

TSSMTM
Creating VCE Success

ENGLISH TEXT SUMMARY NOTES
“Minimum Of Two”

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SAMPLE

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AREA 1:
READING & THE STUDY OF TEXTS:
MINIMUM OF TWO

Chapter 1
GENRE

Minimum of Two is an anthology of short stories, which explore the responses of ordinary humans struggling to overcome difficulties. Winton's stories depict emotional journeys and changes in human relationships. The genre of the short story compliments Winton's minimalist style. Most of the stories are quite brief but powerful. Because of this brevity, the stories focus on processes and feelings of characters, rather than action.

Tim Winton is noted for writing Australian literature. The settings of Winton's stories are distinctly Australian and characterized by detailed descriptions of the sounds, smells and sights of his home state, Western Australia. The sensory details are obviously Australian with "the smell of cooking prawns", "salty sea breezes" and "the hiss of beer cans". A prominent feature of many of Winton's stories is the beach, which is an internationally recognized element of Australian life, and the nostalgia associated with summer holidays at the beach. Furthermore, Winton aims to present Australian identity, especially that of the 'Aussie battler'.

Chapter 2

STRUCTURE

Minimum of Two consists of fourteen stories, which are seemingly disconnected but are actually unified through symbolism and themes. The Nilsam stories make up half of the collection (seven stories: 1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 14). and alternate with the stories about others. The experiences of the Nilsams are not presented in chronological order, which serves to increase suspense, which culminates in the last story, *Blood and Water* with the painful yet joyous birth of Sam. The collection climaxes and is resolved with the hope brought by new life, which is symbolized classically with the natural birth of a child.

Winton begins each story with a clear depiction of the setting and provides fairly conclusive endings. The author employs recollection and reflection to impart the experiences which have shaped the characters. The rape of Greta is presented through Madigan's thoughts, not as an event in the story. Winton provides some resolution at the end of each story and clearly presents the traits of each character through their responses to events and people which shape their lives.

Winton's stories each include a clear main character as the focus of the narrative and the author often chooses to use their anonymity to engage interest and add emphasis to the universality of their experiences. Winton omits the names of his characters in *No Memory Comes*, *The Water Was Dark and It Went Forever Down*, *Bay of Angels* and *Death Belongs to the Dead, His Father Told Him, And Sadness to the Sad*. He does not immediately introduce the Nilsams, even though they feature prominently in the text. Winton's employs an omniscient narrator to present the characters sympathetically. The use of third person narration also serves to provide insight and evoke understanding towards the inner life of the main characters from whose perspective the story is presented. In this way, the reader connects emotionally even with troubling characters, such as the boy in *No Memory Comes*.