

Quiz: RL.4.6

Read the passage. Then answer the question.

“The Witness”

- 1 Back in 1962, I was friends with this kid named Randy, and his family had a dog, Buck. He was this giant dog who didn't realize that he was too big to climb onto our laps. We would take him to the park and throw a football around. When Buck got older, he preferred to relax while we played. One day, though, something happened to him. I think of the day as a series of bright flashes, like a camera capturing moments. I arrange the scenes silently in my head. I try not to think about it because the memory is too much for me, but once in a while, when I see dogs playing in a park, I remember.
- 2 I was fourteen, and I had just been on my second date with a nice girl named Mary. She looked pretty in jeans and a red flannel shirt. We planned to play tennis at the local park, but she wasn't really into it. Instead, we walked through the park, holding hands and talking. I don't recall what we talked about, but I remember having a good time. It was our last date, even though I really liked her. She didn't change, but I did.
- 3 Her mom picked her up on schedule at the pond just as the sky was getting dark. After they left, I decided to cut through the woods to get home. My family liked to have picnics there, so I knew the way really well. About a half mile from my house, I ran, crunching over branches, until I came down on a rock and fell sideways.
- 4 I heard the snap before I felt the pain as I fell on a pile of branches. I got up slowly and stepped off the pile, flinching slightly with each movement. I sat down by a nearby tree. I took off my shoe to inspect my foot, when I heard someone approaching. I was happy to see that it was Randy's dad. He was dragging along Buck. It was nice to see Mr. Farmer taking Buck out for a long walk. Buck had been struggling with a lot of health problems that past year. Maybe things were turning around for the old guy.
- 5 I really did not expect what came next, and in retrospect, I'm certain that Mr. Farmer would never have done what he did if he knew there was a witness. He probably came out here to be alone, to get it over with quickly. He brushed aside some leaves, patted space on the ground, and had the dog lie down. I had seen Buck spin like a little windup clock before plopping down on the sofa and resting his huge head on his paws with a snort, and I could see the exact same motion from a distance: plop, he dropped, dusting up leaves and dirt. Mr. Farmer knelt before Buck, petting the dog's soft fur. “Sorry, Boy, so sorry,” Mr. Farmer whispered, before walking away.
- 6 Then Mr. Farmer reached for something at his side. As soon as I recognized it, I turned away, but I heard the loud pop of the gun and then the whimper and then the silence. After a few minutes, they were gone. I stood up slowly and took a few deep breaths. I wanted to feel something, anything, but the shock of Buck's death left me numb. I walked home, wondering what Mr. Farmer planned to tell Randy.
- 7 The next day, Randy told me that old Buck had run away. His dad told him that he put Buck out in the backyard, but Buck wandered off. I tried to comfort Randy, but I knew too much. I wanted to tell him, but

