

1. Neighbours (Story) Summary

About the author

Tim Winton whose full name Timothy John Winton (born 4 August 1960) is an Australian writer. He has written novels, children's books, non-fiction books, and short stories for both children and adults. In 1997, he was named a Living Treasure by the National Trust of Australia, and has won the Miles Franklin Award four times. His novels include *That Eye, the Sky* (1986), *Dirt Music* (2001), and *Breath* (2008). He also wrote several children's books, including *Lockie Leonard*, *Human Torpedo* (1990), *The Bugalugs Bum Thief* (1991), and *The Deep* (1998). This story 'Neighbours' has been taken from *Migrants of Australia* edited by Harwood Lawler.

Summary

The story is about a young couple who have moved to a new place in Australia. The place is full of European migrants. They have a house which is small and beautiful. It has high ceilings and paned windows which feel like an elegant cottage. The newly married couple has started to live in such a multicultural and multilingual suburb neighbourhood. They are in new phase of life. This story has presented a fine concept that cultural and linguistic barriers cannot stop people from bestowing love and compassion.

This story has presented different seasons with different changes in thoughts and behaviours. The newly married couple is unnamed here in this story. The young man and woman are the major characters in the story. They have recently migrated from the expansive outer suburbs to this new place.

At the beginning the environment is disgusting because the languages, cultures and their activities are quite unfamiliar for them. They have become quite irritated to hear loud conversations of their next-door neighbour which is a Macedonian family. The Macedonian family lives on the left side of their house. They always shout, scream and talk in a loud voice. Similarly, they are also

disturbed most of the time by a Polish widower, an old man who always hammers the nails in the woods uselessly. The activity of the old man has also disturbed them. The old man lives on the right of their house. These two families are the main reason for young couples' irritation. They don't like to stay with them so they remain away from them for initial months.

The neighbours are quite cautious and they also care about the young couple's activities. The young man writes his thesis and does household tasks whereas his wife works outside. She works in a hospital which is strange for their neighbours so they are shocked to see the young man sitting at home whereas his wife working in the hospital. They disapprove of males sitting at home and wives working outside.

In the autumn season the couple have decided and started to plant different types of vegetables in the kitchen garden. The neighbours have seen their activities so they want to advise about plantation. The young man seems to be careful about the words. A big woman from the neighbourhood has given a bagful of garlic cloves to plant. Similarly, the young couple has built a hen house. It is not so strong so it has fallen sooner. The old man of their neighbourhood has come there who is not invited. He has repaired it. In this way they learn sharing and caring in the neighbourhood. They become bold and they have the feeling of pride. They have learned various things from the Macedonian family. They become quite close to their neighbours though they don't know their languages. They help each other in this way.

After some time, the young lady becomes pregnant though they don't have any expectations to become parents very early. They don't want their neighbours to know about the pregnancy but they know about the pregnancy. The neighbours start caring for the young couple more. The man gives her small presents of chocolates and packets of cigarettes. The Polish man gives them with wood scraps for their fire. In the summer, an Italian woman offers names

for the upcoming child. In the same way the Greek woman assures her that she will get a male child after touching her belly. The woman who lives next door knits the baby a suit in the late summer. The Macedonian family wave and call out the best wishes in their language. By seeing the support and care of the neighbours, the young man begins to weep. His concept regarding his neighbours has been changed at last.