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My questions are Why does Helena stay with Jimmy and leave Jimmy, why does Alison come back to Jimmy. These are very tricky questions like twisted twines. Here I just air my views, expecting to be complemented by yours.

The reasons for Helena staying with Jimmy might be probed from the following:

Superficially looking, Jimmy is a person basically worth while.

Jimmy is a young man with education, ideas and penetrating insights. Alison breaking through her family's strong obstacles to marry Jimmy from side reflects Jimmy's charms and attractions. Jimmy seems a natural desire and magnet for women if his working-class background? poverty and walled situations are ignored for the moment. As Helena said she took Jimmy to herself because " she finds that she desires him and wants to have him for a time".

It is an outburst of impulse catalyzed by special occasions. At that time, without digs, Helena had an appointment on the next day and had to lodge in Jimmy's attic; Jimmy is then immersed in bereavement without comfort while Allison and Cliff left him successively. Witnessing Jimmy's bitterness and helplessness, out of her female compassionate nature, Helena offered Jimmy her hand and herself as well. For solace and release, Jimmy dramatically accepted his natural enemy. Thus the two naturally and reasonably moved together.

Exploring the in-depth reason, Helena's staying with Jimmy might be considered as a challenge she made for herself driven by her instincts of curiosity and conquest. Helena wanted to make out why the seemingly

compatible couple always brawl and torture each other, why Jimmy is always angry? dissatisfied and cynical, always trying hard to be offensive, provocative, irritating. Determined by her inborn authoritative personality and her middle-class inclination to sustain the status quo, she takes Jimmy as a challenge and an attempt, an enemy territory to conquer, to justify her middle-class convictions and consciousness. She expects Jimmy to be changed, back into normal, behaving like anyone else and taking reality like a real man.

Naive? romantic and over-confident as Helena is, she fails to change Jimmy. Conversely and ironically, she was within an inch of being changed. Helena was inevitably to lose the war because Jimmy's anger was socially deep-rooted. He had the complex of inferiority and superiority. He showed contempt for uneducated Cliff, irony for educated Alison. He was well educated, but his situation was no better than the two he looked down upon. It was an affliction and sarcasm to him. He lived at the sea of isolation? desperation and inarticulate agony. Without being heard or understood. He found no target to attack, therefore everything became his target. Jimmy was a man born out of his time. To change Jimmy Helena should change the times first. It is difficult and impossible for Helena to change the time, and so with Jimmy. To bridge the systematic and fathomless class and value gap was never a easy task and doomed to be futile and fruitless.

Jimmy and Helena's combination was the effect of passionate impulse. It was a kind of insanity or wrong-doings as Helena herself later commented. Once waken up from the dream, the end of their relation was approaching. Helena was a woman of conventionality by nature, she couldn't forget the book of <https://assignbuster.com/british-culture-chaoxiaoqian/>

rules anytime. She still believed in "right and wrong"! Gnawed by the worm of conscience and sense of guilt, she can't "be happy without the book of rules", she can't "be happy when what you're doing is wrong, or is hurting someone else".

Moreover she lost the war waged against changing Jimmy, the war to restore everything into normal. Unless Jimmy and Helena don't confront with each other face to face, or they will certainly fall into the state of war, the war of ideas, class, values, social reality. There was no middle road to compromise. Helena's exeuntting also meant she lost the war against conventionality, against status quo. Her story is more than a morality one, it further proved every desire or attempt to change the suffocating and inanimate society over-confident and all for naught. Everyone would inevitably subordinate himself to conventionality.

My understanding of Alison's return is explained as such:

Alison might feel regret about her past behaviors. Though she is the seeming victim of Jimmy's irrational assault, she knows that Jimmy has reason to do so on her. After her abortion, something dormant was aroused from the bottom of her heart and she came back to Jimmy, though shilly-shally. As a young woman, she is a "monument of non-attachment". "She hasn't had a thought for years!" She is a woman in her 20s without enthusiasm, animation and sincerity. Nothing Jimmy could do would provoke her. Her marriage with Jimmy was a kind of physical and responsive affinity rather than mental and spiritual one. She was nicknamed as 'Lady Pusillanimous' by Jimmy.

Moreover, as a middle-class woman by nature, she kept her arrogant and uppish manner in communicating with the working-class people which was especially exposed when she wrote letter to her mother, discussed Jimmy with her father and Helena, refused to see the dying Mrs. Hugh with Jimmy. She had the sense of inborn class superiority which is a fatal and permanent weapon to sensitive Jimmy. She did betray Jimmy in a sense. In a word, she has never given herself to her husband with the honesty which she knew he demanded and needed. Actually, she knew she should shoulder some responsibility for Jimmy's anger and offered Jimmy more understanding and communication. The problem of their marriage was not sheer Jimmy's fault.

Alison left Jimmy in pursuit of peace and relaxation. Tortured by Jimmy's distorted allegiance and loyalty demands for her, Alison wanted to escape from the role of hostage and the war Jimmy declared on "those sections of society". But Alison never succeeded in escape. Things didn't go in the way as she expected.

Alison's coming back could be interpreted as a subjugation to conventional reality and failure of Ostrichism. Alison is easily to get used to everything and she is also on the verge of burst. Tortured by Jimmy's distorted allegiance and loyalty demands for her, Alison wanted to escape from the role of hostage and the war Jimmy declared on "those sections of society". She leaves Jimmy, in pursuit of peace and relaxation. But Alison never succeeded in escape. Things didn't go in the way as she expected.

Her abortion brings her shock and disillusionment, awakening something dormant in her heart. She then clearly sees a depressing? aimless? hopeless and futureless reality, without light and outlet. By then she understood Jimmy's anger and discontent to some extent. Without a bright future, Alison had to revert to the past, though vague, remote and suspended it is. She wanted to find herself a position in the conventional and accustomed role of wife. The unpleasant past seems a more lovely memento In comparison with the suffocating and smoldering reality.

Finally Alison and Jimmy decide to pick up the bear-squirrel game. It is a seeming communiqũ½ by Alison and Jimmy, protesting the reality and fighting against the " cruel steel traps, lying about everywhere, just waiting for rather mad, slightly satanic, and very timid little animals." This could be regarded as a faint flicker of hope offered by the protagonists who had a in-depth perception and understanding of life.