

LOOK BACK IN ANGER

Love between Jimmy and Alison

Love is probably the strongest feeling known to human, full of contrasts, ups and downs and several risks. Love creates life, but can also be deadly hurtful. Love is happiness, love is passion, love is loyalty, love is pain and sometimes love is even hatred. I believe that different people experience it differently and that there is no strict definition of love. Though I am certain that neither Jimmy nor Alison know what love is, I cannot judge them, because I am not sure anyone really does.

If there is love between Jimmy and Alison, it is rather unusual - most of what they feel towards each other is strongly negative, and love is supposed to be a positive feeling. And if there is no love – why did they marry?

“There must be about six different answers,” said Alison when Helena asked her the same question. *“I knew I was taking on more than I was ever likely to be capable of bearing, but there never seemed to be any choice.”*

She liked him the first time they met at the party, partly also because everyone else despised him. He was her *“night in the shining armour – except that his armour didn’t really shine very much.”* When her parents contradicted their relationship, Jimmy made up his mind to marry her, whether or no he was in love with her. He did it to take his revenge against the upper class society and took her as a hostage in a class war.

Their marriage is not a very successful one. It suffers from a great lack of communication – while Jimmy holds his long monologues, she remains quiet, to some extent because she knows that irritates him. Alison is from the upper class and she never shows her feelings – she wordlessly and calmly drowns in her private pain. Even if she loved Jimmy, she would not be able to express it.

That Alison does not really love Jimmy, is clearly seen when he asks her to come to see Hugh’s mother with him. When he first admits that he needs her help and support, she turns away and leaves. Love is also about allegiances – Jimmy is aware of that and even exaggerates when demanding that Alison should be loyal and feel the same as he does; *“Not only about himself and all the things he believes in, his present and his future, but his past as well. All the people he admires and loves, and has loved. The friends he used to know, people I’ve never known – and probably wouldn’t have liked. His father, who died years ago. Even the other women he’s loved.”* However, Alison feels incapable to bring herself to *feel the way he does about things*. Even her father blames her for writing to her family when knowing how they feel about Jimmy. It was a betrayal.

Jimmy takes love as possession. He is extremely jealous of Cliff and Helena, believing love is competition (*“You’re determined to win her, aren’t you?”*). He also connects love with pain: *“They all want to escape from the pain of being alive. And, most of all, love. /.../ It’s no good to fool yourself about love. /.../ And if you can’t bear the thought of messing up your nice, clean soul, you’d better give up the whole idea of life, and become a saint.”*

Jimmy as a nobody desperately needed someone to love him. *“I may be a lost cause, but I thought if you loved me, it needn’t matter.”* However, he did not know how to give or accept love, which prevented him from being happy.

The only thing, that is left in their marriage, is the bear and squirrel game. It’s a way of escaping from reality, freely playing without common sense and responsibility. And that is not love. It’s just unreasonable passion, without any obligations.

If anything speaks in favour of existence of love between them, it is Alison’s comeback at the end. However, she never says she loves him... She came back because of her desire of being a victim, crawling and crying so that Jimmy could splash about in her tears. She wanted to be in

the mud. She did not want to be good anymore, she has changed utterly and burned her ships which were to bring her back to her family.

To sum up, I do not believe there is any love between Jimmy and Alison. They are both emotionally very confused and I do not think they are able to love anybody, especially not each other. They just cause each other pain. It would have been better for both of them if they had never met.