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**Hindsight is 20/20**

You ask them why they did it—and the classic response is, “I don’t know”. These types of instances are to be expected when dealing with children, partially because they are unaware of consequences, and partially due to the fact that they really don’t know. With age comes experience, with experience the human race naturally becomes wiser, so why trust a young adolescent child to make decisions? We don’t; but that doesn’t stop the foolishness of children believing they are superior in intelligence than they actually are from making decisions that could backfire in the near future. That is why Khaled Hosseini’s book The Kite Runner and the film Atonement go hand in hand when being compared. They both contain one major similarity that bond them together—children make rash decisions and are completely oblivious to the consequences that can occur.

If either Amir (main character in Hosseini’s book The Kite Runner) or Briony (main character in Atonement) knew the truth in their respective stores would it have changed anything? Taking away the abuse and pain, and suffering, and damage that each one caused? Most likely. Amir in The Kite Runner had seen what was done to his servant and friend Hassan when he was present at a scene where Assef (the bully) preformed an audacious act on Hassan leaving him abused in many ways. Amir didn’t intervene to put an end to the very truculent actions that he was witnessing and the guilt began to eat at him. Amir, in his adolescence, made up him mind that the only way he was going to come to terms to what he had seen was to get rid of Hassan and his father Ali altogether. So he preformed am nihilistic act by planting his birthday money and valuable watch under Hassan’s cot to frame him for stealing and hopefully result in him being banished from Amir’s household. This, in turn, backfired. After being forgiven, Hassan and Ali tell Baba (Amir’s father) that they had to leave because they felt unsafe. Amir immediately begins to regret his decision claiming that, “that was when I understood the depth of the pain I had caused” (Hosseini, 107). Amir didn’t think about whom his decision would hurt the most, this time it ended up causing Baba, the last man Amir would ever want to hurt, the most pain. Briony shows the same type of rash decision making. While looking for a few runaway boys out in the darkness of the night, Briony stumbles across her friend being raped by a familiar face; she tells herself she is sure that it was Robbie (a very kind young caretaker of the house) without logically thinking it through that it was in fact dark and she wasn’t fully convinced that it was Robbie in the first place. Without stopping to think the situation through, she is the first to tell the authorities that it was in fact Robbie who is the culprit without regard to him possibly being innocent. All they had back then was people’s word, no cameras, no DNA tests, no evidence. Both of these characters hurt someone who was innocent in the crimes that occurred, but there is always a “what if”? What if Amir would have known that Hassan is actually his half-brother earlier in the book, would he have made that same deviate decision that caused harm to his family? And Briony, with her rash decision, would she have done the same if she would have had the same knowledge at the beginning of the book that she learned at the end (that Robbie was innocent)? The answers to both the questions are never to be known, but logic tells us that both characters would have made better decisions if they would have known the truth and seen the harm their rash decisions caused.

Another parallel that is shared between The Kite Runner and Atonement is the guilt each main character has to endure after making their rash decision that caused so much harm. Amir experiences guilt every time he hears the name *Hassan*. He experiences morbid flashbacks that cause him to take his anger out on the innocent Hassan. The guilt eats at Amir—till he finally snaps. He takes Hassan up to the hill where they always play and ambushes Hassan with an impossible command—“Hit me!” (Hosseini, 92) Amir says to Hassan. Hassan (being the loyal friend that he is) doesn’t hit Amir causing Amir to sulk in his own unsuccessful attempt at redemption with making up for what he had done. Amir did this because the guilt was too much to handle, he couldn’t take what he had down and instead of making up for it in a positive way, he though the quickest option was to let Hassan get even. Briony lives with guilt also for what she had done. Briony reminisced about how when she was younger, she tried to write letters to her sister Cecilia (Robbie’s lover) to explain what she had done was wrong and she was truly sorry for the pain she had caused. She also acknowledged in the movie that she was too afraid to do this in person, so the letters were her way to apologize and avoid the harsh stares of the ones she hurt altogether. She takes the easy way out hiding from taking responsibility for what she had done. Neither Amir or Briony get full closure for what they had done, thus leading them both to live a life of trying to repay for their guilt they still contain inside.

Another comparison that was made between The Kite Runner and Atonement was the effort made by both characters to rectify the things they did wrong. For Amir, it was to take on the task of rescuing his nephew Sohrab. While Amir debated going to save Sohrab, he thought to himself, “*There is a way to be good again*. A way to end the cycle” (Hosseini, 226). At first Amir is reluctant to go on this venturesome journey, but then realizes that this could be a big step in making up for what he had done to Hassan when they were little…Amir knew he owed him. Briony tries to ameliorate for what she had done as well. Instead of taking affirmative action, Briony choose a different route—through literature. When Briony becomes elderly and ill, she decides that her last novel will be about her life ant the big mistake that she made when she was the one that put Robbie in jail. She writes how she goes to visit Robbie and Cecilia and tries to make amends with them by explaining how truly sorry she was. Only later in the book does she reveal that forgiveness was never achieved because Robbie died while off at war, and Cecilia dies in a flood in an underground train station. She never got to see them face to face and tell them she was wrong, she never got to make amends. Her novel is the only way that Briony feels is necessary to give herself some sort of relief and comfort knowing she wouldn’t have to keep the pain inside of her till the day she died; she could write it out in a novel and relief at least some of the harsh guilt she endured since she was little. Both Amir and Briony try to make things right by doing good deeds, even though they will never have full closure because the people the harmed died before Amir or Briony could make things right.

Children shouldn’t be put in a position to make critical decisions, they just simply cannot comprehend that with every choice that is made there are ramifications that come along with it. They do not take into consideration the people around them. Children’s perspective on life is limited, due to them only living a few years in this world. Amir and Briony made rash decisions that later caused damage to love ones, as well as themselves. They were children then, and as they grew and matured, they showed remorse for what they had done. In their adulthood, they realize that their decisions could have had a different outcome for the better if they would have tried to understand the importance of the decision they were about to make. That must be why the saying goes “Hindsight is 20/20”.