

Dressing down essay

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Dressing Down, by Carol Shields, is a story about a grandfather's passion for being nude and having no problem showing off what God gave him. His desire to feel free and natural as a nudist eventually creates a conflict with his wife and leads to a troublesome marriage. This story teaches you that sometimes your passions can affect the relationships you have with the people that are closest to you. We never learn the name of the main character in the story as he is referred to as grandfather throughout the whole story.

Shortly after the grandfather gets married to his wife he travels with some friends to a nudist camp on a beach in France. During this experience the grandfather discovers a freedom and sensation he had never experienced before when he strips down his clothes. He loves the feeling of the sun caressing parts of his body it had never seen before, deciding that it's natural and pure he becomes an instant convert.

This new found love leads the grandfather to start his own nudist camp, Club Soleil, back home in Canada. The main part of this story takes place in Southern Ontario, in 1926, when the grandfather starts Club Soleil. Club Soleil is a two month long camp where basically anyone is welcomed as long as their share his passion of being nude.

It's like any other camp with activities such as swimming, biking, and tanning only without the clothes. He is very satisfied with his camp and loves spending his summers there with other nudists like himself. The conflict in this story is that the grandfather has no problem stripping down and thinks others should feel as comfortable as he does. But he soon finds out that his

wife, referred to as the grandmother, is not as comfortable letting loose. She is described as a conservative and cautious woman who would rather cover up than strip down (Shields 788). The grandmother does not want to attend her husband's summer-long nudist camp if it entails her to be nude. She eventually agrees to attend her husband's camp but only if she can be clothed. This conflict between the married couple creates a great strain on their relationship and marriage.

The grandmother reluctantly attends Club Soleil for many more summers, but still never feels completely comfortable. One summer the grandmother refuses to attend Club Soleil, leaving her husband to go on his own. The reason for her absence is that her grandson, the narrator, turns 10 years old and decides to stay with them for the summer. She feels uncomfortable with the idea of her young grandson at a nudist camp and stays back while the narrator joins his grandfather at Club Soleil.

The grandfather forgives his wife for her decision, however it makes things awkward and further strains their relationship. In the end of the story the grandfather passes away and his wife decides to have him buried nude. He didn't request this but she feels that it's what he would have wanted. As she grows old and prepares for her own passing, she decides to be buried in the same fashion as an offer of forgiveness for not joining her husband at Club Soleil. It seems as if the grandmother regrets all those years of built-up resentment towards her husband for his passion and feels that her nude burial would be a way to show her love for him.

This story ends in a positive and romantic manner and reminds the reader that love can overcome differences.