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There is no story, no set of events that leads anywhere or proves anything – no middle, no end. Just a glimpse through a half-open door, voices seen not heard, vibrations sensed through a wall while a trained ear strains, not to hear what is passing in the next room but to measure the chords. ('The Medium' p. 468)

A good short story will leave a strong impact and get you thinking but it isn't always about action: it is about reaching a moment, a sensation, an effect that leads to a transformation or even just a moment of realisation. The typical plot structure of introduction – complication – climax and resolution is so condensed that the whole story may be the resolution of a story that can be perceived but not fully realised in the traditional sense of story: a single moment that has an impact.

Malouf's short stories are often about that moment, a feeling, an effect – a glimpse. In Malouf's short stories this transformation is often a mystery, felt by characters who know something has happened but can't articulate what has happened beyond knowing that change has occurred.

Some of Malouf's short stories cross to the realm of novella. A story such as 'The Valley of Lagoons', while it centres on the moment at the lagoon, also gives extensive backstory about earlier experiences and events that come together in this moment. 'War Baby' also follows a long time scale trying to capture the way life changes.

What is interesting is the relationship of the parts of the plot: the exposition, the complication, the climax and the resolution.

Here is the beginning and ending of the story 'At Schindler's':

Story	Beginning	Ending
'At Schindler's'	At Schindler's Jack woke early. The sound of the sea would find its way into his sleep.	'Come on,' he said and they set off together down the ravaged beach.

There is a clear relationship between the ending and the beginning but there is also a clear sense of development. The ending returns to the beginning with the sea and

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Jack but it suggests change has taken place: Jack sets off with someone else and the beach is ravaged. Something has happened in between the beginning and ending to disrupt the equilibrium of the story but without reading the story we don't know what has happened.

What takes place between the beginning and the ending changes the perception of the characters. While we can anticipate the ending in the beginning, we need the plot to bring these two parts together.

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