

Task for *Vertigo*

Analysing characters: Luke

An individual study

Quotes from Chapters 1 and 2 have been extracted for analysis.

What quotes on characterisation can be extracted from Chapter 3 to assist in our final understanding of the character's journey and position?

Luke		
Pages	Quotes from text	Significance of quotes – What does it reveal about character and how does the language reflect this?
3	<i>Luke Worley grew up on the edge the city, in a neat suburban garden with a green lawn and a date palm, and in all that time he never developed the least interest in birds...</i>	Caught between two worlds – seen in the prepositional phrase 'on the edge' – implies Luke's connection to the natural world was shallow but still there.
3–4	<i>Near Luke's apartment block there was a mournful bird cry that could be heard at around three in the morning when he happened to wake in the dark, perhaps from a bad dream, but somehow he never got around to identifying it. He meant to, but it was one of those things that fell out of your head...</i>	This foreshadows the identification of the bird in the next chapter where bird symbolism becomes prolific in connection to Luke. Symbolic of freedom, the birds contrast with the claustrophobia and entrapment of the city which may indicate the significance of the adjective 'mournful'.
5	<i>In the past he had felt free of encumbrance, had looked on as his friends locked themselves into immense mortgages from which they saw no escape. Now, absurdly, he began to feel burdened by his inability to shoulder the very debt he had once scorned.</i>	The notion of status anxiety that is foregrounded in a city environment is palpable throughout the text. This makes Luke's experience here representative rather than simply distinctive.
5–6	<i>The clarity of thought that enlightened his twenties had begun to darken, in the way that a smog haze settles by degrees over a bright morning.</i>	

6	<p><i>The moment of truth arrived late one night as he lay in bed with his wife...He could not bear to see her deflated and diminished in this way. It was as if her robust beauty, an athletic glow that had first attracted him, was being preyed upon by an invisible vampire.</i></p>	<p>The gothic imagery reinforces the associations with an industrialised city but also reinforces Luke's sense of hopelessness which serves as a stimulus for the transition to a new environment. Is it really his wife's health or the encroaching status anxiety that is the reason? Or is it a combination?</p>
7	<p><i>'We'll give it two years,' Luke told his bemused parents. 'It's not as if it's a life sentence.'</i></p>	
19	<p><i>(They leave the newspapers after a while and notice birds) - Luke has fetched his binoculars, but is having trouble adjusting the focus. The binoculars are new, a present from Anna.</i></p>	
19	<p><i>'Take your glasses off,' she says. God, he's so impractical. Clever, but always slightly distracted...It worries her that in the country, where men are expected to do much of their own maintenance and repairs, he will not be able to keep up with the demands of their run-down property.</i></p>	
22	<p><i>He rises early, she tends to sleep in, but on all other fronts they observe a strict discipline.</i></p>	
23	<p><i>Often Luke will carry his coffee out to the rickety Juliet balcony off the attic...and...study the local surfers...He thinks of them as black birds of the surf...crouching postures so that they resemble some weird form of sea-bird looking for a kill.</i></p>	

28	<p>After a while he tires of the effort to struggle into and out of his latex corset and the wetsuit hangs in the wardrobe like a ghostly frogman. He is less an active participant in Nature, he jokes to Anna, than an observer, and he marvels at how easy it is on his walks to become mesmerised by the birdlife...Best of all are the black swans that congregate in the north-west corner of the lagoon. Only once has he come upon a swan swimming in close, but as he approached it began to paddle furiously across the surface of the water...before soaring into the sky like a phallic arrowhead.</p>	
29	<p>...there on a low bough, at eye level, is a bird he does not recognise. It looks like an owl. ...this one gazes back at him ...he just stares into its eyes...It looks right at him, and in that moment of looking a current passes between them, a soundless exchange of energy...this silent space of euphoric emptiness. And for the rest of his walk home he is elated. He has never been happier; pointlessly, mindlessly happy.</p>	
30	<p>He tries to find an image of the bird in the book. At first this bothers him...but after an hour of fruitless searching he lays the book aside. Seeing the bird, he tells Anna, is more important than the naming of it. It's like the boy, he reflects; they've never named the boy, and it doesn't matter, indeed it's better that way...he thinks of how much he would have liked it if the boy had been there with him... But he has no control over the boy, who comes and goes as he pleases.</p>	
37	<p>He leaves it to Anna to catch up with friends, to post news of their sea change...Often he reads in bed while Anna, the night-owl, trawls through the cable news networks with their blaring live footage that can sometimes get on his nerves.</p>	

38-40	<p>Luke discovers two trunks crammed with antique hardbacks. It belongs to a vicar although the collection is more about travel writing than religion. Luke is attracted to the exotic nature of the texts and decides to read <i>The Land that is Desolate</i> written by an eminent physician, surgeon to His Majesty King Edward VII. It is an account of a tour in Palestine. It pre-dated the creation of Israel and the PLO. He was reminded to read it after watching the news ‘the latest footage of a rocket strike in Gaza...he would welcome some insight into the history of Palestine...’</p>	
48	<p><i>...they send for a filtration system which Luke fits under the sink with surprising deftness. He has turned out to be more practical than Anna had imagined.</i></p>	
51-2	<p>A chopper lands on the headland and Alan and Luke meet two young men in uniform.</p> <p><i>These guys are only a few years younger than I am, he thinks, and yet they make me feel old. He perceives he is no longer spirited...that he no longer has their youthful sheen, a kind of cocky invincibility. Maybe he never had it. Or maybe he had it and, somewhere in the transition to his thirties, he lost his nerve. Maybe that’s why he’s come to live in the country. Maybe it wasn’t about Anna at all.</i></p>	
52	<p><i>...there are things in his life he would die to protect, and with that thought he looks around for the boy, who would surely have been drawn to the mechanical beast...the big metal bird</i></p>	

54	<p>Luke's father - Ken - comes to visit.</p> <p><i>'There's not much here in the way of facilities, is there?'</i></p> <p><i>He has never been at home in the outdoors and he strides towards the Norfolk pines as if an explorer in the New World, part awed and part baffled at how the other half lives. 'You haven't got sick of it yet?'</i></p> <p><i>'It grows on you.'...He does not want to get into an argument about his career...about where is 'going' and whether his superannuation is adequate.</i></p> <p><i>The sooner they get home and get into the scotch, the better.</i></p> <p><i>Ken: 'And how is she recovering from...from that other business?'</i></p> <p><i>My God, he can't even name it...His father never could deal with the messy human dimension of feeling. But then...for the first time it occurs to him that the 'other business' must have been painful for Ken, a man with no grandchildren.</i></p>	
63	<p><i>Luke is tired of his wife's churlishness. He does not want to think of leaving Garra Nalla. Perhaps one day, but not yet.</i></p>	
63-4	<p><i>...tonight he has resumed his acquaintance with Sir Frederick Treves. At last that honest surgeon has arrived in Jerusalem itself: the goal of his pilgrimage, the very heart of his faith. But even here, as elsewhere, he experiences profound disappointment.</i></p>	

65	<p><i>There is something about Sir Frederick that reminds Luke of his father; that rational scientific mind that wants to believe but is sceptical of everything. ...As time goes on the all-pervading squalor of his tour seems to induce in Sir Frederick and increasingly acid disillusionment. This dry, stony country, these wretched towns and villages, these gloomy basilicas and their fake relics: can this be the Promised Land?</i></p>	
73	<p><i>Luke Worley is not a fool. He can see that his wife is in need of a break.</i></p> <p>(Luke and Anna house sit for friends in Randwick)</p>	
73	<p><i>At the turn-off to the freeway he looks back at the windswept headland of Garra Nalla and the glinting roof of what is now their home. This is our Promised Land, he thinks, and we are here to stay.</i></p>	
74	<p><i>But almost from the moment they begin to unpack in the small high-rise apartment in Bondi Junction he is irritable and censorious.</i></p>	
74–5	<p><i>Five days in and Luke returns to the coast.</i></p> <p><i>...On the drive home (from Thai restaurant) Anna is silent and in the morning she is relieved to see him go. Nothing pleases him, whereas for her it's enough to be out of the wind.</i></p>	

Chapter 3		
