 This text is from *Carrie's War* by Nina Bawden, adapted for the stage by Emma Reeves.

# Carrie's War

## ACT 1

### DRUID'S GROVE

*Darkness. The wind whistles through the trees in the grove. Train sound effects. Smoke, as if from a train. Loud train whistle – an unearthly shriek, 'more like a volcano erupting than a steam engine blowing its top'. Mixed in with the whistling sound is a girl's scream. The sound dies away.*

*Sounds of a summer's day. Daytime, in a wooded, shady place where the light has had to make its way through layers of foliage. Near the top of the slope, ADULT CARRIE pushes through the trees, and enters with a suitcase. She is breathless, as if she has just run up a hill. She is wearing a long, flowing coat. She pauses on the brink and gazes downwards. The unearthly whistle, not as loud as before – as if in CARRIE's memory. CARRIE shudders, and sways on the brink of the slope. The sound dies away.*

*CARRIE'S SON enters through the trees, brushing off bits of leaf and twig. He is wearing jeans, etc. – 1970s clothes with a strong contemporary feel.*

SON: Mum?

CARRIE turns and looks at him blankly.

Mum! How much further?

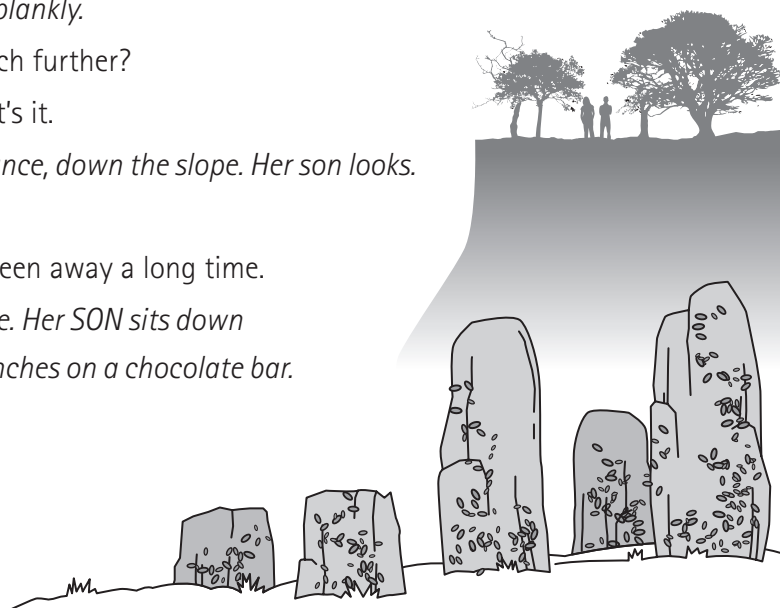
CARRIE: No further. That's it.

CARRIE points off into the distance, down the slope. Her son looks.

SON: That old ruin?

CARRIE: I forgot – I've been away a long time.

CARRIE wanders down the slope. Her SON sits down on his mum's suitcase, and munches on a chocolate bar.



SON: Looks like no one's been here for hundreds of years.

CARRIE: No. No – it's only – (*With wonder.*) thirty years...

SON: Exactly.

CARRIE: We used to come here all the time, during the war. Me, and little Nick.

SON: Little Nick? What, fat Uncle Nick?

CARRIE: He wasn't fat then. Actually, he looked a lot like you.

*CARRIE'S SON offers his chocolate bar to his mum.*

SON: D'you want the rest of this?

*CARRIE shakes her head. She walks along the top of the bank.*

CARRIE: Nick and I used to walk here from the town, along the side of the railway.

SON: What railway?

CARRIE: There used to be a railway. This is the exact spot where the train whistled when it came round the bend. Right by the slope down to Druid's Bottom.

SON: Druid's Bottom?

CARRIE: (*Laughs.*) That's the name of the house. Druid's Bottom. Because it's at the bottom of Druid's Grove.

SON: What's Druid's Grove?

CARRIE: This is. Thousands of years ago, this place was sacred to the Druids. The Old Religion. There's a spring that's supposed to have healing powers, and a stone circle – the remains of a temple. Well, it might be. Albert thought it went back to the Iron Age.

SON: Who's Albert?

CARRIE: Albert Sandwich. He thought there might have been an Iron Age settlement here. He was interested in that sort of thing.

SON: Dad would have been.

CARRIE: Yes. Dad would have been interested, too. Albert and your dad were quite alike. In some ways.

*Pause. The stage darkens as the sun passes behind a cloud. A faint, rumbling noise of ancient breathing.*

CARRIE: Listen.

SON: What for?

CARRIE: Something old, and huge – and nameless.

SON: (*Unimpressed.*) You mean like a ghost? A monster?

CARRIE: Nothing so simple. Albert said the druids used to make human sacrifices...

SON: You're being weird, you do know that, don't you?

Name:	Class:	Date:
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# Carrie's War

- 1 Draw lines to match each word with its meaning in the text.  
One has been done for you.

Word	Meaning
unearthly	belonging to the present day
brink	priest of an ancient religion
contemporary	strange or supernatural
sacred	edge of a steep place
druid	holy

1 mark 2a

- 2 Read these lines from the text:

SON: Mum?

*CARRIE turns and looks at him blankly.*

Why does Carrie look at her son blankly? Tick the **best** answer.

- She is annoyed with him. ☐
- She doesn't recognise him. ☐
- She doesn't hear him call her. ☐
- She is preoccupied by her thoughts. ☐

1 mark 2d

- 3 Look at this line from the text.

CARRIE: No. No – it's only – (*With wonder.*) thirty years...

What does *With wonder* tell you here?

1 mark 2a

1 mark / 3  
Total for this page

4

Why does Carrie's son offer his chocolate bar to his mum?

1 mark 2d

5

Stage directions are written in italics.

At a later stage, the directions are indented and look different to the beginning of the play script.

SON: D'you want the rest of this?

*CARRIE shakes her head. She walks along the top of the bank.*

Why do you think the writer has indented the later stage directions?

1 mark 2f

6

Look at these sentences that the writer uses in the text.

*Dad would have been.*

*Yes, Dad would have been interested, too.*

*Albert and your dad were quite alike.*

Why has the writer included these sentences?

1 mark 2g

/ 3

Total for this page

7

Read these lines from the text.

*CARRIE points off into the distance, down the slope. Her son looks.*

SON: That old ruin?

CARRIE: I forgot – I've been away a long time.

*CARRIE wanders down the slope. Her SON sits down on his mum's suitcase, and munches on a chocolate bar.*

SON: Looks like no one's been here for hundreds of years.

CARRIE: No. No – it's only – (*With wonder.*) thirty years...

SON: Exactly.

From what Carrie's son says here, what can you tell about his attitude towards the house? Tick **one**.

He is wary of it. ☐

He is curious about it. ☐

He is excited by it. ☐

He is unimpressed by it. ☐

2g  
1 mark

8

a) How does the writer create an eerie atmosphere in this scene?

Write **two** things.

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2g  
2 marks

b) The writer lightens the eeriness with humour. How does she do this?

Mention **one** thing.

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2g  
1 mark

/ 10  
Total for this test