Life is Too Short

Redemption. At the moment a heinous crime or mistake is committed -- a sometimes melancholy moment filled with torment and hatred -- an individual may not discern the magnitude of what they have done. In addition, it may take anywhere from a second to decades for someone to identify and comprehend the gravity of the situation they have put themselves in. But, once they realize their mistakes and their need for exoneration, it is up to them. *Solely* them. To strive for their redemption. The theme of redemption is very apparent in both the film *Atonement* and Khaled Hosseini’s The Kite Runner. Both wonderful works of art complement each other, and attempt to summarize the journey of two characters -- Briony from *Atonement* and Amir from The Kite Runner-- who are trying to seek the somewhat unreachable goal of redeeming themselves. Furthermore, both enjoyable works beg to inquire the questions: *Do you feel the guilt gnawing at your bones, and what are you going to do about it?*

The film *Atonement* narrows in on the journey of a quaint girl named Briony. When she was young, she made a false accusation against her servant, crush, friend, and sister’s lover; Robbie. Briony was very literary, and she craved to be the protagonist of her own story. She desired to be the paragon so much that she blamed Robbie for raping her cousin. In truth, Robbie did nothing wrong. Due to Briony’s actions, her sister -- Cecilia-- and Robbie were separated. Forever. Although they rekindled their romance for a short time, they both died before they were able to live out their lives together. Separated by war and Briony, they lost their future together. After they died, Briony was forced to live with her guilt -- oozing out of the pores of her body. While still hankering her chance to be a hero and understanding the depth of the fault she had made, Briony set out to redeem herself. Before she died, she was able to publish a novel dedicated to Cecilia and Robbie. In the novel, Briony threw away her decades of cowardness and found strength in scribing Cecilia and Robbie the one thing she had stolen from them: their happy ending. Overall, Briony finally recognized that she had made an awful mistake, and Khaled Hosseini’s character -- Amir -- in The Kite Runner does precisely the same thing. Also, Amir understands the steps that Briony had to take on her journey to find peace for her soul. Through Amir’s insight, the audience is able to better understand Briony’s thought process and why she made the choices that she did. All in all, The Kite Runner remarkably depicts what it’s like seek redemption after it appears to be too late.

Hosseini’s novel -- The Kite Runner -- recounts the story of a young, literary boy named Amir, and his quest for redemption. Just like Briony, Amir betrays his servant and friend -- Hassan -- by not saving him during the time that he was raped. Additionally, just like Briony, Amir was consumed by his guilt; Amir was so ashamed by his actions, that he could no longer acquaint himself with Hassan. By truly believing that the only way to end his agony was to dispose of Hassan, Amir stashed his “new watch and a handful of Afghan bills” (Hosseini, 104) beneath Hassan’s mattress; he framed Hassan as a liar, thief, and cheater. This forced Hassan to leave Amir’s home, never to be glimpsed again. Eventually, Amir recollects that for “twenty-six years” (Hosseini, 1) he lived with the guilt, torture, and shame that his cowardly actions caused -- only wishing for redemption. But, it was too late. Hassan was dead, and Amir no longer had the opportunity to apologize to him. Nevertheless, he could do the next best thing: save Hassan’s son, Sohrab, from being a sex slave to the Taliban. In the end, Amir rescues Sohrab -- the lone, tiny piece of Hassan that is still left on this Earth. In the end -- just like Briony -- Amir spent his entire life being a coward, but now he could finally glare into the optics of his mistakes. Due to that, he spent the rest of his life striving to compensate for the treacherous acts that he committed. He too unearthed his redemption.

Overall, there are a lot of similarities between Briony and Amir; such as, they are both pompous, stubborn, cowardly, control freaks, literary, and young when they made their blunders. Nonetheless, there is one similarity between them that outshines the others: their need for absolution. Although both Briony and Amir made unforgivable errors, they both discovered ways to redeem themselves. They both had epiphanies that consisted of realizing that it may be too late to recover themselves in the eyes of their victims; nevertheless, they can still somewhat liberate themselves in *their* orbs. They can complete tasks that if their victims were still alive, would be proud of. Both *Atonement* and The Kite Runner account the tales of personas who persevered to find their peace. Also, both works highlight on the imperative fact that redemption is hard to fully grasp. Many people will seek redemption, some will achieve it, but none will ever completely free themselves. Their mistakes will always be playing in the back of their victim’s minds like a broken record, but making mistakes doesn’t automatically make someone a monster. It makes them human. The actuality is that if someone searches for redemption, they are showing that they have integrity, a conscience, and are worthy of forgiveness. So forgive them, because one day you could be in their shoes. Life is too short to cling to grudges, detestation, agony, mortification, and what could have been.