

# Louise edrich the red convertible essay example

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



**What do you think Henry's boots symbolize in the story?**

Henry's boots in the story is a symbol of war and the dark memories it has on the soldier. Despite the fact that the war was over, Henry could not stop wearing his boots, this implied that he still held on to the lifestyle and the memories that the war had on him (Erdrich 464). This implies that that a change in lifestyle such as being deployed on a war assignment has the ability of affecting a person's life permanently. This is most probably because of the traumatic experiences and the fact that the soldiers are made to engage in activities they do not necessarily like.

It is also the very effects of the war that were symbolized by his boots that ultimately led to his death. At the end of the story, we are informed that his boots were filled with water. This is also the moment when Henry drowns (Erdrich 460). His changed lifestyle was symbolized by the boots and once the boots drowned, it also meant the end of his life. The boots hence symbolized Henry's life during and after the war. They acted as a symbol of protection and once they were tampered with, his life was ultimately tampered with.

Do you think that Henry's death at the end of the story is an accident, or do you think that it is suicide?

The death of Henry at the end of the story must have been suicidal. This is evidenced by the fact that he had a lot of traumatic experiences in Vietnam that changed his life completely. It was not easy for him to adjust to the old lifestyle (Erdrich 585). The war changed his perception and made him a social misfit once he was back. It was for the fact that nobody seemed to empathize with his situation nor understood him that could have led to his

death. He lost meaning in life and realized that he could not reverse what had already happened.

The memories of the war, which involved shading of blood could have also been traumatizing and depressing. The fact that he could not completely get over what happened during the war even worsened the situation. The post war made him feel guilty and misplaced in the society (Erdrich 500). He was held in between living in the past and moving on, which was quite difficult for him. He hence thought that dying was the only alternative to solving his issues.

### **Do you think Henry's mother makes the right decision by not taking him to a doctor?**

Henry's mother was insensitive to the fact that war had negatively affected his son. He ignored the changed behavior of his son and most probably thought that it was a temporary feeling that would subside by time. He failed to recognize that his son had adopted a completely different path and lifestyle that involved inhuman acts (Erdrich 157). She did not understand how the same had made him feel and changed his outlook. The decision not to take him to hospital was not a right one as he would have helped him recuperate from the effects of the war. It was normal for Henry to be traumatized and act the way he did, however, not taking him for medical assistance implied that she did not empathize with his situation.

Most war soldiers feel neglected after the war mainly because nobody understands their situation. They hence take the blame for being engaged in wrong acts and behavior by people who do not know what they went through (Erdrich 236). Henry needed psychological help to help him get rid of the

past memories and adjust a peaceful environment. However such efforts should not only be left to the family members who may not appreciate the changed behavior but also be done by the support of the government that deployed them to war zones. There is also need for public education on war veterans so that they understand and appreciate them.

### **Works cited**

Erdrich, Louise. *The Red Convertible: Selected and New Stories, 1978-2008*.

HarperCollins:

New York, 2010.