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**Decisions**

Regret. Everyone has regretted something at one time in their life. However serious the issue, one cannot deny the toll it takes. You think about that one thing day after day. You lose sleep over it. You find yourself daydreaming about it. You cry over it. And eventually, you try to bury it. Regret is something that everyone can relate to. Everyone knows the feeling and everyone knows what it can lead to—unhappiness, loneliness, anger, and depression. Mistakes are carefully constructed by literary authors and placed in a story for a specific reason. Mistakes are generally considered to be a “big deal,” and cause the reader to directly relate with the character. Regret is an underlying theme in the book The Kite Runner, by Khaled Hosseini. The ultimate theme for this book is redemption. This is what Amir strives for after making quite possibly the biggest mistake of his life. Instead of standing up for his best friend and half-brother, Amir chose to watch him get raped. This decision was crucial in regards to the plot as a whole. Hosseini used this haunting decision to shock readers and draw them into the story.

Amir’s decision infuriates readers. Everyone wants to know why. Why didn’t he stand up for Hassan? Why didn’t he try to distract the bullies? Why is he such a chicken? Readers need to be reminded that Amir was just a boy. He didn’t know any better and fear had overtaken him. To better understand Amir and how his decision affected him growing up, we can look at Mary Oliver’s poem “A Bitterness.” This piece of literature can directly relate to the feelings Amir experiences after his careless decision.

After Hassan’s assault, Amir’s life has changed forever. He has become bitter. He has lost his very best friend, Hassan, and still has yet to gain the feeling of acceptance and pride from his father. This single decision has led Amir to “not have a happy life” (Oliver, 1). This is proved to us when Amir has all he has ever wanted—Baba’s appreciation and undivided attention. Amir says “Except now that I had it, I felt as empty as this unkempt pool I was dangling my legs into” (Hosseini, 85). This shows us that even though Amir has everything he’s ever dreamed of, he still cannot be happy because of what he has witnessed happen to Hassan. The poem also states “your best friends were loneliness and misery” (Oliver, 3) meaning that because of Amir’s lack of courage, he lost his only true best friend and is now stuck with the consequences.

Mary Oliver’s poem is directly related to Amir and his experiences throughout The Kite Runner. The title—“A Bitterness”—describes Amir’s overall personality. Bitterness can be defined as angry, hurt, or resentful because of one's bad experiences or a sense of unjust treatment. Amir is bitter because of the event he witnessed happened to Hassan, but he is also bitter because of the way Baba treats him—as a coward and an immature little boy. Above anything else, Amir is bitter with himself. Deep down he wishes that he would have done something to help Hassan, but fear overtook him and left him speechless. He is angry with himself that he couldn’t gather the strength to say a word. He will regret that decision and be resentful toward himself for the rest of his life.

Works Cited:

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