

Dancing bear essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The story culminates in Dieter's death due to a stroke. A second significant statement made by Vanderhaeghe (173) that identifies the nature of this elderly man is attributed to his housekeeper, Mrs. Hax. He is at the mercy of a woman who can decide when or even if he will be allowed to eat bacon or to smoke a cigarette. While there is certainly some indication in the story that Dieter needs to be monitored, Mrs. Hax clearly enjoys her responsibilities and takes pleasure in thwarting the old man's desires.

Noting; except the bear was beaten and battered, humiliated, even spat upon" (Vanderhaeghe, 181). He is suggesting that a wild animal feels or behaves in much the same way that a human does. They are no longer masters of their own fate or destiny. What went on in the old bastard's head if anything? His mouth had opened as if he were about to speak. He has not succeeded in being embraced by the bear but is embraced by the very woman who torments him. What is significant about this quotation is that it links the long forgotten dancing bear to Dieter himself.

Hax, " It was going to be one of those days. Lear is treated similarly by the daughters he gave the power to control his kingdom. Again, in King Lear, the king is reduced to poverty by his daughters and is humiliated by them, Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire are my daughters: I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness; I never gave you kingdom, called you children, you owe me no subscription.... Nevertheless, he knows himself to be worthy of respect, which he does not receive from Mrs. Hax.

Similarly, in Shakespeare's (855) King Lear, his daughter, Goneril, says, " come, sir, I would have you make use of that good wisdom, whereof I know

you are fraught; and put away these dispositions, that of late transform you from what you rightly are. " Just as Dieter Bethge, the elderly man in " The Dancing Bear" is subject to the domination of a woman who finds him to be peculiar and difficult, so does Lear find that he has placed himself in the hands of ungrateful daughters, who having received control of his kingdom are no longer interested in allowing him to act as their father or superior.

In Shakespeare's (1606) play, Lear's good daughter Cordelia comes to rescue her father from the fate imposed on him by her ungrateful sisters. From her, Lear learns the truth, that " her voice was ever soft, gentle, and low, an excellent thing in a woman" (Shakespeare, 1606). It is a sad situation and one in which the petty tyranny of a housekeeper makes an old and ill man miserable. Dieter has lost the ability to take care of himself and is impotent in the face of the mean and petty behavior of Mrs. Hax.

Once more, the reader is reminded that there are some very strong similarities in the situation of these two women. Dieter is just an old man whose life is coming to an end and who is no longer sufficiently valued by his only child. Hax, I think it best if my father phones only on important matters, at your discretion" (Vanderhaeghe, 178). Neither is particularly loved or valued by his offspring, although in the case of Lear the reader recognizes that there is one daughter, Cordelia, who does genuinely care for and respect her father.

In this essay, a number of quotations from the short story will be analyzed and linked to the central theme of the story, which focuses on the impotence of the older man whose body no longer serves him and who is very much at the

mercy of others, including an uninvolved son and a housekeeper who treats him with unrelieved contempt. A bear who had lived in shame and impotence. " By attributing human characteristics or reactions such as shame and impotence to an animal, the author is engaged in anthropomorphizing attribution.

Hax, who was told by his son, " Mrs. He is a difficult old man as was Lear but he is still worthy of respect and does not deserve the cruel treatment that Mrs. Hax regularly hands out to him on a regular basis. What made him so peculiar, so difficult at times like these? " This is a symbolic statement because it demonstrates that the woman selected to care for this man is not interested in his well-being and regards him as difficult at best. Ed. Similarly, Shakespeare's (865) Lear is informed that his daughters no longer have any respect for him and that he will no longer be allowed to do as he pleases, " Your son and daughter found this trespass worth the shame which here it suffers."

Just as Dieter has a son who no longer wishes to speak to his father except on very rare occasions, so does Lear have daughters who find there is no room for this once powerful king in the castles that he has given to them. 845-897. Vanderhaeghe, Guy. " The Dancing Bear. " Man Descending. In this, he is like William Shakespeare's King Lear who is described as, the best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then we must look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long engrafted condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them (Shakespeare, 85).

In recalling the dancing bear, Dieter expects that he will learn some fundamental truth. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1985. Dieter is not so fortunate. He is unable to control even the simplest aspect of his life such as being able to decide what he wants for breakfast. Like Dieter, Lear experiences a stroke or heart attack and dies, having learned all too late that his own behavior is responsible for the death of his daughters. There is a similarity between the fate of Dieter and Shakespeare's Lear. 171-186. Dieter has been placed in the hands of Mrs.

Literary Analysis: "The Dancing Bear" Guy Vanderhaeghe (171) describes in "The Dancing Bear" an old man who lay sleeping on the taut red rubber sheet as if he were some specimen mounted and pinned there to dry. With this introduction, the theme of the story is established via figurative language which likens the elderly man to some insect that has been captured, killed, and mounted for display. Works Cited Shakespeare, William. This recollection foreshadows an event - the falling of Dieter after his stroke into the open and waiting arms of Mrs. Hax. He says, "And when the music stopped, the bear had opened his arms very wide in a gesture of friendship and welcome.

In terms of the theme of the story, this reflects the isolation of the elderly man and his acknowledged loss of control over some of his behavior. The two old men are therefore in much the same position with respect to their children. However, if Lear's tragedy is written on a grand and epic scale, Dieter's tragedy is far more intimate, ordinary, and understandable.

Dieter is abused when he asserts the right to eat corn flakes rather than porridge and is made to feel that he is a dirty old man who has no authority in his own home. He is truly abandoned by his son and left at the mercy of a woman whom he knows to be careless with "his plates, his feelings" (Vanderhaeghe, 179). The shame he felt at watching "such an indignity, such complete indifference to the rightful pride of the bear" is like the shame he feels in observing his own condition and his subjection to the whims and petty meanness of a woman who is paid to care for him (Vanderhaeghe, 181).

Dieter has not learned the special truth that the bear may have been able to confide only in him. Briefly, Vanderhaeghe's story moves from the beginning of what seems to be a fairly typical day in the life of Dieter Bethge, who is locked in a battle of wills with his petty and cruel housekeeper/caretaker, Mrs. Hax. Dieter is frail physically and given to moments in which his mental functions are erratic or even disordered. "King Lear." Shakespeare. Running throughout "The Dancing Bear" is Dieter's memory of a trained bear that danced to the music of a violin in a market in Romania when Dieter was a child.

A third significant quotation from "The Dancing Bear" (175) describes the bear that the younger Dieter saw his father skin, "There had been another bear; he was sure of it. Hardin Craig. The dancing bear can only dance when the violin is playing and is abused by his keeper when he chooses to dance alone for his own pleasure. In a particularly telling statement, Dieter states that "his mind's eye had seen the bear suddenly strike, revenge himself.

Vanderhaeghe's short story catalogs the death of an old man who has been all but abandoned by his only son and for whom life is by and large a daily struggle for some type of self-respect or dignity. Here I stand, your slave, a poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man (Shakespeare, 87). The bear, Dieter, and Lear are like one another in their dependence on others. And that was exactly what Dieter had expected all along" (Vanderhaeghe, 185). Both of these older male characters have lost control over the external realities of their lives and are therefore vulnerable to the dictates of others who may not have their best interests at heart.

Perhaps more significantly, this describes the feelings of the elderly man who himself," lives in shame and impotence" because of the frailty of his body and mind (Vanderhaeghe, 175). Lear's royal prerogatives are also treated carelessly by the very daughters whose flattery gained them a disproportionate share of his kingdom. On those occasions when Dieter attempts to rebel against Mrs. Hax's harsh treatment, he is also psychologically beaten, battered, and humiliated in the same way as was the bear. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1952.

Thematically, the language of the two quotations links each of these actors. In this he is different from Dieter, whose death does not look like it will affect his son and it will affect Mrs. Hax only to the degree that she will need to find another job. As the story progresses, a triggered memory of a trained dancing bear from his childhood leads Dieter to rebel against Mrs. Hax and his situation. Dieter identifies with the bear whose only wrongdoing was that he enjoyed dancing without the music provided by his keeper. Yet nothing happened.