And now the dead are young and helpless; babies. More and more of them.

PAUL
(stunned)
Holy shit.

Then a headline which reads:

"HEAD MATERNITY NURSE QUESTIONED ON INFANT DEATHS"

Next page: "MISS WILKES RELEASED."

Next page: "THREE MORE INFANTS DIE."

Next page, at last: "DRAGON LADY ARRESTED."

Then a photo: the front page of the Rocky Mountain Gazette. Annie on the courthouse steps. "DRAGON LADY CLAIMS INNOCENCE," under which there is a statement by Annie Wilkes.

Paul turns quickly to the next page and a very large headline:

"DRAGON LADY FOUND NOT GUILTY"

PAUL just sits there, shaking his head in bewilderment.

CUT TO:

THE BOOK, as Paul turns the LAST page.

CUT TO:

PAUL, stunned and now we find out why, as we

CUT TO:

THE PAGE IN THE BOOK. It's an article from Newsweek magazine, a picture of Paul's car being hauled up out of the snow. Above it this caption: "Presumed Dead--Paul Sheldon."

CUT TO:

PAUL. Slamming the book shut, putting it back on the coffee table, then quickly turning his wheelchair as we

CUT TO:

PAUL, steering his wheelchair toward 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. He is faced with the same problem there--so he struggles into bed and, lying on his back, he rests the knife on his chest and stares up at the ceiling.

DISSOLVE TO:

PAUL'S WINDOW, hours later. The rain has stopped.

CUT TO:

PAUL--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 and hides it under the covers. 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. 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, allowing himself to relax, slips the knife under the mattress. As the TV DRONES ON, Paul lies staring up at the ceiling.

DISSOLVE TO:

OUTSIDE THE FARMHOUSE. NIGHT.

We hear a clap of THUNDER and once again the rain pours down.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP: PAUL--eyes closed. There is another 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 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, 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

(in a soft voice)

Paul, I know you've been out.

PAUL

What?

ANNIE

You've been out of your room.

PAUL

No, I haven't.

ANNIE

Paul, my little ceramic penguin in the study always faces due south.

PAUL

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

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

CUT TO:

ANNIE, as she brings the fat-hand led knife out of her skirt pocket.

ANNIE

Is this what you're looking for? I know you've been out twice, Paul. 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 know I left my scrapbook out, and I can imagine what you might be thinking of me. But you see, Paul, it's all okay.

CUT TO:

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

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

CUT TO:

PAUL, staring at her; waiting.

ANNIE

Last night it came so clear. I realize you just need more time. Eventually, you'll come to accept the idea of being here. 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. 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.

And with that, she reaches down out of sight and comes up holding a 16-inch piece of 4 x 4 wood.

PAUL

Annie, whatever you're thinking about,
don't do it.

CUT TO:

ANNIE. She wedges the 4 x 4 firmly between his legs, just
above the ankles, secures it and adjusts his feet.

ANNIE

Now don't fuss, Paul.

PAUL

Why would I run away? I'm a writer,
Annie--it's all I am--and I've never
written this well--even you said
that this is my best, didn't you?

ANNIE picks up a sledgehammer.

PAUL

Didn't you? Why would I leave a place
where I'm doing my best work? It
doesn't make any sense.

CUT TO:

ANNIE, positioning herself to the side of his right ankle.

ANNIE

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

CUT TO:

ANNIE: CLOSE UP.

ANNIE
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 become more intrusive and we can tell what it is: a car horn HONKING.

FADE IN ON:

SILVER CREEK and ANNIE in her Cherokee, HONKING for another car to get a move on.

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 Gazette.

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 at the other car, calling out, "You poop!" She enters the store.

CUT TO:

BUSTER, staring straight ahead. Something is gnawing at him.

CUT TO:

VIRGINIA, in his office, tidying the 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 3 x 5
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 the desk.

CUT TO:

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

CUT TO:

LIBRARY STACKS

BUSTER, wearing bifocals, sits poring over bound volumes of
The Rocky Mountain Gazette.

CUT TO:

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

CUT TO:

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN GAZETTE, as the pages turn.

--only now they stop moving.

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, "DRAGON LADY CLAIMS INNOCENCE."

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

CUT TO:

BUSTER. He takes the 3 x 5 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:

ANNIE, carrying a bag of feed, followed by MISERY, the sow, comes into view. She slows, smiles, waves--

ANNIE

Hi, Punkin.

CUT TO:

PAUL, staring out at her.

ANNIE

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 SILVER CREEK. 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. He speaks to the guy who sits behind the counter nearby; these two have known each other forever.

BUSTER

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 coffee money inside, closes the register.

BUSTER

Has she been buying any odd things lately?

PETE

Miz Wilkes? Same old stuff.

(beat)

--Lest you call paper 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. Liberace music playing in the background. From the start, PAUL'S 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 over a week.

PAUL

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

ANNIE

Don't talk to me like that.

PAUL

(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 make me burn my book, you drive a sledgehammer into my ankles...

ANNIE

I'll drive a sledgehammer into 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.

CUT TO:

A ROAD. Empty. Hold for a moment--now a car appears around a curve.

CUT TO:

THE CAR. BUSTER is driving fast.

CUT TO:

PAUL in his room. He sits as before, by the window. He doesn't move. Now he closes his eyes, stretches, sighs as we

CUT TO:

THE KITCHEN

ANNIE, busily making cocoa.

CUT TO:

BUSTER IN HIS CAR. He stops at a mailbox. The name on the box is WILKES. Buster turns his car slowly into the driveway by the mailbox.

CUT TO:

PAUL. He yawns, opens his eyes briefly. Closes them. In the distance now, growing more and more visible is Buster's car--

--and now PAUL'S EYES go open wide, and he's staring out the window at the car as it keeps on coming, closer, closer and

CUT TO:

BUSTER, looking around. He's driving very slowly, carefully.

CUT TO:

PAUL. Fixating on the window and now it's all going to be all right, everything's going to be all right--

--and then ANNIE is on him, hypodermic needle in hand, jabbing it into his arm. He desperately tries to fight her off, but the drug starts to take hold. He tries to grab her by the neck, but she fights him off as she wheels him out of the room, down the hall and towards the cellar door.

ANNIE
I don't think I'll ever understand

you. I cook your meals, I tend to you practically twenty-four hours a day, and you continue to fight me. When are we going to develop a sense of trust?

ANNIE opens the cellar door. PAUL is all but limp by now. As she picks him up and starts to carry him down the steps--

CUT TO:

BUSTER pulling up in front of the house. As he gets out of his car--

CUT TO:

ANNIE placing Paul on the cellar floor and heading up the stairs. PAUL is out.

CUT TO:

BUSTER heading up the steps to the front door.

CUT TO:

ANNIE stashing the wheelchair in the hall closet. 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)

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 quite
some time now, and...

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. Please.

BUSTER

Thank you.

ANNIE lets BUSTER in, closes the door. They linger in front
of Paul's door. Buster idly checks out the hallway.

ANNIE

'Course you must know about that
horrible accident.

BUSTER nods and wanders into the living room. ANNIE follows.
He crosses into the study and checks out a bookcase that
contains the complete works of Paul Sheldon. One shelf below
contains Annie's infamous scrapbook.

ANNIE

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

CUT TO:

ANNIE. She's so moved. Buster wanders into the kitchen.

ANNIE

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, trying to fight the drug; just his eyes flutter.

CUT TO:

ANNIE and BUSTER heading back down the hallway toward Paul's room.

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.

BUSTER enters Paul's room. ANNIE follows.

ANNIE

God told me, since I was his number-one fan, that I should make up new stories as if I was Paul Sheldon. So, went to town. And I bought a typewriter. And paper to type on. The same kind Paul Sheldon used. And I turned the guest bedroom into a writing studio. Would you like to see it?

BUSTER

Sure.

ANNIE

It's right this way.

BUSTER takes a look in the bathroom. ANNIE waits for him.

ANNIE

It's right here. I knew how he wrote, the kinds of words he used, the wonderful stories he told--

(moved)

--I've spent the last four weeks trying to write like Paul Sheldon.

(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 just 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
(holding up pages from the manuscript)
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.

ANNIE
Well, I just thought--oh, look at me. You'd think I'd never had a house guest before. Would you like something to drink?

BUSTER
Sure.

ANNIE
How does a nice cup of cocoa sound?

BUSTER
Sounds good.

As she exits into the kitchen.

ANNIE
There's some already made.

BUSTER lingers in Paul's room for a beat, then goes into the hallway.

BUSTER
Must get lonely, living out here all by yourself.

ANNIE
I always say if you can't enjoy your own company, you're not fit company

for anyone else.

BUSTER

You got a point there...

As Buster moves up the stairs--

CUT TO:

PAUL, still fighting the drug. His arm twitches almost involuntarily, grazing the barbecue.

CUT TO:

BUSTER opening the door to Annie's room. He looks around and just as he is about to turn to leave--

CUT TO:

ANNIE, standing right in front of him.

ANNIE

Here you are.

BUSTER heads down the stairs, ANNIE follows.

BUSTER

Thanks, Miz Wilkes, but I don't want to take up any more of your time. I best be going.

ANNIE

But you didn't even taste your cocoa.

They cross to the front door.

BUSTER

I'm sure it's wonderful, but really should be getting back.

BUSTER opens the door.

CUT TO:

PAUL stirring.

CUT TO:

BUSTER and ANNIE at the door.

BUSTER

If you don't mind, perhaps I could pay you another visit sometime.

ANNIE

I'd be delighted. Now that you know the way...

With that, she closes the door. We stay with BUSTER. He stands on the front porch for a beat, thinking, then starts heading down the porch steps. Just as he reaches about halfway down, we HEAR A LOUD CRASH coming from inside the house.

CUT TO:

PAUL--he has managed to partially fight his way through the drug, and in waking has accidentally knocked over the barbecue. He fights to clear the cobwebs.

CUT TO:

BUSTER

Miz Wilkes, are you all right?

There is no answer. He quietly moves into the house.

BUSTER

Miz Wilkes?

Again, no answer.

CUT TO:

PAUL, still fighting to gain complete consciousness.

PAUL

(weakly)

Here. I'm down here. Down here.

CUT TO:

BUSTER. Hearing Paul's muffled call for help, he tracks the sound to the cellar door. As PAUL continues to call out, Buster looks around, sees no one, and opens the cellar door. The shaft of light from the open door pours down on Paul, who is still lying on the floor.

BUSTER

Mr. Sheldon?

But before Paul can answer, there's the sound of a LOUD EXPLOSION. Seemingly from nowhere a hole is ripped through Buster's chest, knocking him out of frame, revealing Annie, smoking shotgun in hand, standing at the top of the cellar steps.

ANNIE

Don't feel bad, Paul. It had to happen. I've been waiting for this sign.

ANNIE walks toward BUSTER'S BODY and very casually takes his gun out of its holster.

ANNIE

I've known for some time why I was chosen to save you. You and I were meant to be together forever. But now our time in this world must end. But don't worry, Paul. I've already prepared for what must be done. I put two bullets in my gun, one for you and one for me. Oh, darling, it will be so 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 her .38 Special 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. And I know we must die. But it must be so that Misery can live. We have the power to give Misery eternal life. We must finish the book.

ANNIE

But the time is now. Soon others will come.

PAUL

It's almost done. By dawn we'll be able to give Misery back to the world.

ANNIE stares at Paul. She could go either way on this. Then, without a word, she turns and goes back up the stairs.

ANNIE

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

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

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM. NIGHT.

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.

ANNIE

Oh, Paul. It's beautiful.

PAUL

Three more chapters to go.

She looks at him now, enthralled.

ANNIE

The stranger staying at the Inn, is he someone from Misery's past?

PAUL

Maybe.

ANNIE

This is so exciting. It's Windthorne, her first love, right?

PAUL

Maybe. Are you ready for the next chapter?

He taunts her with it.

ANNIE

(brimming with enthusiasm)

Oh you!

She takes the pages and goes.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM. LATER.

PAUL types a moment then rips out the page and starts over.

CUT TO:

ANNIE, putting the coffee down for him, putting the pages back on the main pile.

ANNIE

(more excited now
than the last time)

It WAS Windthorne. I knew it--what
does that do to her love for Ian?--

(thinks)

--of course, if she hadn't thought
Windthorne was murdered she never
would have fallen in love with 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'm glad you like it.

ANNIE

Paul, this will be our legacy.

PAUL

It will.

He hands her a few more pages, she starts reading as she
exits.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM. MUCH LATER.

PAUL rubs his eyes. For a moment, he sags, but he fights it.
He puts a clean page into the typewriter.

ANNIE bursts in.

ANNIE

Oh, Paul. I'm dying. Does she wind
up with Ian or Windthorne? You have
to tell me.

PAUL

You'll know very soon. I'm starting
the last chapter. And when I finish,
I want everything to be perfect.
I'll require three things.

ANNIE

What things?

PAUL

You don't know?

ANNIE

(smiling)

I was fooling, silly.

(ticking them off)

You need a cigarette, because you used to smoke but you quit except when you finish a book, and you just have one, and the match is to light it. And you need one glass of champagne.

(thinks)

Dome Pear-igg-non.

PAUL

Dome Pear-igg-non it is.

AS ANNIE exits.

CUT TO:

THE WINDOW

The first light of morning is starting to break through.

CUT TO:

PAUL, stretching. He makes sure everything is set.

PAUL

(calling out)

Annie! Annie!

With that, she enters.

ANNIE

Yes, Paul.

PAUL

I'm almost done.

ANNIE

Oh, Paul, this is so romantic. Ian and Windthorne dueling for the right to Misery's hand. Does Ian win? Oh, don't me. It's Windthorne, right?

PAUL

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

ANNIE

(dying from the suspense)

Ahh!!!

She exits; PAUL adjusts the manuscript on the table and then types the last line.

CUT TO:

ANNIE IN THE KITCHEN. She takes the bottle of Dom Perignon out of the icebox, places it on a tray with two glasses-- opens a drawer--takes out the gun--places it in her pocket-- then takes out the hypodermic needle and places it on the tray.

CUT TO:

PAUL'S ROOM

ANNIE enters with the tray. She sets it down on the table.

ANNIE

Did I do good?

PAUL

You did perfect. Except for one thing.
This time we need two glasses.

He takes the last page out of the typewriter.

ANNIE

Oh, Paul.

As soon 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. He grabs the last chapter and twists the last few pages together torch style. He douses it with the fluid and holds the match out of sight.

He smiles as we

CUT TO:

ANNIE entering with the second glass...

PAUL

It's all right here, Annie. Remember how for all those years no one ever knew who Misery's real father was, or if they'd ever be reunited? It's all right here. Will Misery finally lead her countrymen to freedom? Does she finally marry Ian or will it be Windthorne? 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, shards 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

No, no, NOT MISERY--NOT MY MISERY...!

He drops the last chapter into the soaked manuscript and

CUT TO:

THE MANUSCRIPT, as KABOOM!, 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, trying to smother the flames--

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
cocksucker...

As she struggles to her feet, she pulls out the gun and shoots at Paul, hitting him in the shoulder. Just as she's about to shoot again, Paul quickly wheels the chair up to her, throws himself out of the chair, and tackles her. The gun flies out of her hand and lands in the hallway, going off as it lands. 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 throat. She makes horrible sounds, spitting the charred chunks of manuscript out of her mouth. Shards of glass are in her hair. Now a shriek and a tremendous jerk of her body and

CUT TO:

PAUL, falling away --

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--heading for the door, she takes a step away from Paul, then another, then

CUT TO:

PAUL, suddenly kicking out with his shattered leg, screaming in pain as it crashes into her ankle and

CUT TO:

ANNIE, trying to keep her balance, not doing well, her arms windmilling as she fights for balance one last moment, fights and loses, and now, as she topples over--

CUT TO:

THE TYPEWRITER as she falls and her head slams into it, collides with the sharp metal and a great wound opens in her head. There is one final cry. Blood pours. It's over. All over. We are looking at a dead body.

CUT TO:

PAUL, exhausted, panting, lying there, trying to gather his energy. He starts to crawl for the door. Just as he reaches the doorjamb, an arm grabs his leg, and

CUT TO:

PAUL, shrieking, 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 as he turns and

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:

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. 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 collapses, exhausted against the wall opposite the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

PAUL. HOURS LATER. It is dawn. He is awakened by a loud smashing at the front door. After a couple of heart-stopping pounds,

CUT TO:

THE FRONT DOOR smashes open, revealing two cops with guns drawn.

THE POLICEMEN, hurrying 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 in the cellar. She killed him.

OLDER COP
Annie Wilkes?

PAUL
Yeah. She's in there.

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--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 there.

CUT TO:

PAUL: CLOSE UP. In shock.

DISSOLVE TO:

PALM COURT, PLAZA HOTEL

This legend appears: ONE YEAR LATER

MARCIA SINDELL is seated at a table. PAUL enters, walking briskly, and he's never looked this good before. He's gained his weight back, his color is normal again. He appears to be, for the first time in the movie, a jaunty, happy figure.

PAUL

Sorry I'm late. Jenny's basketball game went into overtime. If anybody ever told me I'd have a daughter who'd get a triple double, I'd...

SINDELL

Did they win?

PAUL

Yeah. They're in the semis.

SINDELL

Here it is.

(big moment)

Very first copy.

And she hands him a wrapped package. PAUL sits, begins unwrapping it. It's a book. A new one by Paul Sheldon. The Higher Education of J. Phillip Stone. Paul turns it over gently in his hands.

CUT TO:

SINDELL

SINDELL

The word I'm getting is the Times review is gonna be a love letter.

PAUL

That'd be a first.

SINDELL

And my contacts at Time and Newsweek tell me they're both raves. And don't laugh--for the first time, I think you've got a shot at some prizes.

PAUL

(flatly)

Great.

SINDELL

I thought you'd be thrilled. You're being taken seriously.

PAUL

I'm delighted the critics are liking it, and I hope the people like it, too. But it's not why I wrote the

book.

CUT TO:

PAUL: CLOSE UP. There is a genuine sense of peace about him. He has been through the fire and survived.

PAUL

I like it. Remember how you once said I live my whole life as if I'm in danger of being found out? Well, I believe I've managed to get that guy down on paper.

(He touches the book.

Beat.)

Don't think I'm completely nuts, but in some way, Annie Wilkes, that whole experience, helped me.

SINDELL

Paul, since you brought her up, I have to ask you this, or I'd be drummed out of the agents' union-- what about a non-fiction book? The truth about what went on in that house.

PAUL

Gee, Marcia, 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.

SINDELL

Now you've hurt me, Paul.

As Paul glances around...

CUT TO:

PAUL, looking past MARCIA.

CUT TO:

DESSERT TROLLEY, some distance away, being pushed by a waitress. It is ANNIE.

CUT TO:

PAUL AND SINDELL

SINDELL

I thought you were over it.

PAUL

I am. Well, maybe not completely--

He glances toward the trolley.

CUT TO:

THE DESSERT TROLLEY, moving inexorably closer to PAUL. ANNIE reaches down and pulls out a very sharp knife.

CUT TO:

PAUL AND SINDELL

PAUL

I don't know if you can ever be totally over something like that--I just don't think about it as much anymore, and when I do, it's not so terrifying.

CUT TO:

ANNIE, with the knife raised.

CUT TO:

PAUL, staring up at ANNIE.

PAUL

I mean, once they found her body, my nightmares stopped.

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