

These notes are for:

- Years 8-10
- 13+yrs
- Secondary

Key Learning Areas:

- English
- ICT

Example of:

- Young Adult Fiction
- Science Fiction
- Series Fiction

Experience of:

- Technology and Society
- Reading & Writing
- Speaking & Listening
- Viewing & Creating

Values addressed:

- Responsibility
- Doing Your Best
- Integrity
- Understanding & Tolerance

Themes:

- War & Peace
- Loyalty & Betrayal
- The Nature of Humanity
- Courage
- Heroism

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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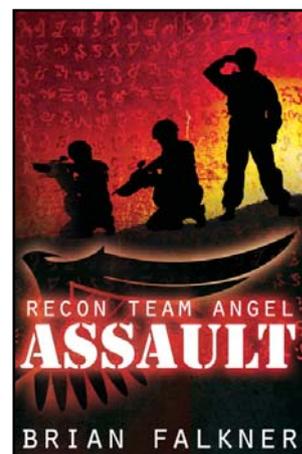
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Recon Team Angel: Assault - Overview

Recon Team Angel Book 1: Assault

By Brian Falkner
 ISBN: 9781921720543
 ARRP: \$19.95
 NZRRP: \$21.99
 November 2011

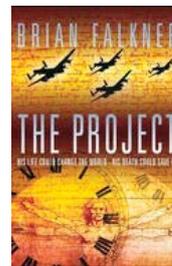
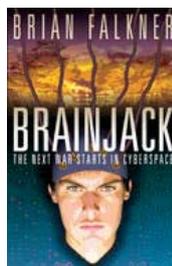


Outline:

The first in a high-octane sci-fi adventure series by bestselling and award-winning author, Brian Falkner. It is 2030, and the world is at war with an alien race. The Bzadians. The battleground: Earth. Recon Team Angel, made up of teenagers from around the world, has been training for years. They have learned Bzadian languages. Learned how to operate their weapons. How to work, eat and think like them. Now it is time to act. Recon Team Angel must slip behind enemy lines, work their way into the top-secret alien facility under Uluru and uncover the truth. But what they discover will shock not just them, but all of humanity.

Author Information:

Brian Falkner was born and raised in Auckland. He is the award-winning, bestselling author of several novels for children and young adults, including *Northwood*, *The Flea Thing*, *The Real Thing* and *The Super Freak*. His action-adventure sci-fi novels, *The Tomorrow Code* and *Brainjack*, were both short-listed for the New Zealand Post Book Awards for Children & Young Adults and the Esther Glen Award at the LIANZA Awards, with *Brainjack* winning the 2010 New Zealand Post Book Awards, Children's Choice Award (Young Adult Fiction category). *Brainjack* also won the 2010 Sir Julius Vogel Award for Best Young Adult Novel. *The Project* has also been short-listed on the 2011 Storylines Notable Books List.



How to Use These Notes:

These notes provide a variety of discussion questions and activities that can be used with *Recon Team Angel: Assault*. Please select according to the level, learning style and targeted outcomes of your students.

In the Classroom

Discussion Questions

- While the Bzadians are presented as enemies in the book, the Recon Team's encounters with Yozi, Kezalu and the other Bzadian characters highlight some of the essential similarities between the two species. How are the Bzadians similar and different to humans in terms of their behaviour? Other than their physical appearance and the fact that they originate from another planet, is there anything which makes them intrinsically "alien"? Do you think that Falkner has attempted to individualise or "humanise" the Bzadian characters, or are they presented as a generic enemy?
- Falkner writes that when the Bzadians first arrived, "They had come seeking refuge. Their own planet was dying, and they needed just a tiny corner of our world to call their own, to resettle their people. ... The Australian Government, although initially unsure, came under immense pressure from other countries to comply." In your opinion, did the government make the right choice in allowing the Bzadians to resettle in the Australian desert? If you were a member of the government at the time, and had no knowledge of what the Bzadians would do in the future, what would you have done from an ethical perspective?
- In the chapter entitled "Benda Hill", Monster points out the Bzadians control over 60% of the planet, saying, "It seems to me that if this planet belongs to anyone now, it belongs to them. ... after the white folk conquered the American Indians, who got to run the country and who got to live on reservations?... It's just evolution ... Now there's someone else at the top of the food chain, and we don't like it." Is there any validity in his observations? Can you think of any other parallel situations from a geo-political or historical perspective? Does this change your view of the Bzadians?
- What is your opinion of Brogan's behaviour? Although she betrayed the humans, can she be blamed for this given that she was effectively raised and brainwashed by the Bzadians from birth? Do her actions at the end of the book, and the information we learn about her in the End Notes, redeem her at all in your eyes? Or can she instead be viewed as a traitor to the Bzadians?
- The prologue states that Team Angel was made up of 14-18 year olds who were selected at puberty for the program. What is your opinion on the use of child soldiers in war? Are they mature enough to make the decision to expose themselves to dangerous and potentially violent situations, or are governments who use them exploiting their youth and naivety? Is the use of child soldiers justified if the safety of a country or race is at stake? Do you have the same attitude to child soldiers today in countries such as Uganda, Somalia and Sierra Leone today?
- The series is set in 2030, nearly 20 years in the future. In your mind, do the events described in the book seem plausible? In what ways do you think the world will change over the next 20 years?
- What purpose do the Prologue and End Note of the book serve? Would you have viewed the story differently if these were not included? Can you think of any other books where the author has used a similar narrative device? Do you like having this contextual information for the story, or would you prefer it not to have been included? Justify your responses.
- How has Falkner used suspense to keep readers engaged throughout the story? Think about both tense and exciting moments in the plot, and unanswered questions which underlie the story. What were some of the main questions you had in your mind as you were reading? Were these questions answered?
- Brian Falkner uses military jargon, some of which he invents, throughout the book. What examples can you find? (Hint: you may like to look at the glossary.) How does this add to the authenticity of the characters and settings?
- What expectations do you have of the next book in the series? Do you think it will deal with the same characters, or different ones? When do you think it will be set? What might it be about? How have your predictions about the rest of the series been shaped by the information in the End Notes? If this information had not been included, might your expectations have been different?

Activities

- Write a newspaper report for the 17th July 2020, the "day of inconceivable treachery" when the Bzadian Army attacked Australia's defences.
- Compose the opening of the next Recon Team Angel book.
- Divide the class into two sides and have a class debate arguing the following statement: "Holly Grogan should be considered a traitor rather than a national hero."
- The story is told primarily from the point of view of Chisnell. Choose one major episode in the book and retell it from the perspective of one of the other Angels.
- In his acknowledgements at the end of the book, Falkner says that Recon Team Angel was influenced by the adventure thrillers of Alistair McLean. Read one of these books then do a brief presentation to the class giving an overview of the plot and explaining how it may have influenced the writing of Recon Team Angel.
- Imagine that the book was being turned into a feature film or TV series. Choose one key scene and write directors notes outlining:
 - where you would film this scene
 - what actors you would like to play the main roles and why
 - the music you would use in the soundtrack
 - how you would use film techniques to create atmosphere and suspense (e.g. camera shots and angles, cuts, lighting, mise-en-scene)
- Create a storyboard of your chosen scene and present it to the rest of the class.
- Write an essay responding to the following question: "In both film and literature, the subject of alien invasion allows composers to explore universal themes such as courage, loyalty, friendship and the nature of humanity. Discuss how these themes have been presented in *Recon Team Angel: Assault* and a film of your choice." Suggested films include *War of the Worlds*, *Independence Day*, *The Day of the Triffids*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Cloverfield* and *Tomorrow, When the War Began*.

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