

Task for *Vertigo*

Representative Characters

Activity: Answer the questions in the orange row by referencing the quotes in the column and researching more of Chapter 3.

Ancillary characters – populate the places in the story but add to the characters’ experiences and commentary on society		
Gilbert Reilly	Rodney Banfield	Alan and Bette Watts and family
<p>How does Gil reflect the political consciousness of the novel?</p>	<p>How does Rodney reflect the ‘corruption’ and diversity of the pastoral?</p>	<p>What is the role of this couple in the novel?</p>
<p>Elderly widower Long beaky nose (p. 25) <i>He has taken to dropping by for a coffee and what he calls ‘a natter’ and mostly they encourage this because Gil is a mine of local folklore.</i></p> <p><i>Not only that, he is happy to advise them on how to work the wood stove: the kind of dry wood they need and where to get it...</i></p> <p>(p. 26) <i>And Gil approves of the new settlers, the sea changers. ‘They bring a bit of life to the district,’ he says, ‘and you can’t expect things to stay the same.’ He himself has four grown-up children who live elsewhere. They rarely return to visit their father, but Gil claims not to hold this against them... ‘Mortgages are tough now’.</i></p> <p>(p. 32–3) Squatters’ mansion - Gil tells them it was bought up two years ago by a consortium of businessmen. The new owners have no interest in mixing with the locals; they fly in their city friends for weekend parties and it is clear that Gil does not warm to them... The property, which had been in the family for almost a century, was sold to the consortium.</p> <p>(33) Gil explains there are guns in the fortification to shoot at the Aborigines</p>	<p>Local plumber Short thickset man An ugly dog that barks all night</p> <p>(p. 26) <i>His shack is fibro box painted a deep pink with a large satellite dish on the roof and a small deck featuring an array of decrepit vinyl armchairs.</i></p> <p>(pp. 26–27) <i>He waits for his girlfriend’s husband to fly inland to the mine for his two-week shift so that Rodney can moonlight in the miner’s bed with the miner’s wife.</i></p> <p>(p. 27) <i>...Luke suspects an indoor dope garden, which is nothing compared to the plantation Rodney is rumoured to be growing in the hills.</i></p>	<p>(p. 48) <i>Handsome, sunburnt man who is fishing for perch with two small children at his side.</i></p> <p>(p. 49) <i>Alan and Bette belong to that coastal tribe who seem entirely at ease in their sun-ripened bodies and who rarely appear in anything other than shorts and thongs.</i></p> <p>Both he and Bette are energetic and practical and seem able to do almost anything.</p> <p>(This couple takes on greater importance in chapter 3. Read on and find out what their role is and how they mirror Luke and Anna.)</p>

who 'make a raid on the sheep, or worse'. Explains that the area along the coast was known as Ross's Farm (Henry Lawson poem) but that eventually it became known as Garra Nalla, the name the local tribespeople had for it. Explains Ross was 'some old soldier-settler who shot himself...tried to farm...had a bad go of it.' (Colonial mentality does not last out here – tribespeople's naming of places shows empowerment and social change.)

(p. 34) Gil reports that people are always shooting and relays the anecdote of 'he came upon the consortium's overseer and some of the weekenders shooting at the swans.' Even though Gil put a stop to it, we see the larrikin nature when he admits that his mother used to 'bake the occasional swan.' (But his act seems restrained whilst the Corporate appear to be profit driven.)

Suggestion that Gil and Luke's father do not really like one another - suggestive of different values - contrasting characters.

(pp. 80 - 81) Gil is angry that the consortium is soon to begin work on a vast tree plantation.

They will scour the land with bulldozers and then the spray truck will come in with their pale green tanks of poison and the men in their fluorescent orange jackets will walk the furrows with their rods of pesticide, and when it does rain, as eventually it must, the chemicals will wash out of the soil and foul the lagoon.

Them swans'll have to find somewhere else to breed.

The council...they're in the bloody pockets of the developers...