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Atonement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO-Ity9GTQI>

***Atonement*** by Ian McEwan - 2002

She was one of those children possessed by a desire to have the world just so. Whereas her big sister's room was a stew of unclosed books, unfolded clothes, unmade bed, unemptied ashtrays, Briony's was a shrine to her controlling demon: the model farm spread across a deep window ledge consisted of the usual animals, but all facing one way--towards their owner--as if about to break into song, and even the farmyard hens were neatly corralled. In fact, Briony's was the only tidy upstairs room in the house. Her straight-backed dolls in their many-roomed mansion appeared to be under strict instructions not to touch the walls; the various thumb-sized figures to be found standing about her dressing table--cowboys, deep-sea divers, humanoid mice--suggested by their even ranks and spacing a citizen's army awaiting orders.

A taste for the miniature was one aspect of an orderly spirit. Another was a passion for secrets: in a prized varnished cabinet, a secret drawer was opened by pushing against the grain of a cleverly turned dovetail joint, and here she kept a diary locked by a clasp, and a notebook written in a code of her own invention. In a toy safe opened by six secret numbers she stored letters and postcards. An old tin petty cash box was hidden under a removable floorboard beneath her bed. In the box were treasures that dated back four years, to her ninth birthday when she began collecting: a mutant double acorn, fool's gold, a rain-making spell bought at a funfair, a squirrel's skull as light as a leaf.

But hidden drawers, lockable diaries and cryptographic systems could not conceal from Briony the simple truth: she had no secrets. Her wish for a harmonious, organised world denied her the reckless possibilities of wrongdoing. Mayhem and destruction were too chaotic for her tastes, and she did not have it in her to be cruel. Her effective status as an only child, as well as the relative isolation of the Tallis house, kept her, at least during the long summer holidays, from girlish intrigues with friends. Nothing in her life was sufficiently interesting or shameful to merit hiding; no one knew about the squirrel's skull beneath her bed, but no one wanted to know. None of this was particularly an affliction; or rather, it appeared so only in retrospect, once a solution had been found.

At the age of eleven she wrote her first story--a foolish affair, imitative of half a dozen folk tales and lacking, she realised later, that vital knowingness about the ways of the world which compels a reader's respect. But this first clumsy attempt showed her that the imagination itself was a source of secrets: once she had begun a story, no one could be told. Pretending in words was too tentative, too vulnerable, too embarrassing to let anyone know. Even writing out the she saids, the and thens, made her wince, and she felt foolish, appearing to know about the emotions of an imaginary being. Self-exposure was inevitable the moment she described a character's weakness; the reader was bound to speculate that she was describing herself. What other authority could she have? Only when a story was finished, all fates resolved and the whole matter sealed off at both ends so it resembled, at least in this one respect, every other finished story in the world, could she feel immune, and ready to punch holes in the margins, bind the chapters with pieces of string, paint or draw the cover, and take the finished work to show to her mother, or her father, when he was home.

Her efforts received encouragement. In fact, they were welcomed as the Tallises began to understand that the baby of the family possessed a strange mind and a facility with words. The long afternoons she spent browsing through dictionary and thesaurus made for constructions that were inept, but hauntingly so: the coins a villain concealed in his pocket were 'esoteric', a hoodlum caught stealing a car wept in 'shameless auto-exculpation', the heroine on her thoroughbred stallion made a 'cursory' journey through the night, the king's furrowed brow was the 'hieroglyph' of his displeasure. Briony was encouraged to read her stories aloud in the library and it surprised her parents and older sister to hear their quiet girl perform so boldly, making big gestures with her free arm, arching her eyebrows as she did the voices, and looking up from the page for seconds at a time as she read in order to gaze into one face after the other, unapologetically demanding her family's total attention as she cast her narrative spell.

Even without their attention and praise and obvious pleasure, Briony could not have been held back from her writing. In any case, she was discovering, as had many writers before her, that not all recognition is helpful. Cecilia's enthusiasm, for example, seemed a little overstated, tainted with condescension perhaps, and intrusive too; her big sister wanted each bound story catalogued and placed on the library shelves, between Rabindranath Tagore and Quintus Tertullian. If this was supposed to be a joke, Briony ignored it. She was on course now, and had found satisfaction on other levels; writing stories not only involved secrecy, it also gave her all the pleasures of miniaturisation. A world could be made in five pages, and one that was more pleasing than a model farm. The childhood of a spoiled prince could be framed within half a page, a moonlit dash through sleepy villages was one rhythmically emphatic sentence, falling in love could be achieved in a single word--a glance. The pages of a recently finished story seemed to vibrate in her hand with all the life they contained. Her passion for tidiness was also satisfied, for an unruly world could be made just so. A crisis in a heroine's life could be made to coincide with hailstones, gales and thunder, whereas nuptials were generally blessed with good light and soft breezes. A love of order also shaped the principles of justice, with death and marriage the main engines of housekeeping, the former being set aside exclusively for the morally dubious, the latter a reward withheld until the final page.

Never Let Me Go

mot de passe : webin21

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**Never Let Me Go**
by Kazuo Ishiguro - 2005

My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years. That sounds long enough, I know, but actually they want me to go on for another eight months, until the end of this year. That'll make it almost exactly twelve years. Now I know my being a carer so long isn't necessarily because they think I'm fantastic at what I do. There are some really good carers who've been told to stop after just two or three years. And I can think of one carer at least who went on for all of fourteen years despite being a complete waste of space. So I'm not trying to boast. But then I do know for a fact they've been pleased with my work, and by and large, I have too. My donors have always tended to do much better than expected. Their recovery times have been impressive, and hardly any of them have been classified as "agitated," even before fourth donation. Okay, maybe I am boasting now. But it means a lot to me, being able to do my work well, especially that bit about my donors staying "calm." I've developed a kind of instinct around donors. I know when to hang around and comfort them, when to leave them to themselves; when to listen to everything they have to say, and when just to shrug and tell them to snap out of it.

Anyway, I'm not making any big claims for myself. I know carers, working now, who are just as good and don't get half the credit. If you're one of them, I can understand how you might get resentful—about my bedsit, my car, above all, the way I get to pick and choose who I look after. And I'm a Hailsham student—which is enough by itself sometimes to get people's backs up. Kathy H., they say, she gets to pick and choose, and she always chooses her own kind: people from Hailsham, or one of the other privileged estates. No wonder she has a great record. I've heard it said enough, so I'm sure you've heard it plenty more, and maybe there's something in it. But I'm not the first to be allowed to pick and choose, and I doubt if I'll be the last. And anyway, I've done my share of looking after donors brought up in every kind of place. By the time I finish, remember, I'll have done twelve years of this, and it's only for the last six they've let me choose.

And why shouldn't they? Carers aren't machines. You try and do your best for every donor, but in the end, it wears you down. You don't have unlimited patience and energy. So when you get a chance to choose, of course, you choose your own kind. That's natural. There's no way I could have gone on for as long as I have if I'd stopped feeling for my donors every step of the way. And anyway, if I'd never started choosing, how would I ever have got close again to Ruth and Tommy after all those years?

But these days, of course, there are fewer and fewer donors left who I remember, and so in practice, I haven't been choosing that much. As I say, the work gets a lot harder when you don't have that deeper link with the donor, and though I'll miss being a carer, it feels just about right to be finishing at last come the end of the year.

Ruth, incidentally, was only the third or fourth donor I got to choose. She already had a carer assigned to her at the time, and I remember it taking a bit of nerve on my part. But in the end I managed it, and the instant I saw her again, at that recovery centre in Dover, all our differences—while they didn't exactly vanish—seemed not nearly as important as all the other things: like the fact that we'd grown up together at Hailsham, the fact that we knew and remembered things no one else did. It's ever since then, I suppose, I started seeking out for my donors people from the past, and whenever I could, people from Hailsham.

There have been times over the years when I've tried to leave Hailsham behind, when I've told myself I shouldn't look back so much. But then there came a point when I just stopped resisting. It had to do with this particular donor I had once, in my third year as a carer; it was his reaction when I mentioned I was from Hailsham. He'd just come through his third donation, it hadn't gone well, and he must have known he wasn't going to make it. He could hardly breathe, but he looked towards me and said: "Hailsham. I bet that was a beautiful place." Then the next morning, when I was making conversation to keep his mind off it all, and I asked where he'd grown up, he mentioned some place in Dorset and his face beneath the blotches went into a completely new kind of grimace. And I realised then how desperately he didn't want reminded. Instead, he wanted to hear about Hailsham.

So over the next five or six days, I told him whatever he wanted to know, and he'd lie there, all hooked up, a gentle smile breaking through. He'd ask me about the big things and the little things. About our guardians, about how we each had our own collection chests under our beds, the football, the rounders, the little path that took you all round the outside of the main house, round all its nooks and crannies, the duck pond, the food, the view from the Art Room over the fields on a foggy morning. Sometimes he'd make me say things over and over; things I'd told him only the day before, he'd ask about like I'd never told him. "Did you have a sports pavilion?" "Which guardian was your special favourite?" At first I thought this was just the drugs, but then I realised his mind was clear enough. What he wanted was not just to hear about Hailsham, but to remember Hailsham, just like it had been his own childhood. He knew he was close to completing and so that's what he was doing: getting me to describe things to him, so they'd really sink in, so that maybe during those sleepless nights, with the drugs and the pain and the exhaustion, the line would blur between what were my memories and what were his. That was when I first understood, really understood, just how lucky we'd been—Tommy, Ruth, me, all the rest of us.

Driving around the country now, I still see things that will remind me of Hailsham. I might pass the corner of a misty field, or see part of a large house in the distance as I come down the side of a valley, even a particular arrangement of poplar trees up on a hillside, and I'll think: "Maybe that's it! I've found it! This actually is Hailsham!" Then I see it's impossible and I go on driving, my thoughts drifting on elsewhere. In particular, there are those pavilions. I spot them all over the country, standing on the far side of playing fields, little white prefab buildings with a row of windows unnaturally high up, tucked almost under the eaves. I think they built a whole lot like that in the fifties and sixties, which is probably when ours was put up. If I drive past one I keep looking over to it for as long as possible, and one day I'll crash the car like that, but I keep doing it. Not long ago I was driving through an empty stretch of Worcestershire and saw one beside a cricket ground so like ours at Hailsham I actually turned the car and went back for a second look.

Shutter Island

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 mot de passe : webin21

**SHUTTER ISLAND**

Denis Lehane — 2003

“Your name is Andrew Laeddis,” Cawtey said. “The sixty-seventh patient at Ashecliffe Hospital? He’s you, Andrew.”

”BULLSHIT!” .

Teddy screamed it and the scream rocketed through his head. “Your name is Andrew Laeddis,” Cawley repeated. “You were committed here by court order twenty-two months ago.” Teddy threw his hand at that. “This is below even you guys.”

“Look at the evidence. Please, Andrew. You—“

“Don’t call me that.”

“—came here two years ago because you committed a terrible crime. One that society can’t forgive, but I can. Andrew, look at me.” Teddy’s eyes rose from the hand Cawley had extended, up the arm and across the chest and into Cawley’s face, the man’s eyes brimming now with. that false compassion, that imitation of decency. “My name is Edward Daniels.”

“No.” Cawley shook his head with an air of weary defeat. “Your name is Andrew Laeddis. You did a terrible thing, and you can’t forgive yourself, nomatter what, so you playact. You’ve created a dense, complex narrative structure in which you are the hero, Andrew. You convince yourself you’re still a U.S. marshal and you’re here on a case. And you’ve uncovered a conspiracy, which means that anything we tell you to the contrary plays into your fantasy that we’re conspiring against you. And maybe we could let that go, let you live in your fantasy world. I’d like that. If you were harmless, I’d like that a lot. But you’re violent, you’re very violent. And because of your military and law enforcement training, you’re too good at it. You’re the most dangerous patient we have here. We can’t constrain you. It’s been decided look at me.”

Teddy looked up, saw Cawley half stretching across the table, his eye pleading.

“It’s been decided that if we can’t bring you back to sanity—now, right now —permanent measures will be taken to ensure you never hurt anyone again. Do you understand what I’m saying to you?” For a moment—not even a full moment, a tenth of a moment—Teddy almost believed him.

Then Teddy smiled.

“It’s a nice act you’ve got going, Doc. Who’s the bad cop— Sheehan?” He glanced back at the door. “He’s about due, I’d say.”

“Look at me,” Cawley said. “Look into my eyes.”

Teddy did. They were red and swimming from lack of sleep. And more.

What was it? Teddy held Cawley’s gaze, studied those eyes. And then it came to him—if he didn’t know otherwise, he’d swear Cawley was suffering from a broken heart.

“Listen,” Cawley said, “I’m all you’ve got. I’m all you’ve ever had. I’ve been hearing this fantasy for two years now. I know every detail, every wrinkle —the codes, the missing partner, the storm, the woman in the cave, the evil experiments in the lighthouse. I know about Noyce and the fictitious Senator Hurly. I know you dream of Dolores all the time and her belly leaks and she’s soaking with water. I know about the logs.”

“You’re full of shit,” Teddy said.

“How would I know?”

Teddy ticked off the evidence on his trembling fingers:

“I’ve been eating your food, drinking your coffee, smoking your cigarettes. Hell, I took three ‘aspirin’ from you the morning I arrived. Then you drugged me the other night. You were sitting there when I woke up. I haven’t been the same since. That’s where all this started. That night, after my migraine. What’d you give me?”

Cawley leaned back. He grimaced as if he were swallowing acid and looked off at the window.

“I’m running out of time,” he whispered.

“What’s that?”

“Time,” he said softly. “I was given four days. I’m almost out.” “So let me go. I’ll go back to Boston, file a complaint with the marshals’ office, but don’t worry—with all your powerful friends I’m sure it won’t amount to much.”

,Cawley said, “No, Andrew. I’m almost out of friends. I’ve been fighting a battle here for eight years and the scales have tipped in the other side’s favor. I’m going to lose. Lose my position, lose my funding. I swore before the entire board of overseers that I could construct the most extravagant role-playing experiment psychiatry has ever seen and it would save you. It would bring you back. But if I was wrong?” His eyes widened and he pushed his hand up into his chin, as if he were trying to pop his jaw back into place. He dropped the hand, looked across the table at Teddy. “Don’t you understand, Andrew? If you fail, I fail. If I fail, it’s all over.”

“Gee,.” Teddy said, “that’s too bad.”

Outside, some gulls cawed. Teddy could smell the salt and the sun and the damp, briny sand.

Cawley said, “Let’s try this another way—do you think it’s a coincidence that Rachel Solando, a figment of your own imagination by the way, would have the same letters in her name as your dead wife and the same history of killing her children?”

Teddy stood and the shakes rocked his arms from the shoulders on down.

“My wife did not kill her kids. We never had kids.” “You never had kids?”

Cawley walked over to the wall.

“We never had kids, you stupid fuck.”

“Oh, okay.” Cawley pulled down another sheet.

On the wall behind it—a crime-scene diagram, photographs of a lake,

photographs of three dead children. And then the names, written in the same tall

block letters:

EDWARD LAEDDIS

DANIEL LAEDDIS

RACHEL LAEDDIS

Teddy dropped his eyes and stared at his hands; they jumped as if they were

no longer attached to him. If he could step on them, he would.

***Mary Reilly*** – Valerie Martin - 1990

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mot de passe : webin21

*Mary Reilly is a retelling of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde through the eyes of a servant named Mary Reilly. Set in Victorian England, she serves at Dr. Jekyll's manor and grows devoted to him as he struggles with his sinister alter-ego, Mr. Hyde. Dr. Jekyll created Mr. Hyde through various experiments in his laboratory. In the beginning, Dr. Jekyll exhibits interest in Mary beyond any other servant.*

There was the table, littered with strange bottles and glasses, some with coloured liquid standing in them still, as if Master had just stepped away from an experiment a moment ago. I held the lamp up so that I might see farther, but my own shadow fell across the table and quenched the ugly glimmering of the bottles there. Then I seemed to hear Master say, If we cast our shadows, are they not always part of us?

I felt a queer sickness in my stomach for as I stood gazing at the table it was as if the pieces of some wicked puzzle fell into place before my eyes. His experiments, I thought, and I heard Master say he had been successful, so successful no-one would believe him. Then I lowered the lamp and as I did I saw him. He had fallen on the far side of the table, near the window. Perhaps he thought to get out of the way. He lay on his back, his hand stretched out towards me, clutching the empty bottle as Mr Poole had said. My heart lurched in my chest and I felt a gagging at my throat as if that hand was closed about it. The sleeve was rolled back on the shirt, and as I approached I saw the trouser legs rolled up from his ankles as well. I knew what I would find as I rounded the table, and I clutched the end of it to hold me up. I raised the lamp to see his face, which was not as I had ever seen it but all twisted in a grimace of pain, the lips stretched cruelly over the gritted teeth, his eyes wide open and staring, so that he seemed to call out to me for help.

I set the lamp upon the table where it made a great clatter of light among the bottles and tubes there and I remembered the first time I come into this room so long ago and I set my heart against it, so even then I mun have known. All the time the truth was right before my eyes and especially the last night when I held Master up in the yard and saw the change come upon his face, and those other eyes looking out at me for a moment, but I would not understand, as if I was too stubborn to know it.

How many times did he tell me?

But Master was right, who would believe it? How could one man be two — one kind, gentle, generous, the other with no care but his own pleasure and no pleasure but the suffering of his fellows?

I leaned upon the tables and glared at the bottles, all glittering before me, and wanted to smash them but I had no strength. Indeed my knees no longer held me up so I slipped to the floor. Then I crawled to Master, speaking to him softly. His face was turned towards mine, his silver hair matted about it in a way I did not like to see, and his eyes so wide and staring, seemed to look through my head at the table behind me. From the yard I could hear the sound of heavy footsteps and raised voices crossing to the theatre. They were coming to take him away, take him from me entire, and they knew— now everyone would know — my gentle Master and Edward Hyde was one and the same. “But you said you no longer care for the world’s opinion.” I said to him, “nor will I.” When I reached him I kissed his hand , as I did that night in the yard, then I tried to pry the bottle from him, for I did not like to see it, but his fingers was stiff, he held on with death’s own grip. “This is a cruel trick,” I said to Master. “That he should take his own life and leave you behind to answer for it.” I smoothed his hair back away from his forehead, but I did not try to close his eyes.

I heard footsteps crossing the theatre; soon they would be on the stairs. “Well, let them come,” I said and I lay down beside Master, covering us both with my cloak as best I could, for the floor was cold. I rested my head upon his chest and put my arms around his neck. I could hear my own heart in my ear and it seemed to be beating against his still one.

That was how they found us.