

Erdrich commentary

[Life](#), [Death](#)



In *The Red Convertible* Louise Erdrich uses the foreshadowing and the symbolism of boots and water to show the death of Stephan and the car as a symbol of the loss of a lifelong brotherhood in the last 40 lines. Louise Erdrich uses the symbol of boots to show the weight of the PTSD from war in Stephan's life to the point where he was alive, he was truly not living a healthy life because he was weighted down by the war and his experiences this is shown when he first arrived home and would not leave the TV screen. On page 9 is Stephan physical death, he says calmly " My boots are filling" which is foreshadowed earlier on page 8 when the two of them; Stephan and Marty; are tossing beer can into " the river and see how far, how fast, the current takes them before they fill up and sink". This is exactly what happened to Stephan when he jumped into the river to " cool... off" page 9. With the foreshadowing and the event of Stephan is creates a dramatic but a calming effect in the since that Stephan is okay and accept that the current is too fast and he would not survive because the boots are filling up acting like weights to sink him. This can be interpreted in many ways as if he did not know that he was going to be swept away and that he committed suicide but the unknowing of the river and the effect of the alcohol consuming impaired his judgment and he jumped into the river and the effect of his actions lead to his death. In the last 8 lines of the short story Marty takes Stephan's most valued possession; the red convertible, he leads it into the river right alongside Stephan when he is swept away with the current. The effect of the river engulfing the car is Marty's way of coping with Stephan's lost. With the actions of Marty it seems to be as Marty is accepting the fact of the physical death of Stephan. Marty does not go into the beginning stages

of grief at this time because Stephan was dead way before this time, right around the time he came home from war with PTSD was his emotional death. Without Stephan's emotions he was not himself because he was characterized in the beginning as a fun and care free type of person. So once returning from war, it can be said as the war killed Stephan not the river. The brotherhood of the two was lost when the car was swept under the current and Stephan was not himself or could be himself so the lost of the brotherhood between Stephan and Marty was also killed when Stephan returned from war. Marty is accepting this fact and is in the numb stage of grief and watches his brother and the car as it says on page 9 " I wait. " Yet the fact the Erdrich ends with the lines " And then there is only the water, the sound of it going and running and going and running and running. " Show that Marty just moves on in life and cannot really morn because his brother was dead way before his death so once his death occurred Marty was almost done with grieving so he could move on in life. Marty could not sit and dwell on Stephan's death forever because life still going on even when a death occurs. In The Red Convertible Louise Erdrich uses symbols of the car, water, and the boots to show the process of life and death. Death is on its own time clock but when it was Stephan's time to go Marty was almost done with grieving because Stephan was dead when he returned home with PTSD and no emotions to be himself again. The brotherhood of the two was lost when the car was swept under the current of the river right besides Stephan's dead body.