

**“The Witness”. Presentation script**  
**Forfar Academy**

*Speaker at meeting addressing people about the Land Reform Act:*

“We must fight against this unjust One Acre Act. It seemed like a good idea once – but no longer. The Land is in ruins; the people have no livelihoods. We must make the Government listen to us. We must fight for what we believe in...”

*Soldiers rush in and drag the speaker out*

*Soldier:*

“The meeting is closed.”

*John:*

“But the Government didn’t want to listen. That’s when the Troubles started. It didn’t really affect me at first – not until Blackriggs, when I became the witness to sights I can never forget...”

I didn’t know what to do. How could I deal with something as awful as that? I am not brave; not your stereotypical hero who rushes in and saves the day. I was scared, lost, panicked...”

*Ninian:*

“John, I want some crisps. I want to watch cartoons. I want to watch cartoons now.”

*John:*

“But then I found Ninian. He doesn’t know what’s going on. He lives in his own world of black and white – no shades of grey. Maybe he’s the lucky one...”

I couldn’t let him down. He reminded me so much of Davie. I couldn’t save Davie – I had to save Ninian. We had to run, to hide, escape the killing...

But I couldn’t escape. I saw more death – the killing of the soldiers at the checkpoint. Why? Both sides were as bad as each other.”

*Ninian:*

“John killed the tiger. John killed the bad man. John is good at killing.”

John:

“It was kill or be killed. I had no choice. Does that make it any better?”

Lila:

“I wanted to do my bit for the cause. I hated the authorities for what they did to my father. But I couldn’t condone killing people. That wasn’t for me. No way. There’s just no ideal that justifies killing innocent folk. I liked John and Ninian. They needed my help and I could do that – help to get Ninian back to his father. That was my way of helping the cause.”

Kel Foulis:

“I enjoyed the fighting. Loved the army. People like Fraser shouldn’t be allowed to cause havoc. He and the other rebels deserved everything they got. My father taught me that people have to be punished – you have to be tough. Not like Stumpie McNeil. He has no guts. He could have killed me when he had the chance – but he couldn’t do it. I despised him for that. Just like his brother – no guts.”

Struan Fraser – the Tod:

“Some might call me a terrorist – or just a rich boy who likes to play soldiers. But that’s not the way I see it. I am passionate about this beautiful land of ours. I had to fight against the neglect, the mismanagement... We were peaceful at first – but then *they* grew violent. Injustice. Beatings. Death.

I had to act. Sometimes life throws things at you that you just have to do. I regret the killings. We all have a dark side and it finds its way out at times. But I believe there was no other way. This land is ours. We should be able to live happily, peacefully, as equals. If it means fighting for that right, then that’s what we have to do.”

John:

“I wanted to forget what happened at Blackriggs, but I couldn’t. I had to face it – be the witness. Tell them what I saw. If it meant an end to all this madness.

We should not be fighting over land. It doesn’t belong to us. We belong to it, if anything. And the real point is who cares for it. We need to remember that.”

Class:

“The Witness should win the Angus Book Award because”

Pupil:

“It has a real Scottish setting.”

Pupil:

“It’s my favourite out of the four.”

Pupil:

“It’s a compelling novel.”

Pupil:

“The issues made me think.”

Pupil:

“It has contrasting characters.”

Class:

“Good luck James.”

Pupil:

Voice over – words appear on screen