

AUDITION INFORMATION



MISERY

Written by WILLIAM GOLDMAN
Based on the novel by STEPHEN KING

Directed by Matthew Watson

Audition Dates: August 28 & 29, 2022
Performance Dates: Oct 20-Nov 6, 2022

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in auditioning for a Theatre Tallahassee production!

If you've auditioned for us before, welcome back!

If this is your first time auditioning at Theatre Tallahassee, we're thrilled to have you! We've been around now for 70 years, and we wouldn't have lasted so long without new people, new talent, and new voices.

Whether you're a veteran performer who just moved to town or you've never been on stage before but really want to try, we'd like to encourage you to audition for shows at Theatre Tallahassee.

We're aware that auditioning can be an overwhelming experience, even if you've done it a hundred times before. We've put this information booklet together for you to help you learn a little more about the play, the characters you will be reading for, and to give you some idea of what to expect during auditions.

Please read over the character list and director's comments, and pay attention to any specific audition requirements for this show. Then review any script sides provided. You will also need to fill out and submit an audition form.

Break a leg!

MAINSTAGE SEASON

This production is part of our Mainstage Season of shows. Theatre Tallahassee's Mainstage auditorium seats up to 271 audience members a night. Shows run for three weekends, with opening night on a Thursday, and the following weekends running Friday through Sunday. The second Saturday is a double show day, with both a matinee and evening performance. Additional shows may be added depending on ticket sales, or benefit performances.

ABOUT OUR AUDITIONS

Theatre Tallahassee auditions are open, and we want to encourage diversity – we try our best to discourage directors from pre-casting roles. And unless specified in the character list, most roles are open to all races and ethnicities.

Know what you're auditioning for. Do a little research on the play and characters. Audition sides are included in this packet, as well as a character breakdown to give you some idea of which roles you'd like to audition for.

Audition requirements and formats may vary from show to show. Some directors prefer “closed” auditions where actors wait in a separate room until called. Some like to have every actor in the room. Some prefer monologues, or cold readings, or need you to sing. This audition packet should give you an idea of what you can expect.

We know that it can be disappointing not to get a part. We always have more people audition than we have roles for, and there are many factors that directors have to weigh when casting. We encourage you to audition often. Just because you weren't right for one role, doesn't mean that you won't be perfect for another.

We look forward to seeing you on stage. Break a leg!

COVID CHANGES

At this time, Theatre Tallahassee is following the current CDC guidelines for COVID safety as much as we are able. Distanced seating and masking for audience members may be required, depending on the current COVID risk in our area.

Theatre Tallahassee requires all actors, crew, and staff to be fully vaccinated at least 14 days prior to the first in-person rehearsal. Other precautions such as temperature checks, and mask-wearing plus testing are possible, pending the environment at the time that rehearsal commences.

A reminder: as a non-profit, community theatre, we are unable to provide payment for actors, and we understand that the risks of an unmasked performance at this time may be too high for some volunteer actors, despite all the precautions we will be taking to minimize that risk. Please consider this before auditioning.

MISERY

THE PLAY

Misery follows successful romance novelist Paul Sheldon, who is rescued from a car crash by his “number one fan,” Annie Wilkes, and wakes up captive in her secluded home. While Paul is convalescing, Annie reads his latest book and becomes enraged when she discovers the author has killed off her favorite character, Misery Chastain. Annie forces Paul to write a new *Misery* novel, and he quickly realizes Annie has no intention of letting him go anywhere. The irate Annie has Paul writing as if his life depends on it, and it does.

ABOUT THE DIRECTORS

MATTHEW WATSON

Matthew Watson is thrilled to be returning to Theatre Tallahassee. He moved to Tallahassee in 2004 and since then he’s been hooked, performing in productions such as *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Oklahoma*, *All My Sons*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*. A graduate of the Jacksonville University BFA Theatre Program, as he moved through college he started finding his calling behind the scenes Assistant Directing *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Chess*, and *Ragtime*; and directing the Alpha Psi Omega production of *Jack & Jill*. Since moving back to Tallahassee, his directing credits include *Red*, *The Crucible*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, *Company*, *Dancing Lessons*, *the Pajama Game*, and *Deathtrap*.

MISERY

IMPORTANT DATES

○ AUDITIONS

Sun, August 28 at 7pm

Mon, August 29 at 7pm

Please see next page for Audition info

Tues, August 30 at 7pm

Call backs, by director invitation only

■ REHEARSAL PERIOD

Rehearsals are currently scheduled Mon-Fri (7pm-10pm). Final schedule and times may vary depending on schedules.

■ TECH WEEK/DRESS OCT 10-19

Tech runs & dress rehearsals.

○ PERFORMANCES*

OCT 20-23

OCT 28-30*

NOV 4-6

Thurs (opening week only), Fri, Sat shows at 8pm. Sun matinees at 2pm. Second Saturday (Oct 29) is a double show day with a 2pm matinee, and 8pm show. Call times are usually 1.5 hours before curtain.

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Actors must be able to commit to all performance dates & tech/dress rehearsals.

Actors must also be willing and able to wear masks for in-person rehearsals, and take COVID tests as required.

MISERY

CHARACTERS

The parts of Paul and Annie will require physical action and movement that includes (but may not be limited to) lifting or assisting in lifting another human, moving one's own body weight with upper body only, moving furniture and large set pieces, and exerting physical action and effort during dialogue.

All roles are open to any race or ethnicity.

ANNIE WILKES (*Female Presenting, 40s - 60s - any Race*) A nurse who comes to Paul's rescue (seemingly), Annie seems to be a kind, tender woman who cares deeply for Paul, even if she does seem slightly off. As Paul grows to know her it becomes clearer that Annie is manipulative, cunning, and hides a deep set and terrifying malice behind her cheery simple façade.

PAUL SHELDON (*Male Presenting, Late 30s - Early 60s - any race*) A famed romance novelist tired of the series that has brought him the most acclaim. Returning from a retreat to finish his most recent work, he is involved in a terrible car crash that leaves him with broken legs and unable to care for himself. He's thoughtful, if not a touch arrogant, and extremely crafty. He quickly realizes how dangerous his situation is and must use anything and everything at his disposal to survive.

BUSTER (*Male Presenting, Late 30s - Late 60s, any race*) The Sherriff of a nearby town searching for Paul. Very friendly with possible hopes of something more with Annie.

MISERY

AUDITION INSTRUCTIONS

Auditions will consist of readings from the sides provided in this script. Sides do not need to be memorized.

If you need special accommodations for auditions (i.e. uncomfortable with in-person auditions due to Covid, unable to attend audition dates, disability accommodations, etc.), please contact the director, Matthew Watson at MWatson2711@gmail.com

Download and fill out an Audition Form ahead of time:

[Audition Form \(Word Format\)](#)

[Audition Form \(PDF Format\)](#)

Forms can also be accessed by visiting TheatreTallahassee.org/Auditions

MISERY

SIDE 1

Annie
Paul**PAUL.** Ms. Wilkes. Ms. Wilkes!*Annie enters.***ANNIE.** *(Kindly.)* Well you don't have to scream your head off, you know I'm on the other side of the door.**PAUL.** Could I please have my pills now? My legs, very painful...**ANNIE.** Oh poor dear, it's like clockwork how your pain comes. I have your pills right here.*She reaches into her pocket and takes out the pills. She holds them. Then sweet, almost shy:*

Could I ask you a favor? I took the liberty of peeking inside your leather case. You don't mind, do you?

PAUL. Ms. Wilkes ...**ANNIE.** Please, call me Annie. All my friends do.**PAUL.** Annie. Please.**ANNIE.** Anyway, I see there's a manuscript in there.*Beat.***PAUL.** And you want to read it?**ANNIE.** You don't mind, do you? You wouldn't mind if I read it? I wouldn't presume to do such a thing without your permission. I respect you too much.*Paul pauses.***PAUL.** Sorry, but I have a hard and fast rule about who can read my work at the early stage. Only my agent, my editor, and anyone who saves me from freezing to death in a car crash.*Annie realizes this answer is yes. And it's a big moment for her.***ANNIE.** Oh my, you'll never know what a rare treat you're giving me.*Beat.*

Heavens! Forgive me for prattling away and making you feel all oogy.

She gives him the pills. He eagerly swallows them.

There you go. You'll feel better in a few minutes. I just can't believe that my hero is recovering in my very own home. The man who gave the world Misery Chastain. And here he is: Paul Sheldon himself!

*He breathes a sigh of relief and puts his head back on the pillow to rest. Annie exits to get the manuscript.***PAUL.** *(To her offstage.)* I guess it was kind of a miracle ... you finding me.**ANNIE.** *(From off)* Not a miracle at all — in a way, I was following you.**PAUL.** Following me?Sides do NOT need to
be memorized.

MISERY

Annie reenters with the leather case.

ANNIE. Well, seeing as how I'm your number one fan and all, it wasn't any secret to me you were staying at the Silver Creek Lodge these past five weeks. You finish all your new books there, any good fan knows that. So some nights, I'd just tool on down there and look up at the light in your cabin. And I'd try to imagine what was going on in the room of the world's greatest writer.

PAUL. *(Can't help but smile.)* Say that last part again — I couldn't quite hear you.

ANNIE. *(Smiles back.)* The world's greatest writer. Well, the other afternoon I was on my way home from town, racing 'cause I'd heard that the storm was coming in hard, and there you were leaving the Lodge. And I wondered why in the world would a literary genius go for a drive when there was this monster storm coming?

PAUL. The literary genius didn't know there was a storm coming.

ANNIE. Lucky for you I did. *(Very sincere.)* Lucky for me too, because now you're alive and you can write more books. Because the world needs more Misery books.

Paul says nothing, but he is moved by her sincerity.

MISERY

SIDE 2

Annie

ANNIE. I was married, you know. Years ago. In Denver. That did not work out. That was very, very hard. I was a nurse at a big hospital, so I threw myself into work just to get through the days. I worked nights too. Night shifts can be slow at a hospital so I had a lot of time to read. That was when I first discovered Misery. She came right at the point I needed her most. And after her horrible childhood, her miserable stepfather, to keep fighting like she does, she's always been a fighter. The whole world can be against her, but she knows that there's a justice higher than that of man, that God rewards the good in us. She makes me know I'm not alone in the world.

MISERY

SIDE 3

Annie
Paul

Paul's room is dark. Outside a storm has begun. Growing. Paul lies in bed.

Suddenly, the door to the room flies open. Annie looks different now than she ever has. And boy, is she ever not smiling.

ANNIE. You dirty bird! SHE CANNOT BE DEAD! MISERY CHASTAIN CANNOT BE DEAD!

PAUL. Annie — please listen to me —

ANNIE. HOW COULD YOU KILL HER?!

PAUL. In 1871 women died in childbirth all the time — but her spirit is the important thing, and Misery's spirit is still alive —

ANNIE. I DON'T WANT HER SPIRIT! I WANT HER — AND YOU MURDERED HER!!

PAUL. I didn't murder her —

ANNIE. — THEN WHO DID?

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

ANNIE. SLIPPED AWAY?! SHE DIDN'T JUST SLIP AWAY! YOU KILLED HER! Do you think I was born yesterday? A writer is God to the people in a story, he made them up just like God made us up. As far as Misery goes, God just happens to have a couple of broken legs and be in my house, eating my food, SO DON'T TELL ME YOU DIDN'T KILL HER BECAUSE YOU DID IT! YOU DID IT! YOU MURDERED MY MISERY!!!

She nearly hits him but manages to stop herself.

I thought you were good, Paul, but you're not good, you're just another dirty birdie —

PAUL. Annie ...

ANNIE. I think I better go now. I don't think I better be around you for a while. I don't think it's — wise.

PAUL. Go? Where?

Annie moves to the door.

Will you be back to give me my medication?

ANNIE. Oh I think you've caused enough suffering and now it's your turn to suffer. And don't even think about anybody coming for you, not the doctors, not your agent, not your daughter, because I never called them. Nobody knows you're here. And you better hope nothing happens to me because if I don't come back, you die.

MISERY

SIDE 4

Annie
Paul

ANNIE. I'm sorry, Paul, but this is not right. You'll have to do it over again.

PAUL. (*Stunned.*) You don't like it? What happened to "I'll treasure whatever you do"?

ANNIE. Like it? Of course I like it — it's beautiful! But it's not right. Throw it all out. Except for the part of naming Gravedigger Wilkes after me, you can leave that in.

PAUL. Maybe you're being a little hasty here?

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

PAUL. Fair? How is it not fair? It's Misery, alive, just like you asked for!

ANNIE. Remember, Ian did ride for Dr. Cleary at the end of the last book, that's okay, but his horse fell jumping that fence and Ian broke his shoulder and he never reached the doctor. So this book can't start with an "experimental blood transfusion" that saves her life, because she was dead and buried in the ground. You cheated.

PAUL. I wouldn't call that cheating —

ANNIE. When I was growing up in Bakersfield my favorite thing in the whole wide world was to go to movies on Saturday afternoons for the chapter plays —

PAUL. (*Cutting in.*) — cliffhangers —

ANNIE. (*Suddenly angry.*) — I know that Mister Man! They also call them chapter plays — I'm not stupid, you know.

Beat.

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 —

She is back in her childhood more strongly now.

— and welded the doors shut and tore out the brakes and started him to his doom 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 —

She's remembering it all so clearly.

— 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 — (*More powerful 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? Are you too stupid to remember? — THEY JUST CHEATED US — THIS WASN'T FAIR —" (*Shouting now.*) "He was in the car when it went over! HE DIDN'T GET OUT OF THE COCKADOODIE CAR!"

PAUL. — they always cheated like that in cliff — (*Stops himself.*) — in chapter plays.

MISERY

ANNIE. But not you. Not with my Misery. Misery was buried in the ground at the end of the last book, Paul, so you'll have to start from there.

Pause.

Do you understand?

MISERY

SIDE 5

Annie
Buster

ANNIE. 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.

MISERY

Didn't see that coming.

ANNIE. Misery's not dead.

BUSTER. How's that?

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

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.

MISERY

SIDE 6

Annie
Paul**ANNIE.** Can't sleep all day, Punkin.*Paul barely stirs. He has been in bed all week.*

Give us a smile?

PAUL. *(Giving her the finger.)* Here's one.**ANNIE.** Such a cutie.**PAUL.** *(And now the other finger.)* Here's another one.

No question, Paul is a lot stronger now than he has been.

ANNIE. No more jokes, Paul – it's time for you to get back to your writing – it's been more than a week and I've been patient.**PAUL.** It's weird, but for some reason, a couple of crushed ankles haven't done that much for my creative juices. Now, as the French are so fond of saying, "get the fuck out of here:"**ANNIE.** The sheriff just paid me a visit.*Paul cannot help but look over at her.*

Oh, that got you, didn't it. Well, news flash, Mister Man. The FBI thinks you're dead. It's just you and me now, Paul.

Beat.

You owe me your life. I know you'll keep that in mind. You need to start writing again.

*Pause.***PAUL.** I figured out the ending. Want me to tell you what happens?**ANNIE.** Be careful, Paul.*Annie looks at him.***PAUL.** I think you're really going to dig this. Misery and Ian get into a big fight, I'm sure you know the drill; "I never loved you, blah, blah, blah:" She storms out and takes Barkley with her ... you know, Barkley, her dog, her big Irish setter ... well, they go to a hotel. An inn. At the bar, over a few drinks, she tells Barkley how awful Ian is. One thing leads to another, they head upstairs and well, can you guess what happens? She fucks her dog!**ANNIE.** You are less than charming today.**PAUL.** What are you going to do about it? Kill me? I dare you.**ANNIE.** I'll drive a sledgehammer into your man gland if you're not nicer.**PAUL.** Be my guest.*And he spreads his legs.***ANNIE.** That is so disgusting— *(Then resolved.)* I can make you write it.**PAUL.** Can you?*They stare at each other. Impasse.*Sides do NOT need to
be memorized.

After a moment – the sound of knocking on the porch door.

ANNIE. *You say one fucking word.*

Annie's hand goes over Paul's mouth as he lets out a muffled scream. She grabs Paul's arm. Annie takes the cap off a hypodermic needle. He struggles with her – hard – keeping her arm at bay, getting his hands around his neck to strangle her.

But she's the more desperate, jams the needle in.

I don't understand you.

Paul continues to struggle until ... Paul's eyes close – whatever she injected him with takes effect.

When are we going to develop a sense of trust?

CREDITS

MISERY

Written by WILLIAM GOLDMAN

Based on the novel by STEPHEN KING

Director: Matthew Watson

Stage Manager: Lizzie Cochran

THE THEATRE

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