

LOOK BACK IN ANGER

Relationship between Helena and Alison

Helena is Alison's old friend and Jimmy's natural enemy. After she comes over, everything changes. Although the tension increases gravely, Alison is happy to have a woman to help her.

Helena keeps asking Alison personal questions about her relationship with the two men and makes Alison think about how she feels. She is the only character in the book that has any idea about right and wrong and she tries hard to make Alison see that too – she advises her to tell Jimmy about the baby and if he isn't willing to change, get out of that "nuthouse". Helena does not understand anything Alison tells her about her marriage. She is very worried about her and defends her from Jimmy's insults. At the end she even allows herself to sharply intervene in their relationship by wiring Alison's father. I do not think Alison would have left Jimmy if Helena would not interfere. She was too frightened to do that herself, and also had no courage to resist her friend.

Helena's actions may seem like a betrayal – she made Alison leave Jimmy so that she could be with him. However, in my opinion she did not plan it. She told Alison to go only because she wanted best for her. She truly hated Jimmy and did not realize she loved him at the same time. Hatred and love are both passionate feelings and the line in between is dreadfully thin. When Alison returns, they both feel guilty, because they think that the other has more right to be with Jimmy. Helena leaves him, not stepping aside to let Alison come back, but saving her own life.

Helena is far too reasonable to understand Alison's confused desires. At the end she realizes that she cannot save her by directing her decisions and lets her do what she wants, although she knows it is bad for her.