

# Rebel Without a Clue in John Updike's A&P

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## Rebel Without a Clue in Updike's A & P

Adults always stress that it is important to make a good first impression. That is what Sammy was trying to accomplish in John Updike's "A & P." Although some people believe that Sammy is a hero for standing up for his beliefs when he quit, there is conclusive evidence that he quit in an attempt to impress a girl he was obviously attracted to, Queenie.

We know he is attracted to Queenie because he goes to great lengths to tell us what she [looks](#) like, what her mannerisms are, and the way that the other girls follow her. For example, he says, "She was the Queen. She kind of led them, the other two peeking around and making their shoulders round" (1026). This simple quote shows that [Sammy](#) immediately identified Queenie as the one in charge. Another quote that describes this perfectly is, "but you got the idea that she had talked the other two into coming in here with her, and now she was showing them how to do it, walk slow and hold yourself straight" (1026). Naturally Sammy is attracted to Queenie and wants to be noticed by her. Sammy thinks to himself "She must have felt in the corner of her eye me and over my shoulder Stokesie in the second slot watching, but she didn't trip. Not this queen" (1027). Sammy is

surprised to see something like this in his town. He says, "and the women generally put on a shirt or shorts or something before they get out of the car and into the street. And anyway these are usually women with six children and varicose veins mapping their [legs](#) and nobody, including them could care less" (1027).

Sammy's descriptions also indicated he had a lot of sexual interest in Queenie. He describes her as vividly as he can. He starts with saying, "With the s...

... middle of paper ...

...will be from there on.

Sammy was able to bring attention to himself, but it did not work the way that he had hoped it would. The girls most likely didn't even acknowledge that he even quit. He tried very hard to get Queenie to see him and accept him, but that didn't work either. Since Sammy's attempt to impress the girls did not work, he was left standing in a deep shadow called life. I agree with Nathan Hatcher who wrote, "Sammy quits his job not on a matter of ideals, but rather as a means of showing off and trying to impress the girls, especially Queenie" (37).

#### Works Cited

Hatcher, Nathan. "Sammy's Motive." *Ode to Friendship & Other Essays: Student Writing at Virginia Wesleyan College*. Ed. Connie Bellamy. Norfolk, Virginia, 1996. 37.

Updike, John. "A&P." *Harper Anthology of Fiction*. Ed Sullivan Barnet. NY: HarperCollins, 1989. 1026-1030.

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