

ENGLISH TEXT SUMMARY NOTES
**“Collected Stories by Beverley
Farmer”**

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AREA 1:

READING AND RESPONDING

Chapter 1

AUTHOR NOTES

Beverley Farmer married a Greek-Australian, Christos Talihmanidis, in 1965. They went to live in Greece with his parents in 1969, in a village north of Thessalonika. She wrote her first novel while in Greece titled, *Alone*. They returned to Australia for the birth of their son in 1972. He was baptised and they renewed their marriage vows in 1974 in an Orthodox wedding in Greece. They separated in 1976, and later divorced.

Farmer's time in Greece has had an important influence on her writing. *Alone* was published in 1980. Her first collection of short stories, *Milk*, was published in 1983, and many of these stories were influenced by her Greek experiences, displaying a connectedness with the country and its people. She has since visited Greece regularly.

The stories in Farmer's collections, *Milk* and *Home Time*, relate to issues concerning domestic life and emotional issues. Farmer has also written a writer's notebook, *A Body of Water*, including poems, quotations and other observations, which is partly autobiographical.

Chapter 2

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The end of World War 2 saw the introduction of a comprehensive new world order. The old order of European dominance over world affairs was replaced by the dominance of the USA and the Soviet Union in an on-going stand-off known as the Cold War. The USA championed the nations of capitalism, and the USSR those of socialism. Each sought advantage over the other, usually through power plays in international politics. However, in the world's trouble spots, each usually supported one side against the other [Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Cuban 'Missile Crisis' etc]. Many nations of the world aligned themselves with one side or the other; however, there were also those who wished to remain unaligned.

Combined with this almost unprecedented rearrangement of international affairs there was an enormous movement of populations. People were free as never before to leave their homes and countries of birth and migrate to other places. Many migrated because of the destruction that WW2 caused to their countries. People believed that a better and more prosperous life could be found by migrating. Australia was at the forefront, in accepting and welcoming people from many different nations. [even from those whom Australia had been fighting against during World War 2] Many Greeks [whose nation Australia had fought to defend] migrated to Australia during the 1950's, 60's and 70's. And as can be seen, Farmer's stories describe 'reverse migration' – of people going back to the old European countries to live.