

Introduction man. he
works in a small



Introduction

Sammy's life changes with one incidence at the A&P grocery store. Three young girls walk into the store dressed in bikinis and attract people's attention. His vivid description of the store put the girls in sharp contrast with the store, which appears to be a slow place. The events in the story change Sammy's outlook of life and he grows from a fantasizing teenager to a man who understands life's reality.

Sammy's world

Sammy's world is closed. Through a relaxed and casual tone, Sammy explains his work and experience at the store. The setting of the story is at a small A&P grocery store and one can conclude that it is the wrong place for this young man. He works in a small grocery store where he sits checking customers' purchases all day. The work at A&P is very monotonous and does not encourage Sammy to be creative such that his mind wonders off and he rings a customer's item twice. He says that at times the job is so boring that he can hear songs from the cash register. The best he can hope to become in his current job is a manager. Moreover, Sammy is unhappy at his place of work and he is glad when the three girls walk in and take his mind of his work and away from his small and closed world.

He desires a different kind of life that is represented by the three girls who are clearly from a different social divide. Sammy comes from a lower social class and the beauty of the girls makes him desire to have the kind of life they have and live freely as they do. They even have the audacity to come to the store in bikinis in clear disregard of the norms of this small town. They

are free from the rules and Sammy wishes to gain such freedom that is not in his small world.

The transformation

On the other hand, the incidence with the three girls transforms Sammy. To begin with, he changes from an immature teen drooling over girls in bath suits.

When the girls walk in he enjoys them and jokes about them with his colleague Stokesie. However, he changes his perception of the girls and gets annoyed when McMahon checks them out. He is offended and feels pity for them he now sees them as human beings and not only sex objects. He sees himself in McMahon who objectifies the girls “ patting his mouth and looking after them sizing up their joints” (Updike 1). Through the author’s use of first person narration Sammy finds chivalry and transform from an admirer to a protector of the girls.

In addition, he transforms and learns to take control. Sammy is unhappy with the way Lengel, the manager treats the girls and embarrasses them. He takes control of the situation by standing up for the girls.

He tells the manager off and goes ahead to quit from his position. His decision to quit is irrational because he does it for the girls who do not recognize his ‘ heroic’ deed for them as they just walk away. He does not get the girls as he had expected he would by defending them however, by fighting for them he actually does it for himself and gathers the courage to walk away from his job. He learns that only he can control his destiny. He “ refuses to be captured by conformity and monotony” like the sheep in the

A&P store, instead he chooses “live honestly and meaningfully” (Mcfarland 96). His refusal to follow A&P’s policy and opting to quit is a sign of self-liberation (Porter 1155).

Maturity

As a sign of maturity, Sammy understands that every action has consequences. When Sammy quits his job, he knows things will not be easy in the road ahead. He is not from a rich background unlike the three girls who make him lose his job. In fact, his parents had gotten him the job, as they are friends with Lengel. Maybe it is not easy to get a job in this town and Sammy has just left his secure one at the store. He knows the consequences of quitting his job will be hard “...and my stomach kind of fell as I felt how hard the world was going to be to me hereafter” (Updike 1).

Sammy is initiated into a new reality that is harsh just like other ordinary people do at one point in their lives when they have to live with the difficult outcomes of the choices they make in life.

Conclusion

Sammy eventually quits his job in protest of the girls’ embarrassing treatment at the store. He has changed from a teen only concerned with the physical beauty of the three girls to a mature person who empathizes with their plight in the hands of the other patrons at the store as he says he felt pity for them. Standing up against Lengel shows that he has matured and will no longer conform to the rules of the society that are so limiting as he wants to go out and explore the world that the three girls make him know

exists. He has quit his job and he must now deal with the reality of his actions.

Works Cited

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