

Acquiring a firm resolve: dignifying maturity in the short story

[Life](#)



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There are moments in our lives when we radically change. Something happens to us that transforms us into a new person. It may come as we read an engaging text, as we undergo an enlightening experience, or as we witness an interesting event.

The catalyst for this radical change may vary, but its impact will always be the same: we can never go back to our old self, because the change, once done, marks our individual history. This is what happens to Sammy, the main character of the short story, "A&P" written by John Updike.

Sammy undergoes a personal change, a change that makes him take a stand and evolve from an immature teenager to a young man strongly resolved to stand firm in his beliefs.

In the first part of the story, we see Sammy's immaturity as he ogles at the three scantily clad girls. He observes them like any normal teenage boy; he sees the girls as objects of interest because of the way they are dressed. He is delighted by their presence because of his attraction to them, especially to the dominant girl in the group whom he calls Quennie, who is "more than pretty" (page number).

Sammy even goofs around with his co-worker Stokesie, reveling in the presence of the girls who are so misplaced, wearing bathing suits at a grocery store:

You know, it's one thing to have a girl in a bathing suit down on the beach, where what with the glare nobody can look at each other much anyway, and another thing in the cool of the A & P, under the fluorescent lights, against all

those stacked packages, with her feet paddling along naked over our checkerboard green-and-cream rubber-tile floor.