

The life of sammy

Life



It's summer time in the 1960s in this small town located near Boston. The beach is near, the days are hot, and life is boring for a nineteen year old grocery clerk named Sammy. Sammy is a lost and lonely young man, who spent the majority of his work day scrutinizing each and every customer that walked through the door. At the very moment he would see them, he would sigh and psychologically pick them apart.

Until one day, he walked three young girls wearing bikinis and his bitterness was temporarily put aside. Although immature and ignorant, this young man shows a softer side- sympathy. Throughout this short story, the reader is able to see the various attitudes and emotions of Sammy, who is sick of everyday regular-life, and is desperate for change. Sammy is an immature young man, who hates his job and thinks he knows how to treat customers. His boredom and carelessness at work affect his on-the-job performance: " I stood there with my hand on a box of HiHo crackers trying to remember if I rang it up or not. I ring it up again and the customer starts giving me hell. " He then goes on to talk about that particular customer to be the type to sit there and wait for him to make an error, then jump all over him when he finally does make a mistake.

This is a perfect example of his immaturity. Also, Updike gives subtle hints to his immaturity. He mentions near the end of the story how his mother irons his clothes for work. The way he describes the customers, as barn-yard animals, is very degrading, and could also be related to his hatred for this job. Because he hates his job so much, and is so bored with his surroundings, Sammy has nothing better to do than to analyze every customer, with intricate detail. So one day he walks three young girls wearing nothing but

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bikinis. Now as you can imagine not much excites Sammy at the A&P, so when he feasted his eyes on the girls, he started to pick them apart.

Immediately he started observing their most intimate details. He even went as far as giving them their own alias. There was one girl he showed most interest in, he called her “ Queenie. He gave her this name because she appeared to be the leader of the three girls. Another one he called “ plaid,” because of the plaid suit she was wearing- he also called her “ chunky. ” And the third one he referred to as “ big tall gooney gooney,” due to her height and what Sammy observed, “ to have the sort of striking features other girls pretend to admire because they know she’s no real competition to them. ” To Sammy, other customers are “ witches,” and “ pigs.

” In fact, he is so bored at work he even makes a song out of the chimes and noises made by the cash register. This young boy Sammy is still trying to find his place in this world, and seems very lost at times. With the sudden decision to quit, and his mockery of his co-worker, Stokesie. Sammy pokes fun at Stoksie for being married with kids, and said how Stoksie “ thinks he’s going to be manager some sunny day. ” Obviously, starting a family and having a manager job is not something that interests Sammy. However, back in the 1960s, it was common to be married with children by the age of 20, and Sammy is nowhere near that. Upon quitting his job, his boss Lengel, reminds him that he is making a bad decision, but he goes through with it.

He now has no job and no plans for future employment. Although his immaturity is broadly displayed, Sammy also shows signs of sympathy and resentment as the story goes on. Now, unlike Updike and the other

customers, Sammy is not quick to judge the girls. When Lengel scolds the girls for their inappropriate attire, Sammy is immediately displeased and he feels he needs to defend them. He does so by suddenly quitting his job- a desperate attempt to impress the girls. Another display of Sammys sympathetic side is shown when another co-worker, McMahon, is approached by the three girls. The girls ask him a question, he points, they walk away and Sammy remarks, “ all that was left for us to see was old McMahon patting his mouth and looking after them sizing up their joints.

Poor kids, I began to feel sorry for them, they couldn't help it. ” Lastly, the point where Sammy leaves the store after quitting, is where we see resentment. Sammy stands in the parking lot gazing inside through the window. His stomach drops and he remarks “ I felt how hard the world was going to be to me hereafter. It was at that point the had realized what he had done, feeling sorry for Lengel, and himself. In conclusion, Sammy has some serious soul searching to do, and he needs to find his place in life. His lack of morals, irresponsibility, and immaturity are effecting him in several ways shown in this story.

The way he looks at people- whether he is physically attracted to them or not- needs to drastically change or he will continue to have struggles throughout his life. He must also change his values and what is most important to him if he wants more out of life.