Out of the Slump

A 30-Day Reading Rescue Workbook - a five-type slump diagnosis, an honest audit of the stuck book, and thirty dated, logged micro-sessions in five phases that end with your own evidence-tested rescue recipe

Free sample - three real pages from the workbook: Which Slump Are You In? (p.5), Daily Rescue Log: Days 1-2 (p.10) and Ladder 1: Under 150 Pages (p.29). Diagnose + start + stock the shelf: a usable starter - you can run Days 1-2 from the sample alone. Print at 100% on US Letter or A4.

Which Slump Are You In?

Read all five types slowly. Most readers recognise one immediately and a second one partly - the immediate one is your primary type; write the partial one in the margin, because Phase 2 (p.13) will test it. Be honest rather than flattering: the type is a routing instruction, not a judgement, and every type in this list is a normal thing that happens to committed readers.

Type 1 - Wrong Book. The book itself is the wall: you do not dislike reading, you dislike *this* reading. Signs: you read other things happily (articles, a friend's recommendation, the back of the next book) but stall at this one's bookmark; you feel relief when something interrupts it. *Your first move is page 6, taken seriously: this book gets finished, parked or released before Day 1.*

Type 2 - Wrong Length. Ambition outran appetite: the 800-page epic, the trilogy, the complete-anything. Signs: short things still work - you finished a story or an essay recently and enjoyed it - but anything with a three-digit bookmark defeats you in advance. *Your first move is Phase 1 taken literally: nothing over 150 pages until Phase 4, and the ladders on pages 29-32 are your bookshop.*

Type 3 - Wrong Format. The channel is blocked, not the reading. Print hurts your eyes at night; audio wanders off while you drive; the e-reader feels like work because work also lives on screens. Signs: your slump started when your format changed, or when your days did (a new commute, a new baby, new glasses). *Your first move is Phase 2, and Day 7's format trial is the most important day in your thirty.*

Type 4 - Life-Crowded. Nothing is wrong with the book, the length or the format; there is simply no unclaimed ten minutes in your day, and reading lost the auction to everything louder. Signs: you read fine on holiday; you think about books fondly and often; your bookmark has not moved on a workday in weeks. *Your first move is page 4's ten-minute method plus Phase 5's anchor work - and your protocol target is the smallest one in this book, proudly.*

Type 5 - Post-Great-Book. You finished something extraordinary and everything since has tasted like water after wine. Signs: you keep starting good books and putting them down with "not yet, not this one"; you reread passages of *that* book instead of starting anything; the slump has a title and an author. *Your first move is Phase 3's rereads - Day 13 is built for you - and permission, in writing on page 8, to not compare again until Day 24.*

My primary slump type (circle the number): 1 Wrong Book - 2 Wrong Length - 3 Wrong Format - 4 Life-Crowded - 5 Post-Great-Book

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My secondary type, if I have one: _____ - The evidence for my primary type, in one honest line (a fact, not a feeling - "I finished a novella last month and have stalled in the epic since March"): _____

The first move my type routes me to (copy it from the type above, in my own words): _____

What I have already tried, and what it actually did (the advice-list five, honestly scored - switch length [ ] helped [ ] didn't - switch genre [ ] helped [ ] didn't - switch format [ ] helped [ ] didn't - reread a favourite [ ] helped [ ] didn't - log off [ ] helped [ ] didn't): _____

Daily Rescue Log: Days 1-2 (reprint)

DAY 1 - Ten Minutes, Timed and Done

Set the timer for ten minutes. Open any item from your Phase 1 shelf (p.9) at its first page. Read until the timer rings - then stop, even mid-sentence, and mark the stopping point with a slip of paper, not a folded corner of guilt. Today proves exactly one thing: starting is still available to you.

Log - Book/title: _____ - Format: _____ - Minutes read: _____ - Pages: _____ to _____ - Where: _____

Friction check (tick the worst one): [ ] Getting started [ ] Staying with it [ ] The book itself [ ] None today

Where I stopped, in five words (the mid-sentence cliff is tomorrow's gift - name it): _____

One honest line about today: _____

DAY 2 - The Shortest Thing You Own

Take the shortest complete thing on your shelf (named on p.9) - a story, a poem sequence, a slim essay, one graphic novella. Read for ten minutes or to its end, whichever comes first. If it ends inside the ten minutes, sit for a moment with the fact of a *finish* before you log it: finishes are this phase's medicine, and this may be your first in months.

Log - Book/title: _____ - Format: _____ - Minutes read: _____ - Pages: _____ to _____ - Finished it? [ ]

Friction check: [ ] Getting started [ ] Staying with it [ ] The book itself [ ] None today

How the finish - or near-finish - felt, without performing (one line, true words only): _____

One honest line about today: _____

Ladder 1: Under 150 Pages

A short book rescues well only if it is complete: a beginning that does not spend forty pages arriving, a middle with a real turn in it, an ending that lands. Apply the three tests to any candidate, in a bookshop, a library or your own shelves. **Test 1 - the two-page test:** read the first two pages standing up; if you would sit down to continue, it passes. **Test 2 - the whole-arc test:** the contents page or the back cover must promise one complete arc - one story, one argument, one journey - not "Book One of...". Serial openers fail this ladder on purpose: their endings are doors, and a rescue needs landings. **Test 3 - the tonight test:** at your current honest pace (from your logs), could you finish it within three sessions? A ladder book is a near finish, always.

Title & author	Pages	Passes: [ ] Two-page [ ] Whole-arc [ ] Tonight	Where it lives (shelf/library/e-book)	Used on Day ___ / finished [ ]

Below the table: The candidate that failed a test, and which test caught it (a failed candidate recorded is the tests working, not a loss): _____ failed _____

My first Ladder 1 pick for any future Phase 1 - the one I would hand a stuck reader tonight: _____