

# "aandp" and "gryphon" essay sample

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## **“ A&P” and “ Gryphon” Essay Sample**

In both “ A&P” and the “ Gryphon,” the main characters exhibit traits that makethem distinctive of each other in the way they struggle against rules, authority figures, andinflexible social systems. Sammy, in “ A&P” shows how embarrassing it is to confrontcustomers in public when they flout company policy, whiles Tommy in “ Gryphon” prevails upon his classmates to be loyal to authority figures by projecting the good imageof their substitute teacher.

Sammy’s struggle against rules is seen in the way he viewed the company’s policyin regard to the type of clothes the three girls namely; “ Queenie”, “ Plaid” and “ Big Tall” wore to the store. To him confronting a customer, and for that matter the three girls, whoflout the store’s policy, amounts to embarrassing the customer and the three girlsRespectively. “ You didn’t have to embarrass them” (132) . He thinks it is inappropriate forhis boss to confront the three girls shopping wearing a swimming costume. In the processof registering his disapproval against this policy, he ends up disobeying an authorityfigure in the person of his boss. He shows his disapproval to this policy by giving up hisjob. “ I quit”(132). On the part of Tommy, he did not displayed his struggle against ruleswith an open defiance as is the case of Sammy. When the substitute teacher ordered him together with his two friends to take up their seat, he nor any of his friends put up aresistance. Even though they stared at her, but they obeyed her command by taking uptheir seat and not giving up or “ quitting” on their education.

In addition to the above Tommy did not struggle against authority figure, he is rather seen as a person who prevails upon his classmates to be loyal to an authority figure.

He demonstrates this when he openly confronts and engages his classmate in a fight for reporting their substitute teacher to the school's Principal (151). Tommy also tries to disabuse his friend Carl from thinking that the substitute teacher was telling lies when she told them stories about an animal that was half bird and half lion and the pyramids (146).

" I didn't believe that stuff about the bird," (146). Carl thinks she is a liar " she lies" (146).

But Tommy liked her. " I had liked her" (146). He thinks " she was strange" (146).

Furthermore, comparing and contrasting between these two characters will not be complete without touching on the perception they have on the authority of their respective parents. While Sammy did not see anything wrong with offending his parent over quitting his job, Tommy gives due respect to the authority of his parents. Tommy is willing to satisfy the demands of his parents. When he returned from school he made sure he finished his household chores assigned to him by his parents before settling down to do anything else (147).

i Finally, as regarding the struggle against inflexible social systems, both Sammy and Tommy, may to some extent be considered as exhibiting a character that is consistent of a person struggling against inflexible social

system. Sammy's admiration of the three girls wearing a swimming costume in the store and making references to their exposed body parts is tantamount to a struggle against inflexible social system. "this clean bare plane of the top of her chest down from the shoulder bones like a dented sheet of metal tilted in the light. I mean, it was more than pretty" (129). The manager of the store Lengel, made it clear to the girls that swimming costumes are worn on the beach and not in a store. "Girls, this isn't the beach" (131). Sammy thinks it is funny on the part of his boss to remind the girls that "this isn't the beach". "His repeating this struck me as funny" (132).

Furthermore, he struggled against inflexible social system by walking away from his boss, when he was still talking to him, and telling his boss "I Quit" (123) in anticipation that the three girls will stop and watch him "their unsuspected hero" (132). In respect of Tommy, he exhibits this character when he engaged his classmate Wayne in a fight. This is because society in general frowns on this type of uncouth behavior, for this reason the adults who saw them fighting will not sit tight without doing anything, knowing how socially unacceptable it is among civil society to settle dispute with a fight, they immediately separate them. "And then large hands pull at us, and it was my turn to speak to Mr. Faegre" (151).

Moreover, Tommy struggled against inflexible social system when he and his classmates stared at their substitute teacher. She even made it clear to them that staring will not be acceptable in her class, because as she put it "It is impolite to stare, and a sign of bad breeding. You cannot make a social effort while staring" (141).

In conclusion, Sammy's struggle against rules can be seen in the light of his opposition to the policy of the store, leading to his struggles against an authority figure in the person of his boss, and a struggle against inflexible social system in his tolerance of the girl's choice of clothing and walking out on his boss. Tommy on the other hand tries to project a good image of his substitute teacher by prevailing upon his classmates to be loyal to her, and in all instances had been obedient to authority figures represented hereby his parents and the substitute teacher, but struggled against inflexible social system when he and his classmates stared at their substitute teacher.

#### WORK CITED

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