

# PAUL SIDE #2

To celebrate Misery's return—I could never have done it without you.

ANNIE. Oh Paul—It would be an honor.

*And she dashes excitedly out of the room.*

PAUL. *(A whisper.)* Please, God...

*We stay locked on Paul, as the lights fade.*

## Fifteen

*Liberace begins to sing for us.*

*Louder than he's yet been.*

*Lights up on the kitchen.*

*Annie has set up a table with her best silverware and china.  
There are wine glasses, a bottle of Gallo red wine.*

*The whole place is as romantic as Annie can make anything.*

*And Annie—we've never seen her dolled up like this. She  
wheels Paul to the table.*

START  
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ANNIE. I hope you like it.

PAUL. This looks wonderful.

*He takes one.*

And you look very pretty.

*Annie starts to reply, is too embarrassed, stops.*

ANNIE. *(Delighted, almost shy.)* Well I'm not going to tell you what you can say.

*The awkward silence goes on.*

PAUL. Where did you get a dress like that?

ANNIE. It was my mother's. It's old-fashioned.

PAUL. I like it, it's modest.

ANNIE. It is modest. I don't mean to pry, but I read in *People* magazine that you were seeing that 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 *People* magazine.

ANNIE. I knew it. I knew it wasn't true.

*Beat.*

PAUL. You know, when I was a kid, nurses were my heart's desire.

*Annie is dumbfounded, cannot speak.*

The uniform was part of it, I'm sure, but not just that. Who knows, maybe I just wanted someone kind to take care of me. The way you're taking care of me now.

*After a moment—*

I bet you were something in your nurse's uniform.

*Annie, again, cannot speak. They eat. There is awkward silence as they chew.*

Wine?

*He lifts the bottle, and begins to fill her glass with red wine. Annie blushes and tries to put her hand over the glass.*

ANNIE. Oh no, no, no, no.

*Paul succeeds in pouring her a large glass of wine. Annie sheepishly accepts. He pours himself a glass. They look at one another. Paul smiles. Then he takes a bite of food.*

PAUL. I have never, not in all my life, eaten meatloaf to compare with this—WOW—

ANNIE. Well, I have a secret—I only use fresh tomatoes—and to give it that little extra zip, I mix in some Spam with the ground beef.

PAUL. You cannot get this in a New York restaurant, that's for sure.

*She is thrilled, does her best to hide it.*

ANNIE. It was my mother's recipe.

PAUL. You must have been very close with her.

ANNIE. Yes, I was. In my whole life, she was the only person who never let me down. Well, her and Misery.

PAUL. Annie?

*She manages to look at him.*

I think we should have a toast.

END

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ANNIE. A toast?