

# John Osborne: LOOK BACK IN ANGER

## 1. Pre-reading Activities:

1.

	Lower class family	Middle class family	Upper class family
a) house, domestic help	flat, small house podnajemniško*	House, flat	Mansion, big house, having pomočnica*
b) family transport	Bicycle, old car	Car	Limosine, plane, boat
c) clothes	Old, cheap		Fashionable, labels + priznan proizvajalec
d) pets	Mešanec* more pets	Cat, dog	Exotic pets, pedigree pets
e) sports & pastimes*	Non	Average, usual (basketball, football, ...)	Golf, yachting

2. ???

3. Aspects making couple happy/unhappy?

- talking
- honesty
- cheating
- ??

4. /

5.

a) reasons for being angry: depression, unsuccess\*, problems in love, fiscal appearance, financial problems???

b) ??\*\*

## 2. Introduction:

### JOHN OSBORNE'S LIFE and WORKS:

- playwright, screenplay writer, actor, theater director
- born: 12 December 1929, Fulham, London
- lower-middle class father + working-class mother, unhappy marriage
- father died from tuberculosis-a mark on his writing
- attending lesser public\* boarding school in Devon, expelled for hitting the headmaster
- a sense of not belonging to a single social class, problems of identity, loss of family
- jobs: junior journalist, assistant stage manager in theatre, actor
- married 5 times (3 of them were actresses)
- play Look back in anger was excepted at the Royal Court\*
- he didn't take part in any political party
- he was arrested
- he was aware of crucial\* issues

### 3. characters:

#### jimmy:

- Tall, thin, 25, \*(more in the book, p.6)
- he thinks he is smarter, better educated than others

#### cliff: \*7, 60

#### Alison: 2x \*7, jimmy's wife

#### Miss Drury: landlady

#### Helena: p55

#### Hugh Tanner-very ruthless & his mother-she belongs to a working class

#### Colonel Redfern: Alison's father, p97\*

### 4. Plot:

#### ACT I.:

- early evening, April
  - attic room
- reading newspaper
  - jimmy complains about book reviews in the newspaper all being the same
  - jimmy gets angry because Alison is too busy ironing that she doesn't answer his question??
  - cliff zagovarjati\* Alison
  - jimmy makes fun of cliff's poor education
  - cliff's monolog about how much jimmy eats
  - jimmy complaining about the posh newspaper again
  - cliff desires Alison, talking to her
- jimmy is trying to run a conversation:
  - about an article, but they aren't interested, but he still carries on
  - jimmy complaining about Sundays-they are depressing
  - jimmy is complaining about cliff's and Alison's lack of enthusiasm (because they don't read sophisticated articles), he finds them boring
- Alison irons the pants for cliff

- Alison announces Webster is coming to visit
- conversation about Madeline (jimmy's ex-mistress)
- jimmy describes her brother Nigel, her family
  - pusillanimous-\*check it in dictionary\*-is how jimmy describes Alison (p29, \*30)
  - jimmy complains about the noise -he cannot listen to the radio, explains that women are noisy
  - cliff tries to force jimmy to apologize for being offensive all night□□jimmy pushes him into Alison-they both fell on floor- Alison gets burned on the iron□ Alison \*nagnati jimmy out f the apartment Cliff takes care of her wound
- Alison tells cliff she is pregnant with jimmy
  - Together with cliff they discuss it together weather to tell it to jimmy or not
  - Jimmy comes back from cliff's room
  - Cliff goes out to buy cigarettes
- While Alison and jimmy are alone
  - Jimmy confesses he pushed Cliff on purpose (p.45)
  - Jimmy and Alison are playing erotic bear and squirrel game; now is the good time to tell jimmy about the baby-but cliff comes back
- There's a telephone for Alison-helena Charles is coming to visit (48)
  - Jimmy is concerned what did Helena rang for?
  - Jimmy talks about Webster
  - meanwhile Alison is away jimmy searches trough her handbag and starts to search through it□he is suspicious
  - he finds a letter in her bag
  - Alison comes back
  - Jimmy is still holding her letter, he is believed in her letters to Mummy his name is nothing but a dirty word
  - Alison tells Helena is coming over for a visit, she has no place to stay while she is playing in theatre, so she'll stay in miss Drury's spare room downstairs
  - Jimmy wishes Alison to suffer (if only she could have a child, and it would die)-he wishes her to learn what life really is-and the only way to learn that is to suffer [quotation, p52]

## Act 2:

### SCENE ONE:

- 2 weeks later, evening-end of hot day[p 55]
  - Alison is making tea
  - jimmy is playing trumpet
- Helena comes-Alison and Helena are talking-Alison is pleased to have another women's help around the house
  - They are complaining about jimmy's irritating trumpet noise
  - Alison talks about Jimmy's jazz band he used to have
  - Thy are discussing Alison's relationship with cliff-p59
  - They are discussing relationship with jimmy-p59,60
  - They are discussing relationship between jimmy and Hugh Tanner:

- he and jimmy had a sweet store together
- after marriage Alison and jimmy had no money and they lived with Hugh
- Alison doesn't like Hugh
- Describing jimmy's paradox: p61
- Alison is describing how isolated she felt on the wedding night-she was away from her life-style, friends, family - she knew there was no way back
- Alison describes herself as a hostage of her own society
- Alison needed to sign her shares over to her Mummy in trust
- Jimmy and Hugh invited themselves through Alison to Alison's friends...p64:jimmy paradox
- P 66:Hugh moved to a distant place far away, as England was "finished for them"-jimmy didn't want to go with him-he accused him of giving it up, and of leaving his mother all alone□ Alison feels jimmy is blaming her for Hugh's leaving
- Alison explains why she married jimmy, how they met: p65
  - It was after Alison's family came back from India where Daddy served with the British army
  - They met at the party, Alison was 21 years old, jimmy was as if he was burning
  - Alison saw jimmy as a knight
- Helena convinces Alison to leave: p67
  - Reasons why Helena believes Alison should leave:
    - For the sake of her baby
    - Because jimmy should learn how to behave and look after Alison
  - Alison explains their bear and squirrel game-game is a way of escaping from reality, they play it because they can't bear the pain of being human beings
  - Alison describes the first months after Hugh had left
  - Helena advises Alison weather to stand up for herself against jimmy or leave jimmy
- Tea time: p69
  - Cliff enters the room, he comes for tea
  - Jimmy comes for tea and starts talking about jazz-helena stands up for her and disagrees with jimmy about the jazz
  - Jimmy insults cliff, because he doesn't have enough knowledge to read posh newspapers
  - Jimmy sings song
  - Helena complains to jimmy for him being so offensive
- Helena and Alison are going to the church: p75
- Alison's sarcastic monolog on how jimmy "rescued" her from her family and friends-p76
  - Jimmy is being offensive to Alison's mother
  - Helena defends Alison's mother
  - Jimmy is being ruthless: p79
  - He complains about Alison not defending herself

- He is astonished about Alison going to church, as the last time she was to church was when she married jimmy—jimmy starts explaining their wedding day:
  - He was a bit drunk, his best man was a stranger he had met in pub that morning
  - Mummy and Daddy were there too—they found out about the wedding at the last moment—Alison and jimmy had to get married by a local vicar in order Alison’s parents wouldn’t have found out about the wedding
- Jimmy insults Helena with a cow (p83, 84)—a long monolog about Helena and her kind of people
  - Helena stands up for her—she is having an argument with him—she threatens to slap him
  - Quotation: p86 ...jimmy starts to remember his father dying again
    - The whole family was waiting for him to die
    - His family was embarrassed
    - Jimmy was the only one who cared about his father
    - He explains how the past few months of his life was like (they were talking a lot)
- Helena is waiting for Alison downstairs to go to church together, meanwhile:
  - Quotation: p88—paradox: jimmy believes he has given everything to Alison—and that she is the one destroying him
  - Alison gets upset about that—she throws a cup on the floor
  - Jimmy gets upset—he doesn’t understand her—quotation: p90
  - Quotation. P 91
- Helena enters, there is a phone call for jimmy (p 91)
- Helena accuses/blames cliff for doing nothing(p 92):
  - Quotation: p 92—cliff is a mediator
- Helena tells Alison she called her father to pick her up and take her home
  - She knows it’s up to her to save Alison from further pain
  - Alison agrees to go with the father
  - Helena presumes jimmy will realize his mistake for being so impatient and ruthless, that he treated badly
- Jimmy comes back and announces that Hugh’s mother had a stroke and she is in hospital now (p95)
  - He asks Alison to come with him to the hospital
  - The bells starts to ring—and Helena goes towards the door
  - Now Alison is between a hard decision. Whether to go with Helena to church or with jimmy to hospital
  - She decides for Helena and going to church
  - Jimmy is disappointed, he can’t believe Alison isn’t coming with him

## SCENE 2:

- (p97):introduction:
  - the following evening
  - Alison is packing

- description of Alison's father: p97\*
- conversation between father and Alison: (p98)
  - father points out an idea jimmy might have been betrayed by Alison
  - jimmy hates all of her family/AND/all upper class in general
  - father admits that jimmy might have been right, as he hated her family, he admits Alison's mother might have gone too far by hiring
    - private detectives on checking up on jimmy
  - quotation: father: p101-they bought like comfortable life-just watching
  - Alison believes jimmy likes her father most-because he can feel sorry for him
  - Quotation (p102) about how she had suffered
  - Alison believes jimmy married her for revenge
  - Father remembers leaving England and then coming back again when everything was changed quotation:p105
  - She sees a squirrel-she picks her up she is at the edge=point of a decision
  - Helena enters-she won't be going with them home, because she has an important appointment about the new play-she is going to come after them the following day
- Cliff enters
  - Alison gives him the envelope with a good-bye letter for jimmy, **they take their leave**(p106)
  - Helena tells cliff she'll be staying with them for one more night
  - Cliff leaves the apartment-he won't deal with jimmy
  - Cliff gives Helena the envelope-so that she will handle with jimmy when he comes back from the hospital
- Jimmy comes back
  - Helena hands him over the letter
  - Jimmy starts to shout, expresses his anger
  - Helena tells him about Alison being pregnant with his baby but jimmy acts as if he doesn't care for the baby
  - Jimmy is still upset because Hugh's mother he visited was dying-and AGAIN he had to watch her die
  - Helena slaps his face, when he mentions the baby and how he doesn't care about it he is surprised then she kisses him passionately

## Act 3:

### SCENE ONE:

- (p115): introduction
  - several months later-Autumn, Sunday evening
  - there are Helena's things now where Alison's used to be
  - jimmy and cliff are reading newspapers, Helena is ironing
  - Helena is wearing an old shirt of jimmy's
- P116:
  - Cliff complains about the smell of jimmy's pipe he is smoking
  - they are talking about articles (Helena actively participates in the conversation)
  - all of the sudden jimmy asks helena whether she is going to the church-he starts to make fun of her-he attacks her because of her believes
- jimmy and Cliff are performing a sort of dialogue in a theater play about Nobody (p123)
  - Helena tells her negative opinion about this sketch
  - now Helena performs
- cliff and jimmy starts to push themselves around (p128):
  - cliff's shirt got dirty□Helena offers to clean it for him //just like Alison in the act I.//
- when Helena is away to wash the shirt, cliff and jimmy start to talk about her(p129):
  - jimmy notices that cliff is not having the same relationship with Helena as he had with Alison
  - cliff announces he'll try to go on his own:
    - because Helena would prefer that
    - because sweet-stall is not for him-he wants something better
    - jimmy respects cliffs idea
    - jimmy complains how he need women (paradox: he can't be without them, but he can barely stand them)-  
quotation(p132)
- they are all getting ready to go out on a drink: (p133)
  - jimmy complains about Helena ironing
  - they talk about cliff's leaving
  - jimmy and Helena get emotional:
    - jimmy remembers how he had Helena for an enemy
    - Helena says she loves him
    - Quotation: p135-Jimmy loves Helena for her bravery of standing up for herself, he hopes they'll stay together forever
    - Jimmy wishes to get away with Helena from his flat, to start all over again with her
- then all of a sudden Alison appears at the door: p 136

### SCENE 2:

- introduction: p138
  - a few minutes later
  - jimmy is playing trumpet

- Helena and Alison are having tea
- Helena and Alison talking:
  - Alison felt it was the right time to come back
  - There were many times before she had to try very hard to convince herself not to come over for a visit-but that afternoon she just walked onto a train-it was then she really realized she is really going back
  - Alison explains she came for no reason or intention of breaking Helena and Jimmy up
  - Helena realizes she made a mistake being with jimmy-but she still believes in her principals-she still knows what is wrong and right
  - Quotation: p142
  - Helena immediately decides to leave jimmy
  - Alison tells her she lost her child
  - Helena calls for jimmy in order to tell him she made up her mind and that she is going to leave
- Jimmy enters: p146
  - Jimmy is showing sympathy for Alison
  - He is “used” to the pain and loses – but Alison isn’t
  - Helena quickly explains she has made the decision and she is ready to leave tonight-she says she truly loved him, but doing the wrong thing=and hurting someone else is in her way to happiness (that is why she needs to leave him)
- Quotation: p 147
- Jimmy and Alison:
  - Jimmy blames her for not sending any flowers to the funeral of Hugh’s mother
  - remembering from the party where they met
- quotation: p149
  - Alison realizes what jimmy went through when suffering
  - she misses her baby-she can’t bare the fact the baby is dead
  - when she lost her baby she knew exactly how jimmy must have felt when he lost his father-she was thinking about jimmy, she missed him
  - she wishes jimmy could have seen her suffer-as that is what he always wanted
  - quotation:p150
  - this is the point where jimmy breaks-he can’t bare the fact she is suffering so much and she is crawling
  - he starts to describe how they’ll be better in the world of bears and squirrels