BUSTER/ANNIE

~~BUSTER. I don't watch much TV.~~

START ANNIE. ~~Oh, well…~~

She closes the front door.

What can I do for you, Sheriff?

BUSTER. I felt I should come by, ma'am. When I was here in February, you told me Paul Sheldon was your hero.

ANNIE. Is my hero. *(Excited.)* Oh my God—you're here to tell me you found him?

BUSTER. No ma'am. We didn't find him, but we did find his car. Crashed it off the side of a hill, just a few miles from here. The snow's all melted that way now. Looked like it sat at the bottom of the hill for months.

ANNIE. Are you telling me he's dead?

BUSTER. Well, I can't say for sure, ma'am, but the FBI is one hundred percent sure. They found his car and told me he must have crawled out after the crash and died.

ANNIE. But you don't think so?

BUSTER. Oh most likely they're right. They're the FBI. I thought the car door looked like it may have been pried open, but that didn't add up to them. They think—he couldn't have gotten too far if he was injured, and the body would have to be close by. But since we haven't found a body, I figured there's really only one explanation.

He lets that hang there a moment.

ANNIE. What's that?

BUSTER. The coyotes got to him.

ANNIE. No! Please, please no!

BUSTER. I hate being the one to tell you all this. Pete at the general store tells me you really are Paul Sheldon's biggest fan. Says you have him set the first copy aside for you every time a new novel comes out.

ANNIE. I told you as much.

BUSTER. Well, at least you got to see him in town.

ANNIE. I never saw him. I'd certainly remember if I had.

BUSTER. That's right, you said that.

ANNIE. I'm sure he came here for peace and quiet and not to be bothered by the likes of us.

BUSTER. It's strange, both of them coming to an end at the same time.

ANNIE. Both of them?

BUSTER. Paul Sheldon and Misery.

She keeps looking at him.

Oh… I picked up Mr. Sheldon's last Misery book. Read the whole thing.

ANNIE. You did? What did you think?

BUSTER. Sure came as a shock to me, Misery dying like that at the end. Didn't see that coming.

ANNIE. Misery's not dead.

BUSTER. How's that?

ANNIE. Misery's not dead, Sheriff. I just know it.

END

Pause.

~~BUSTER. Well, I don't think there'll be any more books, Ms. Wilkes.~~

ANNIE. There already is.

Buster looks back at her.

As his number one fan, I know he would never have left the Lodge unless he'd finished a new book. So when he turns up, or when you find his body, you'll find the next Misery.

BUSTER. I hope you're right about that.

ANNIE. I'm certain. And you should read the whole series. From the beginning.

BUSTER. Well maybe I'll do that. You stay out of trouble now.

She turns and goes into the house.