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Story Summary Table

STORY	PLOT	THEMES	SETTING
<i>Every Move You Make</i>			
'The Valley of Lagoons'	Growing up in a country town, feeling like he doesn't belong – his relationship with a family shows his change of allegiances. 'This was the country I would go on dreaming in, wherever I lay my head.' (p. 45)	Growing up, change, friendship, outsider, masculinity, memory	Australian bush
'Every Move You Make'	A relationship with a man who has re-invented himself and subsequently dies. 'And this, she thought, is the real face of grief, the one we do not show . . . This is what sorrow is that knows no explanation or answer. That looks into the abyss and sees only the unanswering depths.' (p. 63)	Relationships, identity, death	Castle Hill (urban)
'War Baby'	How war affects a young man. 'We lose whatever innocence we might have paid claim to the moment we are drawn into that tangle of action and interaction, of gesture and consequence, where the least motion on our part, even the drawing of a breath, may so change things that another, close by or far off, will be nudged just far enough out of the clear line of his life as to be permanently impaired.' (p. 91)	Need for purpose, memory, change, loss of innocence, masculinity, fragmented selves	Urban
'Towards Midnight'	A woman is facing death, who is a swimmer in the pool each night.	Death, memory, the unknown	Italy

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	'Like the arrival of wings.' (p. 108)		
'Elsewhere'	A funeral causes a man to realise different worlds and possibilities. 'Something had come to him back there and changed things.' (p. 120)	Change, family, death	Urban
'Mrs. Porter and the Rock'	Donald takes his mother, Mrs Porter, to Uluru, which stimulates memories – she gets lost. 'This was a moment, she knew, that she would never forget.' (p. 151)	Memory, age, family, imminent death	Hurstville to Uluru
'The Domestic Cantata'	Bohemian household where the father, a composer, holds control. Visitors arrive and the act of creation is interrupted by real life. 'Silence, in this house, was a positive not a negative commodity, a breathing space and pause that was essential not only to the production of their father's work but to the work itself' (p. 154)	Disruption, family, creativity	Urban
<i>Dream Stuff</i>			
'At Schindler's'	At Schindler's boarding house a son is disturbed when his mother, a war widow, befriends an American who will replace his father. 'There was a shadow on his heart that would be there for many years to come, a feeling of loss from which he would only slowly be released.' (p. 197)	Masculinity, family, change, acceptance, loss	Boarding house
'Closer'	Pentecostal family in the country with a prodigal gay son who only comes at Easter, seen from point of view of the nephew. 'I knew it was a dream. But dreams can be messages. The feeling that comes with them is real, and if you hold on to it you can make the rest real.' (p. 203)	Dream, family, disconnection, relationships, outsider	Rural

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'Dream Stuff'	A writer returns to his hometown and finds it has a violent undercurrent that leads to his mistaken arrest. 'He had long understood that one of his selves, the earliest and most vulnerable, had never left this place, and that his original and clearest view of things could be recovered only through what had first come to him in the glow of its ordinary light and weather.' (p. 209)	Memory, dream, fear, change	Brisbane – Sydney
'Night Training'	Two soldiers face nightly the aggression of a commanding officer. 'Greg was puzzled by a kind of emptiness in himself, a lack of connection with all this.' (p. 234)	Dream, institutional corruption, power	Military barracks
'Sally's Story'	An actress returns home and finds a stable relationship and happiness. 'But she was not sure that she believed, quite yet, in such happy turnabouts, and feared she might be tempting fate if she were to find a word, a new one to finish the phrase.' (p. 265)	Relationships, happiness, ordinary life	Domestic country town
'Jacko's Reach'	Follows the history of a place that becomes targeted for progress. 'If they take it away, we will preserve it in our head. If there is no such place we will invent it. That's the way we are.' (p. 256)	Place, memory, story, progress	Piece of land
'Lone Pine'	A holiday brings a couple into contact with violence. 'There were stars. Their living but dead light beat down and fell weakly upon him.' (p. 268)	Violence, the unexpected	Holiday
'Blacksoil Country'	A colonial boy feels the pull of the land but confrontation with the indigenous owners leads to death. 'This is my sort of country . . . Most of all I liked the voices of it.' (p. 273)	Land rights, indigenous connection to the land, cultural assumptions	Colonial times Rural

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	'But that little blood was my blood, not just the black feller's.' (p. 280)		
'Great Day'	A birthday celebration becomes an annual excuse to ignore Australia Day for a family with ties to the local museum, which is burnt down. 'When we punish them [the housebreakers, the muggers, the smashers, the grab merchants] it is to hide our secret guilt. There is ancient and irreconcilable argument in us between settlement and the spirit of the nomad' (p. 317)	Family relationships, national celebrations, collective memory	Domestic party
<i>Antipodes</i>			
'Southern Skies'	A young migrant boy starts to grow up and see the adult world differently because of his encounters. '[I] was aware for the first time of the grainy reality of my own life, and then, a fact of no large significance, of the certainty of my death . . . it was at the point where my self ended and the rest of it began that Time, or Space, showed its richness to me. I was overwhelmed.' (p. 342)	Identity, growing up, family, time and space	Urban Australia
'A Trip to the Grundelsee'	Australians and one American who visit old ladies in Europe forge a friendship. 'They had no shared language' (p. 353)	Friendship, place, memory, culture	Europe
'The Empty Lunch-tin'	A woman sees a man coming closer to her house each day – he reminds her of her dead son. 'He cast no shadow.' (p. 356)	Memory, death	Urban
'Sorrows and Secrets'	A foreman who asks a young worker to deliver a letter to a woman kills himself after he hears her response. 'Sorrows and secrets. All these men had stories, were dense with the	Masculinity, love and relationships, death, secrets	Domestic

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	details of their lives, but kept them in the dark.’ (p. 370)		
‘That Antic Jezebel’	A woman at a concert sees her friend’s place taken by a young man who turns out to be his son who reports his father’s death. ‘. . . grief doesn’t kill us. We’re too damned selfish and strong.’ (p. 383)	Memory, death, secrets, family, grief	Theatre
‘The Only Speaker of His Tongue’	A lexicographer tries to record the language of an aboriginal who is the last to speak his people’s language. ‘When I think of my tongue being no longer alive in the mouths of men a chill goes over me that is deeper than my own death, since it is a gathered death of all my kind.’ (p. 385)	Loss, language, aboriginality, resistance	Rural
‘Out of the Stream’	Michael is on the threshold of growing up and realises that adult life is filled with fears. ‘The boy stood in the doorway and was not yet visible.’ (p. 388)	Thresholds, fear, growing, family, ancestors, awareness	Interior domestic settings and the grandfather’s hut
‘The Sun in Winter’	An Australian in Bruges is given a private tour of things tourists don’t normally see, culminating in the vision of a coffin in a death parlour. ‘But to see what is common, that is the difficult thing, don’t you think? For that we need the imagination, and there is never enough of it – never, never enough.’ (p. 403)	Cultural difference, death, new world/old world, extraordinary/ordinary	Europe
‘Bad Blood’	The life of Uncle Jake the black sheep of the family. ‘In an otherwise exemplary line of seven brothers and sisters he made so sharp a detour’ (p. 406)	Change, social acceptance, family	Domestic
‘A Change of Scene’	Violence is encountered on a trip to a European ruin. ‘But she was disturbed, re-entering that lost world, to discover how much	Memory, violence, fear, cultural difference, family	Europe

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	of it had survived in her buried memory' (p. 415)		
'In Trust'	Objects are valued because of their connections to memories in this story about a girl who chooses her great aunt's lover's x-rays as a precious item. '... it is not only objects that survive and can be collected. Images too, the shadowy projection of objects, live on to haunt us with the immediacy of what was.' (p. 435)	Objects, memories	Domestic
'A Traveller's Tale'	Project officer with the Council of the Arts tours the regions to give lectures on culture and meets a woman who claims to be the daughter of a famous Australian diva, Alicia Vale, whom he has studied. 'The stories we tell betray us, they become our own. We go on living in them, we go on living outside them.' (p. 464)	Story, memory, discovery	Rural
'A Medium'	A boy who goes to music lessons is fascinated by the medium whose rooms are down the hall opposite the music teacher's rooms. 'Looking through into Miss Sampson's room . . . I saw too much.' (p. 428)	Story, people, imagination	Music room
Child's Play			
'Eustace'	A prowler in a girl's dormitory returns each night. '... he seemed like a continuation rather than an interruption of her dreams; as if she had first dreamed him and then found him there.' (p. 476)	Fear, violence/violation, acceptance, dream	Dormitory
'The Prowler'	A city becomes captured by the fear of a prowler or prowlers who come	Dreams, imagination, fear, violence/violation	Suburban

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	<p>out at night and capture the city's imagination.</p> <p>'The suburb sleeps. Most of its dreams are dull, bursting like bubbles in the light, and as clear as bubbles. Entirely guiltless.' (p. 498)</p>		
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