

JULIE

SHORT STORY EXCERPT: RED SATIN RIBBONS

Summary: Robert Aaron Jaeger and Lilly Radford have something in common. They've both lost someone to the same automobile accident and they both have tried to commit suicide due to their loss. What they don't know is that they need each other. When Robert escapes the pressures of his business and the mounting responsibility to raise his four-year-old daughter alone, to go white water river rafting, he's not prepared for what he sees. Before he launches his boat in the river, he sees a woman standing at the river's edge. Something's not right. As he approaches, she falls in. He launches his raft and goes after her. Later, the two of them will find out that they have more in common than a suicide attempt. In spite of their agony over the ones they loved, through each other they will find hope and love to move forward.

intercedent?
sw canyon?

Yesterday, bright sunshine had given the canyon life, but it lacked the defiance and ferocity Robert craved. Today, the hazy, damp, cold atmosphere encouraged the canyon's rage. Instead of waters on the river's bank barely covering the tops of his shoes, as it had the day before, it swallowed his ankles. Rough, violent currents heightened his need to white water raft one last time before he headed home to Seattle. He needed to hurry. He noticed everything around him in Glenwood Canyon had settled into motley shades of gray, including the sky.

Why?

Robert's heart pounded. Up for the challenge, he looked to his left to make sure no one had launched their raft. Fifteen yards away, he saw something a bit unusual—frightful. A woman stood on the riverbank with no life jacket, no raft, no helmet. Robert's heart sank. Something's not right.

New #?

When?
Is he with group??
Can alone with raft?

he thought

P-S
= 17-year-old
A girl, then.

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State it as a fact (story det)
instead of this
observing it.

same
at

Not necessary

In his slow gait towards her, with a firm grip on his raft, Robert noticed she wore nothing more than a thin dress with its jacket hanging off her shoulders. And she showed no signs of sensitivity to the pelting winds.

"Hey! What are you doing? Get out of there before you drown!" Robert didn't think she heard him. How could she? His voice had succumbed to fear. Nothing but vapors and low funereal sounds escaped his lips. Robert took in a large gulf of air and bellowed, "Get out of there! Get out! You'll drown!" He picked up his pace and waved his arms. He still didn't get her attention. He ran, and dragged his banana raft behind him.

important?

He fell three times. After his fourth fall, he dropped the raft and got within four feet of her. When she moved, he stopped and tried to grab her. He failed. He eyed the raft behind him, but couldn't decide whether to go for his paddle or lunge for her again. Without warning, she lifted her hands waist-high and stepped in the river knee deep. He had to do something. Soon.

"Lady, don't do it!" He rushed to his raft and snatched the paddle. "Here, grab hold. I'll pull you in." His fear increased as angry currents pushed up her thighs and swayed her fragile frame back and forth.

or not?

As that an expression?

She looked over her shoulder and locked deep-set eyes on his. Her beardless Van Gogh stare almost devoured him, as if death clutched him by the throat and pulled him under. He knew that look and the power that generated it. Despair anesthetized her and left enough spark to shove her over the edge. It gave people like her the courage to step off ledges, shoot or hang themselves. His own hand-to-hand combat with despair had placed him in a tightly sealed garage while he waited for darkness to come. The car, however, ran out of gas. He needed to help this woman—to tell her that if he had survived, so could she.

Too short a reference to his suicide

When? Why?
Dedicate 2 paragraph to this — not just a brief mention.

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He balanced himself on the wet, rocky bank then extended the paddle once more, but she plunged into the river.

he cried out/implored (indicate speaker)

"Nooo! No. No. No. No. No." He watched in horror as ferocious currents swept her away. He tried to get to his raft, but one bad footing after another thrust his knees onto wet stones. One last time, he stood and steadied himself then made it to his raft and went after her.

Powerful waters dipped and propelled his raft upward, slammed it too close to shore. Frantic, he stabbed his paddle into the embankment and maneuvered to the middle of the river. Turbulence blindsided him and catapulted the raft high in the air. The raft bounced so hard he almost lost control and went overboard.

She's dead. That's the first thought that came to mind when he saw her facedown in the river. Her arms and legs bobbed on the surface. A ball of dark hair ^{bobbed} ~~daubed~~ in the waters like clods of algae. Her body took on the likeness of a ~~battered~~ ragdoll. In desperation, he paddled as fast as he could against wind and currents. His muscles burned. His jaws ~~tightened~~. He thrust his paddle through the waters and fought with all he had until he moved close enough to the riverbank and jumped out. Waters clawed his empty raft and pushed it downstream.

He bent over the woman and pried her loose then planted his feet onto the riverbank with hard, deliberate steps. Her liquid body dripped while weak limbs draped over his arms. He laid her on a muddy knoll and knelt beside her. After he squared his shoulders, Robert faced the sky and expanded his lungs to breath.

With what precious minutes remained, he lifted her hand and felt for a pulse. Nothing. He pressed two fingers on her neck. Still, nothing. He extended his arms to perform CPR. Careful. He believed she weighed less than a hundred pounds. Too much pressure to her chest and

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~~without a doubt~~ he would crack her sternum. After three failed attempts, he wondered if it mattered.

P.O.V. shift

This is someone's child. What if Mary Elizabeth had fallen into a pool? I'd want someone to do everything in ^{his} ~~their~~ power to revive my baby.

"Come on! Breathe. One . . . Two . . . Three."

he implored/commanded/pleaded

He stared at her chest then her face. For a split second, he saw his wife, thought he'd stepped into another world to bring her back. Her death, this woman's impending death, together, stirred ^{an insatiable} ~~a voracious~~ need to save this woman.

"Don't you die on me! Don't you dare die on me!" He pressed harder. "One . . . Two . . . Three. Come on!" Crack! Her sternum broke. He rubbed his trembling hands on his face. Should I do this? He had no choice. He couldn't go through another death. Not now. ~~Whoever this woman was, he had to save her.~~ He had to save this woman.

"One . . . Two . . . Three. Come on, lady. Breathe. Breathe! One . . ."

spitwater

The moment she coughed, he closed his eyes and released a deep sigh. Other than the rising and falling of her chest, she lay lifeless. Lips, purple. Nail beds, pale. Fingertips rutted deeper than dried prunes.

I might say just "Winkled"

As he dug in his waterproof waist pack to retrieve his cell, he stared at ^{the} a mop of unruly strands. ^{that} They covered half her face. The wet parallel folds in her dress led him to bare thighs, white panties, and the skinniest legs he had ever seen. He tugged on the saturated garment and covered her thighs before he noticed she had on one shoe. The bare foot had red blotches of color on uneven toenails.

Julie

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After he dialed 911, he looked at the cloud-cluttered sky. ~~Hurry and answer the dog-gone~~
~~phone.~~ Colorado's mountain air had dropped ten degrees. The clouds had darkened. He tugged at his collar and hunched his shoulders against freezing winds.

Call reception on river? could he hear over noise of rapids?

"Glenwood Emergency Dispatch. What's your emergency?"

"A woman fell in the river at Glenwood Canyon." He placed the call on speaker phone then lifted the woman's eyelids, mimicking what he once saw on television, though he had no idea why.

"Someone fell in the river? Where about?"

"Near the highway. I think she tried to commit suicide. She's unconscious."

"How long has she been unconscious?"

"I'm not sure. Ten— Fifteen minutes. Twenty maybe."

"Do you have flares?"

"No, but like I told you, I can see the highway from where I am. Please hurry."

"I've dispatched emergency personnel, but I need you to stay on the line. It's important to keep her warm. Sir, what's your name?"

"Robert Jaeger. My name is Robert Jaeger." He took off his life jacket and covered her.

Robert didn't think she looked older than seventeen—much younger than his wife. Why did she want to die? Six weeks ago, he'd wanted to do the same thing. Why hadn't he checked the fuel gauge?

The advice of an old friend came to mind. "Unless there's a crucial lesson to be learned from reflection, don't look back. The present kills the darkness." Robert tucked the cell phone under his arm, rubbed his hands together, blew warm air on his fingertips.

"Mr. Jaeger? Mr. Jaeger!"

the disembodied voice woke him from his reverie OR dispatcher's voice called out

What part? (underline?)

too much p-zelled into 1st

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Robert heard faint echoes of his name and grabbed the phone. "Yes. I'm here."

"How long ago did this happen?"

"From the time she fell in the river until now, about twenty or twenty-five minutes ago."

"Does she have other injuries?"

Robert swept wet, coarse hair from her face. Her left eye looked deformed. "She has a large bruise under the left eye." He removed the life jacket and rolled the woman onto her right side followed by a roll to her left. "She's bleeding." Robert tore her dress. He gasped.

"What is it? What's wrong?"

*in purpose?
why not move the fabric?*

"She has a deep cut stretching from her naval to her right side. It looks to be about an inch deep." Robert stood and pressed the back of his hand against his mouth. After several steps, he spewed on the bank.

Have the dispatcher respond with a question.

New #

*WELL, I'M INTRIGUED.
FROM THE SUMMARY, I KNOW THERE'S A LOVE STORY.
BUT, IS THE 17-YEAR-OLD HIS LOVE INTEREST?
I'M CONCERNED.
DOES HE DRESS THE WOUND?
DO EMERGENCY PERSONNEL COME SOON?
ARE THERE OTHER PARTS?*

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There's nothing more riveting than coming upon someone attempting to end his/her life. With that in mind, there's little that the author has to add to make it a tension filled scene. Just a word here - Don't over-write the action. It's the emotion involved in attempting to right a wrong. This woman and his wife are both before him and he doesn't want to lose another life. Mention the physical manipulation of the resuscitation, but concentrate on the insecurity and fear of another loss. We have to feel the anxiety of the main character. Very difficult to do.

As I read this piece, the aspect of the writing that is most in trouble is the missing actions. This section needs a major tightening up of thoughts and actions.

Good luck.

Summary: Robert Aaron Jaeger and Lilly Radford have something in common. They've both lost someone to the same automobile accident and they both have tried to commit suicide due to their loss. What they don't know is that they need each other. When Robert escapes the pressures of his business and the mounting responsibility to raise his four-year-old daughter alone, to go white water river rafting, he's not prepared for what he sees. Before he launches his boat in the river, he sees a woman standing at the river's edge. Something's not right. As he approaches, she falls in. He launches his raft and goes after her. Later, the two of them will find out that they have more in common than a suicide attempt. In spite of their agony over the ones they loved, through each other they will find hope and love to move forward.

Yesterday, bright sunshine had given the canyon life, but it lacked the defiance and ferocity Robert craved. Today, the hazy, damp, cold atmosphere encouraged the canyon's rage. Instead of waters on the river's bank barely covering the tops of his shoes, as it had the day before, it swallowed his ankles. Rough, violent currents heightened his need to white water raft one last time before he headed home to Seattle. He needed to hurry. He noticed everything around him in Glenwood Canyon had settled into motley shades of gray, including the sky. Robert's heart pounded. *(Start here. The information to this point is peripheral. Let's see the main character and not the water. The call later on will ID the location.)* Up for the challenge,

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he *Robert* looked to his left to make sure no one had launched their raft. Fifteen yards away, he saw ~~something a bit unusual—frightful. A~~ a woman stood on the riverbank with no life jacket, no raft, no helmet. ~~Robert's~~ *His* heart sank. ~~Something's not right.~~

In his slow gait towards her, with a firm grip on his raft, Robert noticed she wore nothing more than a thin dress with its (*matching?*) jacket hanging off her shoulders. ~~And she showed no signs of sensitivity to the pelting winds.~~

“Hey! What are you doing? Get out of there before you drown!” Robert didn't think she heard him. How could she? His voice had succumbed to fear. Nothing but vapors and low funereal sounds escaped his lips. Robert ~~took in a large gulf of air and~~ bellowed, “Get out of there! Get out! You'll drown!” He picked up his pace and waved his arms. He still didn't get her attention. He ran(,) ~~and dragged~~ *dragging* his banana raft behind him.

He fell three times. After his fourth fall, he dropped the raft and got within four feet of her. When she moved, he stopped and tried to grab her. He failed. He eyed the raft behind him, but couldn't decide whether to go for his paddle or lunge for her again. Without warning, she lifted her hands waist-high and stepped in the river knee deep. He had to do something. Soon.

“Lady, don't do it!” He rushed to his raft and snatched the paddle. “Here, grab hold. I'll pull you in.” His fear increased as angry currents pushed up her thighs and swayed her fragile frame back and forth.

She looked over her shoulder and locked deep-set eyes on his. Her ~~beardless Van Gogh~~ stare almost devoured him, ~~as if death clutched him by the throat and pulled him under.~~ He knew that look ~~and the power that generated it.~~ (POV shift) Despair anesthetized her and left enough spark to shove her over the edge. It gave people like her the courage to step off ledges, shoot or hang themselves. (POV shift) His own hand-to-hand combat with despair had placed him in a

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tightly sealed garage while he waited for darkness to come. The car, however, ran out of gas. He needed to help this woman—to tell her that if he had survived, so could she.

(Try to stay in one character's head. If there's a shift, have a new paragraph.)

He balanced himself on the wet, rocky bank then extended the paddle once more, but she plunged into the river.

"Noooo! No. No. No. No. No." He watched in horror as ferocious currents swept her away. He tried to get to his raft, but one bad footing after another thrust his knees onto wet stones. *(If he's going to be the hero, don't have him flopping around all over the place. The tension is already there. Just tell the story.)* One last time, he stood and steadied himself then made it to his raft and went after her.

Powerful waters dipped and propelled his raft upward(??? *Upward? Up stream?*), slammed it too close to shore. Frantic, he stabbed his paddle into the embankment and ~~maneuvered~~ *(pushed the raft)* to the middle of the river. Turbulence blindsided him and catapulted the raft high in the air. The raft bounced so hard he almost lost control and went overboard. *(I'm having a difficult time following what is going on here? The raft is in the air. Then it bounced off what? Then, once back on the river? He gained control. Try to make the sequence plausible.)*

She's dead. That's the first thought that came to mind when he saw her facedown in the river. Her arms and legs bobbed on the surface. A ball of dark hair ~~daubed~~ *was floating* in the water(s) like clods of algae. Her body took on the likeness of a battered ragdoll. In desperation, he paddled as fast as he could against wind and currents. His muscles burned. His jaws tightened. He thrust his paddle through the waters and fought with all he had until he moved close enough

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to the riverbank and jumped out. Waters clawed his empty raft (*away*) and pushed it downstream.

He bent over the woman and pried her loose (*from what?*) then planted his feet onto the riverbank with hard, deliberate steps. Her-liquid- *limp* body dripped while weak limbs draped over his arms. (*You need to tell us that he reached under her and lifted her up before he laid her on the muddy knoll. Sequence is important.*) He laid her on a muddy knoll and knelt beside her. ~~After he squared his shoulders, Robert faced the sky and expanded his lungs to breath.~~

With what precious minutes (*please explain what precious minutes were and until what happened.*) remained, he lifted her hand and felt for a pulse. Nothing. He pressed two fingers on her neck. Still, nothing. He extended his arms to perform CPR. Careful. He believed she weighed less than a hundred pounds. Too much pressure to her chest and without a doubt he would crack her sternum. (*Too much of a jump in time. Fill us in on the three attempts. What constitutes a failed attempt?*) After three failed attempts, he wondered if it mattered.

This is someone's child. What if Mary Elizabeth had fallen into a pool? I'd want someone to do everything in their power to revive my baby.

"Come on! Breathe. One . . . Two . . . Three."

He stared at her chest then her face. For a split second, he saw his wife, thought he'd stepped into another world to bring her back. Her death, this woman's impending death, together, stirred a voracious need to save this woman.

"Don't you die on me! Don't you dare die on me!" He pressed harder. "One . . . Two . . . Three. Come on!" Crack! Her sternum broke. He rubbed his trembling hands on his face. Should I do this? (*Can't change from "I" to "he".*) He had no choice. He couldn't go through another death. Not now. Whoever this woman was he had to save her.

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"One . . . Two . . . Three. Come on lady. Breathe. Breathe! One . . ."

The moment she coughed, he closed his eyes and released a deep sigh. Other than the rising and falling of her chest, she lay lifeless. Lips, purple. Nail beds, pale. Fingertips rutted deeper than dried prunes.

As he dug in his waterproof waist pack to retrieve his cell, he stared at ~~(a)~~ her mop of unruly strands. They covered half her face. The wet parallel folds in her dress led him to bare thighs, white panties, and the skinniest legs he had ever seen. He tugged on the saturated garment and covered her thighs before he noticed she had on one shoe. The bare foot had red blotches of color on uneven toenails. *(This is a description that needs an emotional reaction to her physical appearance. Put some people in the scene.)*

After he dialed 911, he looked at the cloud-cluttered sky. Hurry and answer the dog-gone phone. Colorado's mountain air had dropped ten degrees. The clouds had darkened. He tugged at his collar and hunched his shoulders against freezing winds.

"Glenwood Emergency Dispatch. What's your emergency?"

"A woman fell in the river at Glenwood Canyon." He placed the call on speaker phone then lifted the woman's eyelids, mimicking what he once saw on television, though he had no idea why.

"Someone fell in the river? Where about?"

"Near the highway. I think she tried to commit suicide. She's unconscious."

"How long has she been unconscious?"

"I'm not sure. Ten— Fifteen minutes. Twenty maybe."

"Do you have flares?"

"No, but like I told you, I can see the highway from where I am. Please hurry."

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"I've dispatched emergency personnel, but I need you to stay on the line. It's important to keep her warm. Sir, what's your name?"

"Robert Jaeger. My name is Robert Jaeger." He took off his life jacket and covered her. Robert didn't think she looked older than seventeen—much younger than his wife. Why did she want to die? Six weeks ago, he'd wanted to do the same thing. Why hadn't he checked the fuel *(gas gauge on his car.)* gauge?

The advice of an old friend came to mind. "Unless there's a crucial lesson to be learned from reflection, don't look back. The present kills the darkness." Robert tucked the cell phone under his arm, rubbed his hands together, blew warm air on his fingertips.

"Mr. Jaeger? Mr. Jaeger!"

Robert heard faint echoes of his name and grabbed the phone. "Yes. I'm here."

"How long ago did this happen?"

"From the time she fell in the river until now, about twenty or twenty-five minutes ago."

"Does she have other injuries?"

Robert swept wet, coarse hair from her face. Her left eye looked deformed. "She has a large bruise under the left eye." He removed the life jacket and rolled the woman onto her right side followed by a roll to her left. "She's bleeding." Robert tore her dress. He gasped.

"What is it? What's wrong?"

"She has a deep cut stretching from her naval to her right side. It looks to be about an inch deep." Robert stood and pressed the back of his hand against his mouth. After several steps, he spewed *(Puked? Barfed? Threw up? Don't understand spewed.)* on the bank.

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Sue

Summary: Robert Aaron Jaeger and Lilly Radford have something in common. They've both lost someone to the same automobile accident and they both have tried to commit suicide due to their loss. What they don't know is that they need each other. (When Robert escapes the pressures of his business and the mounting responsibility to raise his four-year-old daughter alone, to go white water river rafting, he's not prepared for what he sees.) Before he launches his boat in the river, he sees a woman standing at the river's edge. Something's not right. As he approaches, she falls in. He launches his raft and goes after her. Later, the two of them will find out that they have more in common than a suicide attempt. In spite of their agony over the ones they loved, through each other they will find hope and love to move forward.

- Toofast a switch - start w/ today

Yesterday, bright sunshine had given the canyon life, but it lacked the defiance and ferocity Robert craved. Today, the hazy, damp, cold atmosphere encouraged the canyon's rage. Instead of waters on the river's bank barely covering the tops of his shoes, as it had the day before, it swallowed his ankles. Rough, violent currents heightened his need to white water raft one last time before he headed home to Seattle. He needed to hurry. He noticed everything around him in Glenwood Canyon had settled into motley shades of gray, including the sky. Robert's heart pounded. Up for the challenge, he looked to his left to make sure no one had launched their raft. Fifteen yards away, he saw something a bit unusual—frightful. A woman stood on the riverbank with no life jacket, no raft, no helmet. Robert's heart sank. Something's not right.

had

not quite clear on his position - standing on a beach, etc

slow down
need a better picture of surroundings

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In his ^{why} slow gait towards her, with a firm grip on his raft, Robert noticed she wore nothing more than a thin dress with its jacket hanging off her shoulders. And she showed no signs of sensitivity to the pelting winds. ^{away from} ?

"Hey! What are you doing? ^{fall in?} Get ~~out of~~ there before you drown!" Robert didn't think she heard him. How could she? His voice had succumbed to fear. Nothing but vapors and low funereal sounds escaped his lips. Robert took in a large ^{gulp?} gulp of air and bellowed, "Get out of there! Get out! You'll drown!" He picked up his pace and waved his arms. He still didn't get her attention. He ran and dragged his banana raft behind him. ^{earlier}

He fell three times. After his fourth fall, he dropped the raft and got within four feet of her. When she moved, he stopped and tried to grab her. He failed. He eyed the raft behind him, but couldn't decide whether to go for his paddle or lunge for her again. Without warning, she lifted her hands waist-high and stepped in the river knee deep. He had to do something. Soon.

"Lady, don't do it!" He rushed to his raft and snatched the paddle. "Here, grab hold. I'll pull you in." His fear increased as angry currents pushed up her thighs and swayed her fragile frame back and forth. ^{good}

She looked over her shoulder and locked deep-set eyes on his. Her beardless Van Gogh stare almost devoured him, as if death clutched him by the throat and pulled him under. He knew that look and the power that generated it. Despair anesthetized her and left enough spark to shove her over the edge. It gave people like her the courage to step off ledges, shoot or hang themselves. His own hand-to-hand combat with despair had placed him in a tightly sealed garage while he waited for darkness to come. The car, however, ran out of gas. (He needed to help this woman—to tell her that if he had survived, so could she.) ^{reward} ^{no!}

not yet - save for later in story
don't need

talk about backstory

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Powerful waters dipped and propelled his raft upward, slammed it too close to shore. Frantic, he stabbed his paddle into the embankment and maneuvered to the middle of the river. Turbulence blindsided him and catapulted the raft high in the air. The raft bounced so hard he almost lost control and went overboard. *good*

pick one She's dead. That's the first thought that came to mind when he saw her facedown in the river. Her arms and legs bobbed on the surface. (A ball of dark hair daubed in the waters like clods of algae. Her body took on the likeness of a battered ragdoll) In desperation, he paddled as fast as he could against wind and currents. His muscles burned. His jaws tightened. He thrust his paddle through the waters and fought with all he had until he moved close enough to the riverbank and jumped out. *new word* Waters clawed his empty raft and pushed it downstream.

He bent over the woman and pried her loose then planted his feet onto the riverbank with hard, deliberate steps. Her liquid body dripped while *weak* limbs draped over his arms. He laid her on a muddy knoll and knelt beside her. After he squared his shoulders, Robert faced the sky and expanded his lungs to breathe. *new word*

With what precious minutes remained, he lifted her hand and felt for a pulse. Nothing. He pressed two fingers on her neck. Still, nothing. He extended his arms to perform CPR. Careful. He believed *Probably* she weighed less than a hundred pounds. Too much pressure to her chest and

no-he would help her right away

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without a doubt ^{he'd} ~~he would~~ crack her sternum. After three failed attempts, he wondered if it mattered. ^{more detail}

This is someone's child. What if Mary Elizabeth had fallen into a pool? I'd want someone to do everything in their power to revive my baby. ^{1st tense, not 3rd}

"Come on! Breathe. One . . . Two . . . Three." ^{he yelled}

He stared at her chest ¹ then her face. For a split second, he saw his wife, thought he'd stepped into another world to bring her back. Her death, this woman's impending death, together, stirred a voracious need to save this woman. ^{→ good here, just a hint of his life}

"Don't you die on me! Don't you dare die on me!" He pressed harder. "One . . . Two . . . Three. Come on!" ^{PP} Crack! Her sternum broke. He rubbed his trembling hands on his face. Should I do this? He had no choice. He couldn't go through another death. Not now. Whoever this woman was ¹ he had to save her. ^{paragraph by itself}

"One . . . Two . . . Three. Come on lady. Breathe. Breathe! One . . ."

The moment she coughed, he closed his eyes and released a deep sigh. Other than the rising and falling of her chest, she lay lifeless. Lips, purple. Nail beds, pale. Fingertips rutted deeper than dried prunes. ^{no-too slow → maybe look closer? look for other signs?}

As he dug in his waterproof waist pack to retrieve his cell, he stared at a mop of unruly strands. ^{covering} They covered half her face. The wet parallel folds in her dress led him to bare thighs, white panties, and the skinniest legs ^{he'd} he had ever seen. He tugged on the saturated garment and covered her thighs before he noticed she had on one shoe. The bare foot had red blotches of color on uneven toenails.

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"Glenwood Emergency Dispatch. What's your emergency?"

"A woman fell in the river at Glenwood Canyon." He placed the call on speaker phone, then lifted the woman's eyelids, mimicking what he once saw on television, though he had no idea why.

"Someone fell in the river? Where abouts?" *whereabouts?*

"Near the highway. I think she tried to commit suicide. She's unconscious."

"How long has she been unconscious?"

"I'm not sure. Ten—Fifteen minutes. Twenty maybe."

"Do you have flares?"

"No, but like I told you, I can see the highway from where I am. Please hurry."

"I've dispatched emergency personnel, but I need you to stay on the line. It's important to keep her warm. Sir, what's your name?"

"Robert Jaeger. My name is Robert Jaeger." He took off his life jacket and covered her. Robert didn't think she looked older than seventeen—much younger than his wife. Why did she want to die? Six weeks ago, he'd wanted to do the same thing. Why hadn't he checked the fuel gauge? *→ before that he seems to know what he's doing. doesn't fit that he's unsure here*

The advice of an old friend came to mind. "Unless there's a crucial lesson to be learned from reflection, don't look back. The present kills the darkness." Robert tucked the cell phone under his arm, rubbed his hands together, blew warm air on his fingertips.

"Mr. Jaeger? Mr. Jaeger!"

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"She has a deep cut stretching from her naval to her right side. It looks to be about an inch deep." Robert stood and pressed the back of his hand against his mouth. After several steps, he spewed on the bank.

→ short sentences, if he's shocked by what he sees
good premise. want to know what's going to happen
2 characters, good to keep it to a minimum

- like the premise
- conflict right away (suicide)

Jenn's Comments

Summary: Robert Aaron Jaeger and Lilly Radford have something in common. They've both lost someone to the same automobile accident and they both have tried to commit suicide due to their loss. What they don't know is that they need each other. When Robert escapes the pressures of his business and the mounting responsibility to raise his four-year-old daughter alone, to go white water river rafting, he's not prepared for what he sees. Before he launches his boat in the river, he sees a woman standing at the river's edge. Something's not right. As he approaches, she falls in. He launches his raft and goes after her. Later, the two of them will find out that they have more in common than a suicide attempt. In spite of their agony over the ones they loved, through each other they will find hope and love to move forward.

Yesterday, bright sunshine had given the canyon life, but it lacked the defiance and ferocity Robert craved. Today, the hazy, damp, cold atmosphere encouraged the canyon's rage. Instead of waters on the river's bank barely covering the tops of his shoes, as it had the day before, it swallowed his ankles. Rough, violent currents heightened his need to white water raft one last time before he headed home to Seattle. He needed to hurry. He noticed ^E everything around him in Glenwood Canyon had settled into motley shades of gray, including the sky. Robert's heart pounded. Up for the challenge, he looked to his left to make sure no one had launched their raft. Fifteen yards away, he saw something ~~unusual~~ ^{frightening} — ~~frightful~~. A woman stood on the riverbank with no life jacket, no raft, no helmet. Robert's heart sank. Something's not right.

This is lovely imagery, but doesn't start with the woman ready to jump to

My wait someone had done that?

Is she on the opposite side of the river or the same side as Robert?

If he's thinking this then put it in italics

SHORT STORY EXCERPT: RED SATIN RIBBONS

In his slow gait towards her, with a firm grip on his raft, Robert noticed she wore nothing more than a thin dress with ^a jacket hanging off her shoulders. ~~And~~ she showed no signs of sensitivity to the pelting winds.

"Hey! What are you doing? Get out of there before you drown!" Robert ~~didn't think~~ she ~~didn't~~ heard him. How could she? His voice had succumbed to fear. Nothing but vapors and low funeral sounds escaped his lips. Robert took in a large gulf of air and bellowed, "Get out of there! Get out! You'll drown!" He picked up his pace and waved his arms. He still didn't get her attention. He ran and dragged his banana raft behind him.

He fell three times. After his fourth fall, he dropped the raft and got within four feet of her. When she moved, he stepped ^{stepped into the water} and tried to grab her. He failed. He eyed the raft behind him, but couldn't decide whether to go for his paddle or lunge for her again. Without warning, she lifted her hands waist-high and stepped ^{further into} in the river knee deep. He had to do something. ~~Soon.~~

"Lady, don't do it!" He rushed to his raft and snatched the paddle. "Here, grab hold. I'll pull you in." His fear increased as angry currents pushed up her thighs and swayed her fragile frame back and forth.

She looked over her shoulder and locked deep-set eyes on his. Her ^{empty} ~~beardless~~ Van Gogh stare almost devoured him, ^{like} as if death clutched ^{ing} him by the throat and pulled ^{ing} him under. He knew that look and the ^{desperation} power that generated it. Despair anesthetized her and left enough spark to shove her over the edge. It gave people like ^{them} her the courage to step off ledges, shoot or hang themselves. His own hand-to-hand combat with despair had placed him in a tightly sealed garage while he waited for darkness to come. The car, however, ran out of gas. He needed to help this woman—to tell her that if he had survived, so could she.

Did he get into the water or is he still on land?

- he waded towards her.

Vary your sentence your starters.

→ did the current pull it away? or was he tethered to it?

- why?
- how would the paddle help?
further into

- Is he in the boat now?

Good wording back story of

POV shift. Stay in Robert's head.

SHORT STORY EXCERPT: RED SATIN RIBBONS

- he's still on the river bank?

He balanced himself on the wet, rocky bank, then extended the paddle once more, ~~but~~ she plunged into the river.

again 91

"Nooo! No. No. No. No. No." He watched in horror as ferocious currents swept her away. He tried to get to his raft, but one bad footing after another thrust his knees onto wet stones. One last time, he stood and steadied himself, ~~then~~ ^{hopped into} made it to his raft, and ~~went~~ ^{paddled} after her.

Powerful waters dipped and propelled his raft upward, slammed it too close to shore. Frantic, he stabbed his paddle into the embankment and maneuvered to the middle of the river. Turbulence blindsided him and catapulted the raft high in the air. The raft bounced so hard he almost lost control and ~~went~~ ^{flew} overboard.

She's dead. That's the first thought that came to mind when he saw her facedown in the river. Her arms and legs bobbed on the surface. A ball of dark hair daubed in the water, like ~~clods of algae~~ ^{The current battered her body like a ragdoll.}. Her body took on the likeness of a battered ragdoll. In desperation, he paddled as fast as he could against wind and currents. His muscles burned. His jaws tightened. He thrust his paddle through the waters and fought with ~~all he had~~ until he moved close enough to the riverbank and jumped out. Water clawed his empty raft and pushed it downstream.

Isn't her body being pulled down stream by the current?

He bent over the woman, ~~and~~ ^{loose from what?} pried her loose, then planted his feet onto the riverbank with hard, deliberate steps. Her liquid body dripped while weak limbs draped over his arms. He laid her on a muddy knoll and knelt beside her. ~~After he squared his shoulders,~~ Robert faced the sky and expanded his lungs to breath.

Why would he jump to water? She's in the water.

With what precious minutes remained, he lifted her hand and felt for a pulse. Nothing. He pressed two fingers on her neck. ~~Still,~~ ^N Nothing. He extended his arms to perform CPR. Careful. He believed she weighed less than a hundred pounds. Too much pressure to her chest and

SHORT STORY EXCERPT: RED SATIN RIBBONS

~~without a doubt~~ he would crack her sternum. After three failed attempts, he wondered if it mattered.

This is someone's child. What if Mary Elizabeth had fallen into a pool? I'd want someone to do everything in their power to revive my baby.

"Come on! Breathe. One . . . Two . . . Three."

He stared at her chest then her face. For a split second, he saw his wife, ^{as if} ~~thought~~ he'd stepped into another world to bring her back. Her death, this woman's impending death, together, stirred a voracious need to save this woman.

Just weave a backstory
"~~Don't you die on me! Don't you dare die on me!~~" He pressed harder. "One . . . Two . . . Three. Come on!" Crack! Her sternum broke. He rubbed his trembling hands on his face. Should I do this? He had no choice. He couldn't go through another death. Not now. Whoever this woman was, he had to save her.

- little too melodramatic
"One . . . Two . . . Three. Come on lady. Breathe. Breathe! One . . ."

The moment she coughed, he closed his eyes and released a deep sigh. Other than the rising and falling of her chest, she lay lifeless. Lips, purple. Nail beds, pale. Fingertips rutted deeper than dried prunes. *was she in the water that long?*

grab
As he dug in his waterproof waist pack to ~~retrieve~~ his cell, he ~~stared at~~ a mop of unruly strands. ~~They~~ covered half her face. The wet ~~parallel~~ folds in her dress led him to bare thighs, white panties, and the skinniest legs he had ever seen. He tugged on the saturated garment, ~~and~~ covered her thighs, *and* before he noticed she had on one shoe. The bare foot had red blotches of *polish* ~~color~~ on uneven toenails.

SHORT STORY EXCERPT: RED SATIN RIBBONS

After he dialed 911, he looked at the cloud-cluttered sky. Hurry and answer the dog-gone phone. Colorado's mountain air had dropped ten degrees. The clouds had darkened. He tugged at his collar and hunched his shoulders against freezing winds.

"Glenwood Emergency Dispatch. What's your emergency?"

"A woman fell in the river at Glenwood Canyon." He placed the call on speaker phone then lifted the woman's eyelids, mimicking what he once saw on television, though he had no idea why.

"Someone fell in the river? Where about?"

"Near the highway. I think she tried to commit suicide. She's unconscious."

"How long has she been unconscious?"

"I'm not sure. Ten— Fifteen minutes. ~~Twenty~~ maybe."

"Do you have flares?"

"No, but like I told you, I can see the highway from where I am. Please hurry."

"I've dispatched emergency personnel, but I need you to stay on the line. It's important to keep her warm. Sir, what's your name?"

"Robert Jaeger. My name is Robert Jaeger." He took off his life jacket and covered her.

Robert didn't think she looked older than seventeen—much younger than his wife. Why did she want to die? Six weeks ago, he'd wanted to do the same thing. ^{Luckily, he didn't} Why hadn't he checked the fuel gauge?

The advice of an old friend came to mind. "Unless there's a crucial lesson to be learned from reflection, don't look back. The present kills the darkness." Robert tucked the cell phone under his arm, rubbed his hands together, blew warm air on his fingertips.

"Mr. Jaeger? Mr. Jaeger!"

of good weave
back story

SHORT STORY EXCERPT: RED SATIN RIBBONS

Robert heard faint echoes of his name and grabbed the phone. "Yes. I'm here."

"How long ago did this happen?"

"From the time she fell in the river until now, about twenty ~~or twenty-five~~ minutes ago."

"Does she have other injuries?"

Robert swept wet, coarse hair from her face. Her left eye looked deformed. "She has a ~~large~~ bruise under the left eye." He removed the life jacket and rolled the woman onto her right side followed by a roll to her left. "She's bleeding." Robert tore her dress. He gasped.

"What is it? What's wrong?"

"She has a deep cut stretching from her naval to her right side. It looks to be about an inch deep." Robert stood and pressed the back of his hand against his mouth. After several steps, ^{vomited} he ~~spewed~~ on the bank.

Don't forget the cracked sternum

He didn't notice the bleeding while doing CPR?

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Ed

Summary: Robert Aaron Jaeger and Lilly Radford have something in common. They've both lost someone to the same automobile accident and they both have tried to commit suicide due to their loss. What they don't know is that they need each other. When Robert escapes the pressures of his business and the mounting responsibility to raise his four-year-old daughter alone, to go white water river rafting, he's not prepared for what he sees. Before he launches his boat in the river, he sees a woman standing at the river's edge. Something's not right. As he approaches, she falls in. He launches his raft and goes after her. Later, the two of them will find out that they have more in common than a suicide attempt. In spite of their agony over the ones they loved, through each other they will find hope and love to move forward.

* fascinating premise

Yesterday, bright sunshine had given the canyon life, but it lacked the defiance and ferocity Robert craved. Today, the hazy, damp, cold atmosphere encouraged the canyon's rage.

do you mean the river's rage?

Instead of waters on the river's bank barely covering the tops of his shoes, as it had the day before, it swallowed his ankles. Rough, violent currents heightened his need to white water raft one last time before he headed home to Seattle. He needed to hurry. He noticed everything around him in Glenwood Canyon had settled into motley shades of gray, including the sky.

I don't get this

does he have a boat?

Robert's heart pounded. Up for the challenge, he looked to his left to make sure no one had launched their raft. Fifteen yards away, he saw something a bit unusual—frightful. A woman stood on the riverbank with no life jacket, no raft, no helmet.

Is he alone?

Robert's heart sank. Something was not right.

- * set the scene for us. where is he? what does it look like? what is it like to be there?
- * go through the action one moment at a time, chronologically. tell us what actually happens.
- * fascinating question: what happened to Robert after he woke up in the garage? why did he decide to keep living? perfect gold.

SHORT STORY EXCERPT: RED SATIN RIBBONS

so he has a raft
does he carry it around with him?

In his slow gait towards her, with a firm grip on his raft, Robert noticed she wore nothing more than a thin dress with its jacket hanging off her shoulders. And she showed no signs of sensitivity to the pelting winds. — there are pelting winds?

“Hey! What are you doing? Get out of there before you drown!” Robert didn't think she heard him. How could she? His voice had succumbed to fear. Nothing but vapors and low funeral sounds escaped his lips. Robert took in a large gulp of air and bellowed, “Get out of there! Get out! You'll drown!” He picked up his pace and waved his arms. He still didn't get her attention. He ran and dragged his banana raft behind him.

out of where?

I don't think you can drown by standing on a river bank. — why? what happens

He fell three times. After his fourth fall, he dropped the raft and got within four feet of her. When she moved, he stopped and tried to grab her. He failed. He eyed the raft behind him, but couldn't decide whether to go for his paddle or lunge for her again. Without warning, she lifted her hands waist-high and stepped in the river knee deep. He had to do something. Soon.

I don't get what he's doing

“Lady, don't do it!” He rushed to his raft and snatched the paddle. “Here, grab hold. I'll pull you in.” His fear increased as angry currents pushed up her thighs and swayed her fragile frame back and forth.

ambiguous

this is too complex an image to include in an action scene.

She looked over her shoulder and locked deep-set eyes on his. Her beardless Van Gogh stare almost devoured him, as if death clutched him by the throat and pulled him under. He knew that look and the power that generated it. Despair anesthetized her and left only enough spark to shove her over the edge. It gave people like her the courage to step off ledges, shoot or hang themselves. His own hand-to-hand combat with despair had placed him in a tightly sealed garage while he waited for darkness to come. The car, however, ran out of gas. He needed to help this woman—to tell her that if he had survived, so could she.

only
to
led
to
it

It
woman
where

could

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He balanced himself on the wet, rocky bank then extended the paddle once more, but she plunged into the river. *she's already in*

"Nooo! No. No. No. No. No." He watched in horror as ferocious currents swept her away. He tried to get to his raft, but one bad footing after another *[he fell]* thrust his knees onto wet stones. One last time, he stood and steadied himself then made it to his raft and went after her.

Why can't he walk or stand properly?

Powerful waters *[huh?]* dipped and propelled his raft upward, slammed it too close to shore. Frantic, he stabbed his paddle into the *[?]* embankment and maneuvered to the middle of the river. Turbulence blindsided him and catapulted the raft high in the air. The raft bounced so hard he almost lost control and went overboard.

She's dead. That's *was* the first thought that came to *his* mind when he saw her facedown in the river. Her arms and legs bobbed on the surface. A ball of dark hair *[h.e.c.]* daubed in the waters like clods of algae. Her body took on the likeness of a battered ragdoll. In desperation, he paddled as fast as he could *[?]* against wind and currents. His muscles burned. His jaws tightened. He thrust his

at some point, does he rescue the woman?

Why does he have to paddle against the current? Is she floating upstream? paddle through the waters and fought with all he had until he moved close enough to the riverbank and jumped out. Waters clawed his empty raft and pushed it downstream.

He bent over the woman and pried her loose then planted his feet onto the riverbank with hard, deliberate steps. Her liquid body dripped while *weak* *[?]* limbs draped over his arms. He laid her on a muddy knoll and knelt beside her. After he squared his shoulders, Robert faced the sky and expanded his lungs to breathe.

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Show us what he does of?

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covered

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