

*Early morning. The small front porch of Annie's small house. Buster is the sheriff of the nearest town, Silver Creek. He comes up the porch, looks around a bit. Looks for a bell to ring. There is none. It is freezing out-still, he takes of his glove to prepare to knock on the door.*

*Annie opens the door just as he's about to knock.*

**ANNIE.** Oh my!

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

**ANNIE.** I'm not all that used to visitors out here. What can I do for you, Sheriff?

**BUSTER.** Ms. Wilkes, isn't it?

**ANNIE.** That's right.

**BUSTER.** I'm sorry to be bothering you so early, Ms. Wilkes. I've been going nuts with phone calls from New York-so I'm asking everyone in these parts if they've seen something. There's a writer, comes here often from New York; he was supposed to show up back home a few days ago and he didn't. Guess he checked out of the Silver Creek Lodge two weeks back, and now there's people back East scared something bad happened to him.

**ANNIE.** *(Shocked.)* Writer from New York? Oh my God, Paul Sheldon was staying there! He's my hero! I got all the Misery books inside. I'm just reading the new one, Misery's Child. Is it him you're looking for?

**BUSTER.** *(Shows photo.)* Yes, ma'am. Here's a photo here.

**ANNIE.** Oh my God. What are people saying at the Lodge?

**BUSTER.** Nothing unusual, ma'am. Checked out the morning of that blizzard. Said he was driving a '65 Mustang. Blue. Doubt it had chains and that was some mother of a storm-guess he coulda gone off the road near here. I was up in the helicopter yesterday and it's hard to see if a car's buried. Snow's still piled high.

**ANNIE.** *(Shakes her head, visibly upset.)* I don't think God would let anything bad happen to Paul Sheldon.

**BUSTER.** Yeah, I don't know that he's been gone long enough to worry. I told his agent when she called, maybe he decided to make a stop on his way home. Or maybe he had enough of this damn winter, went to Florida instead. But she insists he would have been in touch.

**ANNIE.** I have to believe he's safe. Will you let me know if you hear anything, Sheriff?

**BUSTER.** Oh, I think everyone will hear about it if we find him. And please, call me Buster, everyone does.

**ANNIE.** All my fingers are crossed for you, Buster.

*Buster nods.*

*Annie closes the porch door-very softly.*