

Argumentative essay the apprenticeship of duddy kravitz

[Life](#), [Love](#)



A man must pursue his dreams. This is certainly true for everyone in humankind, for if there were no dreams, there would be no reason to live. Duddy Kravitz understands this perfectly, which is why he is one of the most ambitious young men of his time. From the moment he hears his grandfather say, "A man without land is nobody,"(44) he is prepared to seek the land of his dream, no matter what the cost would be. This ambition of his is very respectable, but unfortunately his methods are damnable.

Duddy is a relentless pursuer, a formidable competitor but also a ruthless manipulator. It is true that he has obtained all the land that he desires at the end, but he succeeds through immoral, despicable and contemptible means. It is clear then, that Duddy has failed in his apprenticeship and has become the "scheming little bastard" that Uncle Benjy has warned him against. There is no doubt that Duddy is very shrewd and clever, but his lack of moral principles attributes to his final failure. In fact, his immorality can be traced back to a very young age.

During his study in the parochial school, he already earns money through methods that hardly comply with virtues of any kind. Taking advantage of the fact that minors cannot be sued in Canada, Duddy defrauds stamp companies and sells stolen hockey sticks. Perhaps he cannot distinguish right from wrong; perhaps he does not care, but nonetheless it is improper for him to engage himself into these kinds of activities. Duddy emerges himself deeper into the sea of corruption when he establishes Dudley Kane Enterprises.

With his limited knowledge of movie making and his mistaken trust in John Friar, his firm produces bar-mitzvah films of extremely poor quality. The bar-mitzvah film for Mr. Cohen, for example, is obviously a failing product. "Duddy didn't say a word all through the screening but afterwards he was sick to his stomach,"(149). After the screening, Duddy says to Mr. Friar, " I could sell Mr. Cohen a dead horse easier than this pile of —,"(149). However, realizing the obvious faultiness of the film, Duddy does not talk candidly to his client.

Instead, he untruthfully says that the film is a phenomenal piece of art and that he is entering it into the Cannes Festival. By doing so, he deceives the Cohenfamilyinto buying the appalling bar-mitzvah film of Bernie. As a matter of fact, Kravitz is not only skilful in handling situations, but he is also very apt in manipulating people. This can be clearly seen in his relationships with Virgil and Yvette. Duddy is never loved in his family, so originally Duddy is quite content to know that there is someone who cares about him, Yvette.

He finds great companionship in her and acquires a feeling of fulfillment in himself in her presence. But as time passes by, Yvette becomes nothing but a tool to him. He uses her as a medium through which he can buy the land that he lusts for; because he is a minor and he cannot legally own land, thus getting the deeds under her name. " The farmers would be wary of a young Jew, they might jack up prices or even refuse to sell, but another French-Canadian would not be suspect,"(99). Duddy also treats her as a sexual toy.

He makes love with Yvette whenever he wants it, but he does not take Yvette's feelings into consideration: " Yvette wanted to wait, but Duddy

insisted, and they made love on the carpet,"(193). He never pays any respect to Yvette and he does " he hasn't the first notion of how to treat a woman,"(164). Not only does he use her sexually and financially but also mentally. Duddy has no love for Yvette, which is shown in various occasions, one being while having a conversation with his comrade. " Listen," he said, " what kind of friend are you?

You must know lots of nice Jewish girls in Outremont. Why don't you ever fix me up? " " What about Yvette? " Bernie asked, embarrassed. " Yvette? I could never marry her. She's my Girl Friday," (232). This shows how he has come to use Yvette as nothing but a tool, fooling her in making her believe that he actually loves her. With Virgil, Duddy takes advantage of his physical disabilities. After selling the pinball machines that Virgil brought him to ease his financial troubles, Duddy does not want to repay Virgil.

Using the fact that Virgil is an epileptic and that it is very difficult for him to be hired, Duddy employs him as a driver But Duddy tells him that a truck would be necessary for the task, and that he can provide Virgil with the perfect vehicle for one thousand dollars, the exact amount that he owes Virgil, even though he is getting free of charge. Virgil is innocent enough not to know what is happening. Knowing this, Duddy doesn't take into account that if Virgil encounters an accident, he can be sued for everything he has.

He is also very grateful and flattered to know that Mr. Kravitz is willing to hire him. He accepts the job immediately, and thus, Duddy does not need to reimburse Virgil. It is quite ironic that Duddy, being such a good manipulator of people, is later being used by his Bohemian friends when they come to his

apartment every night to party, eat and drink, all at Duddy's expense. After Duddy has engaged himself into all kinds of deceitful activities, he is bankrupt and is on the verge of a mental breakdown.

At that point, Uncle Benjy's letter reveals to Duddy that he must make a very serious decision: " There's more to you than mere money-lust, Duddy, but I'm afraid for you. You're two people, that's why. The scheming little bastard I saw so easily and the fine, intelligent boy underneath that your grandfather, bless him, saw. But you're coming of age soon and you'll have to choose. A boy can be two, three, four potential people, but a man is only one. He murders the others. " (287) Duddy must now choose the way that he will live on for the rest of his life.

He may continue on to live the way that he has always lived and be a complete amoral criminal, or he can abandon his money-lust and become a fine shrewd gentleman. The time has come for him to choose what is to become of him. But at this point, Duddy performs the most dirty, sickening and contemptible act in his apprenticeship. He forges Virgil's cheque in order to buy the final parcel of land: " Duddy took a quick look at Virgil's bank balance, whistled, noted his account number and ripped out two cheques. He forged the signature by holding the cheque and a letter Virgil had signed up to the window and tracing slowly,"(316).

This is a clear indication that Duddy has chosen to become the inconsiderate " scheming little bastard". He has murdered all the other good possibilities of himself. Duddy has obviously chosen the wrong kind of man to be. He has chosen to become a crooked person, a corrupted chap, and a ruthless man.

Undoubtedly, Duddy is a very keen and intuitive young man. He can calmly and gracefully settle Lennie's problems with Mr. Calder. He can also tactfully and intelligently get Aunt Ida going back to Montreal to see the dying Uncle Benjy.

Duddy has all the qualities that are needed for him to succeed in society; it is only a matter of time. Unfortunately, Duddy chooses the wrong path at a young age and continues on with that path to his adulthood. He ends up being a terrible failure. Perhaps his lack of discipline from his early years is one of the most important attributes to his tragic fall in *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*. ID: 0014464 Argumentative Essay The Fail in the Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz By: Anchal Joshi For: Ms. Tozzi Date: 11/11/2010