



## NOSTALGIA AND ROMANCE:

### A STUDY OF RELATIONSHIPS IN *LOOK BACK IN ANGER*

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#### Abstract

*Look Back in Anger* is about the feelings of fury of the post-war penetration that felt betrayed, sold-out and irrevocably ruined; of the older generation that is like the “sturdy old plants left over from the Edwardian twilight who cannot understand why the sun isn’t shining anymore”; of women who seek identity in age-old practices and relationships like marriage only to find themselves gasping for “a little peace”; of people who cannot save their love from the “cruel steel traps” of society. The consciousness of “high noon” of the Victorian and Edwardian era looms painfully over the breeding ground of the post-war city of London and its emotionless existence. Nostalgia seems to be the only way to survive the emotional and social claustrophobia. The fate of each individual lies as if in looking back. This paper attempts to explore the different relationships that John Osborne offers in his play. This paper also seeks to know about the pitfalls of romance where neither looking back is pleasurable, nor does it hold anything to look ahead. Can a relationship sustain without a future but only a bitter past? Does the same thing happen to friendships and other filial relationships? Does love fall apart due to external forces or if the lovers do not know the way to hold on? Can love really be held on to? These are some of the questions that this paper seeks answers for.

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### **Introduction to the Complex Relationships in the Text**

While the focal point of the text is the relationship between Jimmy and Alison, almost every character shares a unique and yet complex connection with the other. Some are visible on stage, some are mentioned and speculated. What prevails over most relationships in the text is an insurmountable emptiness, the very emptiness that leads to the childless conjugal by-product of class distinction and regret that is the marriage of Jimmy and Alison. This is the very emptiness that governs the lives and encounters of each character and leads them into an open-ended darkness. It is interesting to note how Osborne does not mention a single relationship in the play that did not dwell in this darkness. Keeping with the central theme of regret and anguish, Osborne did not move the focus or create a stark contrast, instead he envisions and offers shades of the same grey lives.

### **Jimmy-Alison**

Being the most complex relationship in the play, the most striking and dull at the same time, Jimmy and Alison's conjugal filth definitely takes over the centre stage in *Look Back in Anger*. This relationship along with the entire play is conditioned by the force of Jimmy's anger and thus, to read this marriage, Jimmy's life and character needs to be briefed.

Perhaps certain personal experiences urge Jimmy to go all out against the society he is living in. But on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusion and lights, Jimmy feels like an alien, a "stranger". His exile is without remedy since he is deprived the memory of a promised land. As Jimmy says, "I must say it's pretty dreary living in an American age,"



(Osborne, 1956, p. 14) he tries to hide his pain at the loss of the English pride in the flippant manner of his speech. Jimmy, with his life and society, is frustrated and is unwilling to accept this sudden change. The society might not be ready for a change but he must distribute his angst among others, like the consciousness within us all, trying to wake everybody into a realisation.

Jimmy's life is a tale of departure: his father, Madeline, Hugh. Though he claims, "At the end of twelve months, I was a veteran," (Osborne, 1956, p. 50) each departure left him not stronger but with an intense hunger for companionship.

It is evident that Jimmy denied life its true meaning by the fact that he married Alison out of a challenge or revolt rather than a true emotion or desire to spend the rest of his life with her. Again, Alison, the object of Jimmy's anger, realises that Jimmy expects her to be loyal not only to himself, but "all that he believes in, his present and future, but his past as well." (Osborne, 1956, p. 35) However, Alison, with her loyalty towards her class, finds it impossible respond to Jimmy's needs. Even when she writes to her mother, Alison does not mention her husband in fear of being abandoned by her class. She accepts the working-class life, as she tenaciously does all the household chores, something unlikely in her paternal atmosphere, even her attire does not quite have the upper-class polish to it, but she cannot change her perspective. Jimmy's Trumpet protests against the boredom that life is, but the sound does not reach Alison, as blanketed as she is in her "white woman's burden". (Osborne, 1956, p. 8) Mistaking her attraction toward Jimmy, Alison marries him only to find out that after four years that their marriage is no longer about love and security, but revolt and revenge.



Alison plays out the role as the object of Jimmy's anger as diligently as she wears Jimmy's red shirt in the opening scene. She knows that all he needs is a reaction, an expression to reciprocate his passion, yet she cannot respond to it. It seems as though her hands are tied in a cold-hearted silence, while Jimmy is passionate about every aspect of life. Jimmy is also passionate about Alison despite her dispossession of ardour – "There's hardly a moment when I'm not—watching and wanting you. I've got to hit out somehow. Nearly four years of being in the same room with you, night and day, and I still can't stop my sweat breaking out when I see you doing—something as ordinary as leaning over an ironing board." (Osborne, 1956, p. 28) Jimmy sure does love Alison; he possesses a burning passion in his heart which takes over his body – "I know what I want now." (Osborne, 1956, p. 28)

Jimmy is desperate for Alison, he wants her to participate in his energy, he wants her to feel pain if that is what is required for her to understand his passionate energy. His desperation is evident when despite his tender loving words, he goes on to attack her with pinching, hurtful words right in the next moment. He almost annoys Alison in the manner of a child to his mother – "I did it on purpose." (Osborne, 1956, p. 28) This particular expression in the first scene, after Alison burns her hand with the iron, describes his relationship with Alison as a whole. It is more than obvious that Jimmy did not intentionally hurt Alison. Even the stage directions of Jimmy's immediate reaction – "Jimmy looks down at them, dazed and breathless" (Osborne, 1956, p. 22) – show how unhappy and shocked he was about the situation. But he says that he did it on purpose just so Alison can get angry, throw a fit, or just quarrel and show some emotional energy, yet Alison denies it all and says, "Yes." (Osborne, 1956, p. 28)



When Alison almost complains about Jimmy to Cliff, he says that if Jimmy heard her speak of him in this manner, “he’d be quite pleased.” (Osborne, 1956, p. 25) The fact that Jimmy would be “pleased” to hear his wife complain about him is in itself an alarming signifier of his desperation of an expression from her. It is this expression of disgust that initially made Jimmy dislike Helena, and eventually made him attracted to her.

Despite the extramarital, it is not that Jimmy has been unfaithful from the very beginning. He keeps on hinting Helena as the “home-wrecker”. (Osborne, 1956, p. 42) He recognises that Helena’s presence was creating a greater void between him and Alison. He believes that Helena is actually pushing Alison farther away from him which is why he almost appeals to Alison, “Why – why are you letting her influence like this?” (Osborne, 1956, p. 46) He keeps on pestering Helena to leave and it is Helena who keeps a strong hand on Alison. Jimmy has time and time again revealed his love for Alison. But Helena’s presence is making him insecure about his marriage. It can, however, also be read as a fear of a potential attraction that Jimmy might already be feeling, to avoid which, he wants Helena out of his sight. However, in one of his most vulnerable moments, when he hears the news of Hugh Tanner’s mother being affected by a stroke, he almost begs Alison to go with him – “I ... need you... to come with me.” (Osborne, 1956, p. 54) He looks into her eyes, but her emotions have already been successfully solidified by Helena and she walks away from him. Jimmy is shocked and hurt at the same time. He falls on his bed, probably crying, as he buries his face in the sheets. He realises the emptiness that he knew was there but never had to face it head on, and now, no longer can he pretend to deny that Alison really does not reciprocate his passion and this breaks his heart the most.



Jimmy did begin to enjoy the companionship of Helena over Alison's, but in the end when Alison returns in the last scene after losing her child, he lets go of his affair with Helena and embraces Alison back into his life.

In the last scene, Alison appears to be an outsider in the household as she complains about the smell of Jimmy's cigarette smoke, marking it as "foul old stuff" (Osborne, 1956, p. 77); she notices that Helena, who used to be the stranger, has now grown "used to it." (Osborne, 1956, p. 77) The reason behind her arrival might be survival instinct, as she has nowhere else to go, but it was perhaps because she had achieved what Jimmy wanted her to, the pain of suffering a loss, the loss of her unborn child. Alison, perceiving Helena's current position in the household and in Jimmy's life, attempts to secure a sympathy from her by iterating anger upon herself – "You must all wish me a thousand miles away." (Osborne, 1956, p. 78) She realises the situation and yet cannot defeat her jealousy finding her position almost nullified by Helena's presence who is the 'other woman', appearing as a passionate partner in a sexual serial.

When Helena leaves, there is another impression of everyone moving away from Jimmy, Cliff has already left after Alison and most recently being Helena, until his final reconciliation with Alison, the only one to ever come back to him.

After Helena's departure, Alison also begins to leave and she certainly would have left him, had Jimmy not revealed the bare state of his mind. He begins by complaining about Alison for not having sent any flowers to Mrs. Tanner's funeral – "You had to deny me that too, didn't you?" (Osborne, 1956, p. 83) He becomes reminiscent of the first time he saw Alison – "You didn't really notice me, but I was watching you all the evening. You seemed to have a



wonderful relaxation of spirit. I knew that was what I wanted.” (Osborne, 1956, p. 83) He goes on to point out that he does not have the strength to achieve what he calls a “relaxation of spirit”. Jimmy has come out of the masquerade of his anger. It is too difficult for him to carry the burden of a luxurious and rebellious outfit anymore for he is now completely broken. There is one last appeal of love from Jimmy as he says, “I may have been a lost cause, but I thought if you loved me, it needn’t matter.” (Osborne, 1956, p. 83) To this appeal for love, Alison, who is already in a chastened state of mind, can hardly fail to respond. She raises her voice and says that she too wants to be a lost cause now. She recalls the misfortune of her miscarriage. Alison suffers the greatest misfortune that can befall a woman. Having lost her child, she feels distraught and forlorn as she falls at his feet and says, “Don’t you see! I’m in the mud at last! I’m grovelling! I’m crawling!” (Osborne, 1956, p. 84) Jimmy sees her in pain, he sees her expression of a loss, the loss of their child, he sees exactly what he wanted to see in the first scene, and yet he cannot see Alison in such pain. After all, he has loved her, he has seen how soft and gentle she was, and how brutally fate has struck his tender little squirrel. He can no longer watch her cry, he bends down to hold her shaking body in his arms and pleads, “Don’t. Please don’t. ... I can’t- ... You’re alright now. Please, I– I... Not any more.” (Osborne, 1956, p. 84)

Jimmy realises that Alison has attained the maturity of outlook and the depth of emotion but at the cost of their child and marriage. He tries to comfort Alison and himself by playing out their bear and squirrel game. He assures her that he will try his best to provide her with “warm trees and snug caves.” (Osborne, 1956, p. 84) He also mentions that they need to be aware of the “cruel” (Osborne, 1956, p. 84) world with its claws and “steel-traps” (Osborne,



1956, p. 84), ready to destroy this beautiful, “rather mad, slightly satanic, and very timid” (Osborne, 1956, p. 84) relationship. They will have to light up, with their new-found passion, an exclusive world in which they can recognise their milieu: a universe of their own with a bear, a squirrel and the steel-trap.

### **Jimmy-Helena**

Helena, Alison’s high-class friend who is by profession an actor, brings in with her another aspect of void in the already empty relationship of Jimmy and Alison. Although she initially moved in to live with the couple for her work in the city, it was not too long before she was attracted to Jimmy. However, her attraction towards Jimmy is rather sexual, which is probably not what Jimmy wants, but its most often very passionate and gives the illusion of what Jimmy has longed for, wilderness in love. Helena finds Jimmy’s trumpet “Horrible and oddly exciting” (Osborne, 1956, p. 34). There is a strikingly passionate, sexual undertone in a pleasure of this kind.

Although Helena is initially disliked by Jimmy, her rage is also what made him notice the contrast between her and Alison. She is an actor, she is expressive, even if it was disgust towards Jimmy, it was an expression. Helena is also sharp and quickly recognises the weaknesses of Jimmy and Alison and creates a place for herself by stretching out the void between them. She tries to first annotate Alison’s relationship with Cliff as sexual or at least romantic. She works her way into the household as she helps Allison with her daily chores, she convinces Alison that she needs to escape this “mad-house” (Osborne, 1956, p. 40) saying Jimmy “doesn’t seem to know what love or anything else means,” (Osborne, 1956, p. 40) she knows Jimmy is driven by an exotic fire and she very tactfully enrages him, slaps him and



kisses him right at his weakest, most vulnerable moment, after he read the farewell letter from his wife.

Helena made sure to not mention her extended stay at Jimmy and Alison's house even after the departure of Alison until right before she left. She knew that was when she could avoid any discussion on the matter. Osborne very purposefully places Helena in the third act in the exact same position as Alison in the first act. Helena also replaced Alison's personal belongings on the dressing table with her own as she leans over the ironing board wearing Jimmy's old shirt.

Jimmy begins to find a better substitute for Alison in Helena as unlike Alison, she reflected all his anguish and participated with him in his arm-chair revolution. Alison's mindless exclamations in the first act like, "I'm sorry I wasn't listening properly" (Osborne, 1956, p. 8) is suddenly replaced with Helena's comforting words like, "No. I quite like it." (Osborne, 1956, p. 65) However, Helena is constantly aware of her position and consciously suppressing it. She recognises the enormity of her guilt only when Alison stands before her, looking tired, sick and miserable. she realises that no happiness comes from upon hurting another – "I suppose, it could never have worked, anyway, but I do love you. Jimmy... But I can't go on." (Osborne, 1956, p. 82)

Helena has an epiphany as she sees the woman she has betrayed, her own friend. She knows that living with Jimmy would mean surrendering her world and living in a dreadful nostalgia, but her relationship with Jimmy is strictly sexual. She says how Jimmy is "futile" because he believes in things that no longer exist, that "he was born out of his time." (Osborne, 1956, p. 79) She even mentions that "there's no place for people like that any longer – in sex,



or politics, or anything.” (Osborne, 1956, p. 79) She herself points how her love, though passionate, is rather physical. It is also noteworthy, that Alison decided to leave only after four years and yet return to him in a couple of months, in these four years, she reads Jimmy in her silence and thus knows him better than Helena. Alison’s interpretations “horried” Helena but she did not believe it then, she stayed to live the horrors that Alison had been living through for four years, but when she herself recognises that under her lustful attraction towards Jimmy, there is no emotional passion that will help her “go on” with him, she chooses to leave and also mentions that Alison would be a fool if she decided to stay with Jimmy. It is this emptiness of true emotion for each other that resulted in the falling apart of Jimmy and Helena. She admits that she has loved Jimmy and is now prepared to end it. Himanjali Sankar commented on this issue and said, “Critics have tried to psychoanalyse Jimmy Porter and understand his anguish vis-à-vis the Oedipal complex...” Even Alison mentions that what Jimmy wants is “a kind of cross between a mother and a Greek courtesan, a henchwoman, a mixture of Cleopatra and Boswell.” (Osborne, 1956, p. 80)

### **Cliff-Jimmy-Alison**

With his “sad natural intelligence of the self-taught,” (Osborne, 1956, p. 7) Cliff is mainly a functional character, a natural counterpart to Jimmy, against whom Jimmy’s distinction is established, in whose recognition is the direction of Jimmy’s anger. Cliff is also the insecure parasite who exists in the communicational gap between his friend and his wife. He is a true friend of Jimmy, one who understands him but embodies the futility of his anger. Cliff acts as a “no-man’s land” (Osborne, 1956, p. 52) between Jimmy and Alison. When Jimmy suffers the breakdown of all communication with his wife, rants and raves ravaged by



Alison's refusal to respond, leaves Alison gasping for "a little peace" (Osborne, 1956, p. 50), it is Cliff who steps in and asks Jimmy to "leave her alone" (Osborne, 1956, p. 9), making sure that the attic room does not go beyond the hell that it already is.

While Cliff's relationship with Jimmy is not obscure, it is understood that their outlook of each other may build up some vocal violence in them but Jimmy has a fatherly affection for him too. Himanjali Sankar, in her "Besides Jimmy Porter", puts in about the relationship between Cliff and Alison in the play – "The physical closeness between Cliff and Alison is never developed into a sexual relation or attraction. Is it because he is the son she will never have? In which case, the ending is even more poignant because even as she returns, having lost the ability to have children, Cliff has disappeared from the stage and their lives..."

Cliff may enjoy being in the thick of the battlefield that he calls this marriage to be, his role is to provide a neutral ear as a confidante to both Alison and Jimmy. Jimmy's impression on Alison is only skin-deep. She only WEARS the "cherry-red shirt" (Osborne, 1956, p. 8) of his passion and Jimmy can only burn her arm as the ironing board collapses. If Alison and Jimmy could cover the emotional distance between them, Cliff's presence in the household would automatically become a superfluity, as it is in the presence of Helena who does not need a Cliff to establish contact with Jimmy. If the distance between the two lands is annihilated, the need for a bridge ceases, and that is exactly what Cliff is in this household.

Alison's news of being pregnant comes as a sudden threat to Cliff as he takes "a few moments" (Osborne, 1956, p. 24) to recover himself before admitting his surprise. He realises that this child could be the Messiah that this marriage needs to bridge the gap between the frustrated intellectual and the object of his frustration, exactly where Cliff resides, suspending



him forever from the significance with which he is presently living. Cliff “exacts” (Osborne, 1956, p. 7) love and shows “demonstrations of it at least” (Osborne, 1956, p. 7), trying to satisfy himself by holding Alison’s hand, or hugging and kissing her. Deep down, perhaps, Cliff loves Alison. He never expresses it but almost reveals it on many occasions, like when he admits of getting “fond of people” (Osborne, 1956, p. 23). He also reassures Alison that she is “too young, and too lovely” (Osborne, 1956, p. 23) to “start giving up” (Osborne, 1956, p. 23) on the idea of finding love. But in spite of his jealousy, if there is any, or his insecurity, he is a true friend and insists Alison to tell Jimmy about the baby and adds, “After all he does love you. You don’t need me to tell you that.” (Osborne, 1956, p. 25) He must act to bring them closer, even if he is the one at times taking residence in the void between them, even if it is at the cost of putting his existence in the household to a significant doubt.

Cliff and Jimmy think “the same about a lot of things” (Osborne, 1956, p. 26) because they are “alike in some ways” (Osborne, 1956, p. 26). Cliff understands the language of Jimmy’s trumpet yet he asks Jimmy to “stuff it away somewhere” (Osborne, 1956, p. 41) as he is aware of the inadequacy of the world to respond. The depth of his affection for Jimmy is revealed when he tries to stop Alison from leaving; once she has left, he goes out himself. It may also be a hint that he felt rather insignificant with no Alison around – without an Alison, Jimmy’s anguish is pointless and almost ceases to exist just as his necessity in the household.

The exchange between Cliff and Helena prior to Cliff’s departure depicts a contrast in the way he feels about Alison’s position in the household as being replaced by Helena. He is rather uncomfortable to get his shirt washed by Helena while earlier he would open his trousers for Alison to iron. He chose to leave as soon as he began to see that with Helena next to Jimmy,



he does not feel like family as he did with Alison and Jimmy. He, despite his love for Alison, would rather see Jimmy happy with Alison than with Helena.

Cliff's angst is that life has made him a disappointingly light-weighted character. It pains him to carry the mask of good humour, he cannot think of an alternative existence of him loving Alison as he "common as dirt" (Osborne, 1956, p. 26). He is bound to feel tired of Jimmy's bursts of anger, yet feels empty without it. He believed that he would be worse on his own and so continued to boil with Jimmy and Alison in the cauldron of empty passion. But when there is no "narrow strip of plain hell" (Osborne, 1956, p. 52) in the household, no gap to bridge, Cliff decides to leave with his "pity" (Osborne, 1956, p. 52) for Jimmy, Alison, Helena, and "all of us" (Osborne, 1956, p. 52).

### **Alison-Helena**

Another significantly distraught relationship in the play is the friendship between Alison and Helena. They seem really close in the second act but the more scene progresses, Helena's true colours can vividly be seen on stage. Helena calls Alison to let her stay at her household for her work in a play that was going to be staged in the city. When Jimmy asks the reason for her extended stay, she says, "Alison wanted me to stay." (Osborne, 1956, p. 46) However, upon close analysis of the preceding and succeeding conversations between the women, it is rather evident how Helena is taking decisions for Alison and making them look like she only wants good for her. She calls Alison's father upon her own responsibility, and told Alison about it only after her father was on the way. In almost every way, Helena manipulates Alison into believing that Jimmy is not capable of love. Helena can be contrasted with Cliff in the context of friendship and love. While Cliff chose to remain silent about his



passion for Alison in order to not break up his friend's marriage, Helena crudely planned her way into the household and into Jimmy's life just as she planned Alison's way out with precision.

In the end when Alison returns after having lost her child, Helena leaves but only after she shows Alison how greatly she has tidied up Jimmy's life, how much better she has kept this "madhouse" (Osborne, 1956, p. 78) together. She does not love Jimmy with all her heart, at least not enough to let go of her life and live with him and his morals. Alison on the other hand feels jealous for sure, but she still looks for a resolution. She may have returned with the expectation that Helena will leave, or she might have just wanted to see Helena in her position to satisfy her "macabre curiosity" (Osborne, 1956, p. 78). The women almost engage in a "cat-fight" with each other over Jimmy as Helena blames Alison to be the reason why she even thought to take her place, that Alison treated Jimmy like "a book or something" (Osborne, 1956, p. 78) that she would "pass around to anyone who wanted it for five minutes." (Osborne, 1956, p. 78) Alison, on the other hand, has a much calmer take in the way she gently mentions her surprise about the situation after all the harsh things Helena had said about Jimmy earlier. But Helena's sudden rise as a conscientious character is rather ironic after all the effort that she put into breaking up an already distraught marriage. In the end, she could not make her place as a true friend to Alison or lover of Jimmy.

### **Alison's Parents**

Another pair in the play which reiterates a similar notion of emptiness as the rest. Colonel Redfern is a former military man of the British army. Alison's mother, on the other



hand, has been shown to be a symbol of the upper-class polished and shallow existence. The pair is not seen in stage but subtle details are mentioned by Jimmy, Alison and Colonel himself that somehow hint that this match is also not much of a success. Colonel somehow feels for Jimmy because he, too, is stuck in the nostalgia of the colonial times when he was posted in India – “That was my world, and I loved it, all of it... If only it could have gone on forever.” (Osborne, 1956, p. 59)

Redfern does not show any dominantly negative attitude towards his wife, but he definitely shows how disagreeing he is with her with respect to interfering in their daughter’s marriage. He gives an impression of being rather satisfied with his marriage earlier when he was in his preferred world – “Your mother and I were so happy then.” (Osborne, 1956, p. 59) Despite what he had originally thought about Jimmy, he is now rather fond of him in a way that he feels like Jimmy sees in him what he sees in himself. He is also not particularly pleased with the situation of Alison abandoning her marriage, and assumes his wife would perhaps

appreciate it. There is a repetition of the idea that this couple disagrees on most things and yet Colonel, too, cannot help but “look back in anger” at his colonial grandeur.

### **Hugh Tanner-Mrs. Tanner**

Hugh Tanner was Jimmy’s partner in invading the upper-class socialites’ parties, who shared his apartment with Jimmy and Alison the first few months of their marriage. But Hugh left his mother and Jimmy in order to strive for a better fortune. He went to China to write a



book and since then, his mother, Mrs. Tanner, has lived a lonely life and died without having seen his son for years. She did receive the affections of Jimmy almost like her son, yet Hugh never once came back for or bothered to know about his old, ailing and lonely mother. Another relationship in the play that has no positive resolution but only emptiness; a son who avoids all responsibilities of his mother and a mother who had nothing to do except “look back in anger” at the remains of her memories with her son in the last few days of her life before the final judgement.

### **Conclusion**

Osborne in his play, *Look Back in Anger*, makes it clear that he is speaking about a rootless and certainly fruitless existence. Each and every life he portrays is infected with pain, void, darkness and essentially having no future. Thus, each relationship is shown in the same light, or rather, in the same darkness. Jimmy Porter is among those who were born in the nineteen thirties – the play being published in 1956 and Jimmy being in his twenties – a generation that looks back at the first world war and looks ahead at the second. This generation is cursed with the nostalgia of Victorian English life and for Jimmy, “the angry young man”, it is rather difficult to keep his anguish to himself. They feel like “there aren’t any good, brave causes left” to die for. Their love is passionate, but almost too passionate and nobody to return such intensely strong emotion.

The characters teach the world an important aspect of romance. Jimmy calls Helena a “home-wrecker” in the second act, and in the final scene, he admits that she has played out the “cruel steel-traps” for his relationship with Alison. In this particular expression, Helena, no



longer seems to be a person, the other woman or a living entity that destroys the relationship on purpose with the intention of “home-wrecking”. Helena becomes a concept, an issue, a subjective essence that can always find its place in the void between lovers. Had it not been for Helena, Alison might not have left, or she might have, or she could have at least had the chance to tell her husband about her pregnancy; there are endless speculations. But it was the very empty space between Jimmy and Alison that allowed a Helena to creep in and take control. Cliff may represent the unaddressed issues in a relationship that usually do not rip apart the lovers, but also never let them completely eradicate the distance to enable healthy communication. Love cannot really be held onto, but if the lovers are true in their emotion, they can perhaps avoid a Cliff to influence or a Helena to take over.

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