

Atonement by Ian McEwan first starts at the estate of the Tallis family, introducing the characters and setting up the pivotal moment that ultimately condemns Robbie Turner. McEwan spends the majority of Part One building up tension. One moment that demonstrates this is when the Tallis family and Paul Marshall are having dinner, spanning from pg 140 to pg 141, starting with "Briony stared at her..." and ending at "That shows what little you know". McEwan utilizes syntax and dramatic irony to effectively increase tension.

Most of the sentences written are long. McEwan builds tension through this by creating a dragged-out sense of time and of the sense of being observed. For example, "[The twins] closed the door behind them with exaggerated, perhaps even satirical, care..." implies that everyone is watching how the twins leave, particularly since no single POV has been established. The phrase "...perhaps even satirical..." interrupts the sentence; it gives the image that, due to close scrutiny, edits to the original line of thought ~~are~~ are formed. In addition, it ~~lengthens~~ lengthens the time it takes narratively for the twins to close the door, reflecting the perceived time for the characters. Syntax can also raise tension.

The dinner scene is preceded by Robbie and Cecilia's ~~moment~~ <sup>time</sup> in the library. Combined with Briony's recollection, the flashback completes the audience's knowledge of the event. Thus the audience knows of the unseen conflicts shown throughout the dinner. A major example would be when Briony seems to confront Robbie. It's mentioned later on that "Briony herself had no clear idea of what she meant". Robbie and the audience, however, know what she is referring to ~~mean~~. The rest of the characters do not. This raises tension as there exists a possibility that Briony will reveal her side of the story, which the audience knows is wrong. The sentence continues that "Robbie ~~also~~ <sup>could no</sup> claim

know [Briony didn't understand what she meant what she meant]". The lack of knowledge on Robbie's part puts him at a disadvantage and raises the probability that Briony will act Robbie as a "maniac", and thus raises tension. Likewise, when Robbie mentions the twins to regain his footing in the confrontation, Briony's immediate response further emphasizes Robbie's lack of knowledge on Briony's perspective. Internal thought continues to work against him.

The fact that As a story, no conflict would have no narrative appeal, so the audience knows to expect it ~~to come~~ sooner or later, McEwan chooses later to draw out the build-up and they form an anticipatory atmosphere that increases tension. Dramatic irony makes it so that, despite knowing more than the characters, the audience has no ~~other~~ choice but to watch as the conflict unfolds and heads towards a dreaded outcome, which in this case seems to be Briony establishing her flawed narrative as truth. McEwan increases tension by taking time to come to confrontational action and by providing the audience more knowledge than the characters ~~so that the audience~~ ~~knows~~