

## Task for *Too Much Lip*

### Character analysis of Kerry Salter

Key quotes	<p>Above or below the surface?</p> <p>Inner voice or outer thoughts/actions?</p> <p>What does this reveal about the character?</p>
<p><i>Three waark flapped down onto the road beside her, drawn to the flattened remains of a king brown ...</i></p> <p><i>The birds stared at Kerry, cawing obnoxiously before they turned to their snake, and promptly ripped it in half ... The fanged snake skull had gotten wedged hard onto the bird's beak. The crow shook its head, first in surprise and then in anger, but to no avail. Kerry watched, fascinated and appalled ...</i></p> <p><i>The other crows noticed their companion's plight.</i></p> <p><i>'Hahaha, looks like a mutant, half a bird and half a snake,' mocked the one on the left.</i></p> <p><i>'Are you ssssssssstuck?'" asked the other, falling about with delight at its own wit ...</i></p> <p><i>'Yugam baugal yang! Wahlu wiya galli!' the luckless crow complained. My beak's no good. You could help a bird ...</i></p> <p><i>'Yugam baugal jang! Buiyala galli! Yugam yan moogle Goorie Brisbanyu?' You could help, instead of sitting up there like a mug lair from the city.</i></p> <p><i>Kerry looked around again. The waark hopped up and down in rage.</i></p> <p><i>Then the second crow chimed in, dripping scorn.</i></p> <p><i>'It's no good to ya, fang-face. Can't talk lingo! Can't even find its way home! Turned right at the Cal river when it shoulda kept going straight. It's as moogle as you look.'</i></p>	

<p><i>'How the hell do you lot know where I've been?' Kerry retorted ...</i></p> <p><i>'Gulganelehla Bundjalung.' Speak Bundjalung. A test of good character.</i></p> <p><i>'Bundjalung ngaoi yugam baugal,' she said. My Bundjalung is crap. (pp. 7–9)</i></p>	
<p><i>Kerry revved the bike again, louder, and gave an evil grin. That's a warning to yez all. Big dorrie locals, paranoid crows, flattened brown snakes, the big brothers of the world. Or maybe it's just a real deadly welcome home to meself. Cos ready or not, here I come. (p. 10)</i></p>	
<p>When Kerry learned to be quiet in the family:</p> <p><i>It was as if, having once been proven wrong by a softly spoken mother, there was nothing that she couldn't be wrong about ... It might be better to watch in silence and think things through; words were dangerously powerful and nothing much good came of them. (p. 33)</i></p>	
<p>Kerry drawing out her nephew, boosting his confidence:</p> <p><i>She would make the kid come swimming and fishing, and for long rides on the Harley, force him to be in the world. Hug him and love him up until he remembered who he really was. Until he found somewhere it was safe to be Donny ...</i></p> <p><i>'Donster!'</i></p> <p><i>The boy looked up at her.</i></p> <p><i>'That magpie – male or female?'</i></p> <p><i>Donny didn't need to look.</i></p> <p><i>'Daughter to the other one.'</i></p> <p><i>Kerry laughed in genuine delight. 'You da man, Donny. You da man!'</i></p> <p><i>A faint change in expression; something in the vicinity of a smile. (pp. 29–30)</i></p>	

<p>Kerry also encourages Donny to be a coffin bearer for Pop (p. 90) and stays on in Durrongo after the funeral, determined to draw him out of his bedroom and teach him some culture. (pp. 100–101)</p>	
<p><i>‘Took you long enough to show ya face,’ Pretty Mary greeted her daughter acidly from the kitchen table. ‘Did ya suddenly remember that old highway to hell goes both ways, did ya?’</i></p> <p><i>‘Yeah, I love you too mum.’ Kerry grinned. ‘Nothing like being overwhelmed with fucking love n’ affection after a year, is there?’</i></p> <p><i>‘Ya after affection ya might want to show ya face round here a bit more often, my girl.’</i></p> <p><i>... Kerry knew from long experience that there was no winning an argument with her mother. To Pretty Mary she was and always would be the Great Abandoner. Shame enough to turn out a dyke, but her far greater sin was the empty hole she’d left behind her in the family. Even in the terrible dark shadow cast by Donna’s disappearance, Kerry had still up and left to live among whitefellas and city people. (p. 43)</i></p>	
<p>Kerry is sensitive to how her brother’s foster child, Brandon, must feel, understanding his wariness about her as a new adult in his life:</p> <p><i>Of course he’d be suss of some random Aunty bossing him around. He’d be wondering what her agenda was, how long it would take her to promise him the world and then deliver considerably less than fuck all. Or maybe bash him, or start on his sister. Or (d) all of the above. (p. 77)</i></p> <p>To build rapport and trust, and boost his confidence, Kerry shows him how to make ‘cockadoodle’ noises at the chook pen to set off the roosters and annoy everyone:</p> <p><i>‘Louder!’ said Kerry, doubting if Brandon had ever in his entire life been urged to make more</i></p>	

<p><i>noise. Pretty Mary's young roosters soon grew excited and began to sound off as well ...</i></p> <p><i>'Can youse fucken keep it down a bit?' yelled the caravan ...</i></p> <p><i>'Sorry, cuz!' she called, grimacing at Brandon. He grinned at her and she ruffled his hair.</i></p> <p><i>'You done that, bub,' she told him, gesturing to the roosters. 'That's down to you. You're the boss chook whisperer.'</i> (p. 78)</p>	
<p>Steve becomes exasperated with Kerry:</p> <p><i>'You're just so fucking rude all the time. The Murries I trained with on the Coast weren't like that. Your mum's not like that.'</i> (p. 282)</p>	