THE SHAPE OF THE GRAVE

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SCENE 1
(Lights up to a cacophony (cacophony= a meaningless mixture of sounds) of sounds and movement. Onstage, a riot between British soldiers and Republican Irish protesters. Shouts of “United Free Ireland!” “Civil Rights for all Irish” “End Internment” (=confinement) NOW!!” ring out, then degrades into more coarse slogans as rocks and bricks are thrown at the soldiers. Gas canisters make an appearance. The noise reaches a fury pitch, shots ring out, there are screams of fear and anger, then the noise fades suddenly into the background, and the rioters move to slow motion. One of the protesters peels off from the group.)

Pro#1: It was ten of four, January 30th, 1972 when the bullets started flying in Bog side.

Pro#2: A Sunday. Cold and bleak.

Pro#3: We were 20,000 strong, coming together to say to the British, you can’t lock us up without a reason.

Pro#1: They could grab us up off the street, throw us in the jails, just for looking at them wrong.

Pro#2: If they thought we looked suspicious, or we went in the wrong shop.

Pro#1: Could keep us up to six months at a go, with no reason. Longer with trumped up evidence.

Pro#3: “Internment for ye, and if we don’t kneecap ye with a drill

Pro#2: Or burn ye with our cigarettes.
Pro#1: Count yourself lucky.”

Pro#3: We’d had enough.

Pro#2: And then the British soldiers started shooting at us.

Pro#1: The lot of us. Live rounds.

Pro#3: Not rubber bullets.

Pro#2: We were unarmed.

Pro#1: When it was done, seventeen

All: Seventeen

Pro#2: Lay wounded, near Free Derry corner

Pro#3: and thirteen

Pro#1: thirteen

All: lay dead.

Pro#2: dead

Pro#3: dead.

All: dead.

(Spotlight up on a single young girl, fifteen years old. Other figures surround her on the stage, but stand in shadow.)

Coll: I am your scapegoat. I am your whipping girl. I am your beast of burden.

Chorus: Michael Kelly, seventeen years of age. Shot dead.

Coll: I am under your thumb. You are my chains. You are my shackles.

Chorus: Jackie Duddy, seventeen years of age. Shot dead.

Coll: I am the end to your means. I am a spoke in your wheel.

Chorus: William Nash, nineteen years of age. Shot dead.

Coll: I am a target. I am a faceless statistic
**Chorus:** Kevin McIlhenney, seventeen years of age. Shot dead.

**Coll:** I have become my own saviour. I am the wrath that will end you.

**Chorus:** Hugh Gilmore, seventeen years of age. Shot dead.

**Coll:** I have become the fuse. I have become the fuse.

**Chorus:** Bombs in Dublin and Monaghan, 17 May 1974. 33 and one unborn child killed.

**Coll:** (with horror) LOOK AT WHAT YOU MAKE US DO!

**Chorus:** UP THE REPUBLIC! UP THE REPUBLIC!

**Coll:** (shrieking) LOOK AT WHAT YOU MAKE US DO!

**Chorus:** NO PEACE WITHOUT JUSTICE!

(The sound of an explosion rocks the stage, Coll screams and covers her head, the chorus screams and scatters, some helping the wounded, some limping, all exit)

**SCENE 2**

**Coll:** (sobbing) Look at what you make us do… (after a brief pause, she leaps to her feet and throws stones off stage right) Here’s one for ya, ya prat!

**Covey:** (from offstage) Oy! Shove off!

**Coll:** What? Can’t shoot a girl?

**Covey:** I said shove off!

**Coll:** (throws another stone) Didn’t stop ya from havin’ a go at Stuttering Mike!

**Covey:** Ow! Hell!

**Coll:** (turns to run, over her shoulder) Serves ya right! (Covey jumps over barricade and runs her down, grabbing her arms from behind) Let me go! (tries to kick him)

**Covey:** I have to give you your due, you’ve got some fire in your belly.

**Coll:** Take your bloody hands off me! They’ll have you for a stiff, they will!

**Covey:** Oh yes, a little fire. Not like your Da, nor like your dear brother, from what the talk is.
Coll: (fighting like an animal) Don’t you speak of them! I’ll cut your head off! I’ll gouge out your eyes!

Covey: Right, you and which army?

Coll: The Volunteers! They’ll have you for a stiff!

Covey: On behalf of you? (laughs) I don’t even think that lot will help the sister of an informer...

Coll: You shut your filthy mouth!

Covey: Or come to the rescue of a bumbling drunk who blew up four of his mates and himself in a Bogside kitchen.

Coll: (railing still, but nearing exhaustion) Shut up! Shut up!!!! Shut up!!!

Covey: See, I’m thinking the drink made him tremble, dropped the goods in the sink, and BOOM! Goodbye, lads!

Coll: Shut your hole. Shut up. Shut up.

Covey: Then your poor, poor brother, well, he was a bit of girl, couldn’t take the “violence” anymore, what with his poor Da blown to bits, so he goes and squeals like a sow. Found his brains in his hands for his trouble too, he did.

Coll: (quietly) I’ll kill you myself.

Covey: What was that, luv?

Coll: I will kill you myself.

Covey: (shoves her away from him, laughing, kicks her in the bottom) Fly away, little muzzy. Come see me when you’ve grown up. But OY! I’ve got my eye on you, right? No more rocks, you might just find yourself in Armagh Prison.

Coll: (turns sullenly, makes an obscene gesture)

Covey: Oh, that reminds me. Say hello to that fine thing of a sister, will ya? That’s a good pup.

Coll: She’d sooner cut her own throat.

Covey: Why, when we can oblige? Now shove off! I’m sick of the sight of ya.
(Coll turns, and walks backwards, staring after Covey, defiant. Lights up, Coll enters the flat she shares with her sister, Brigid.)

SCENE 3

Brigid: Where have you been? Your supper was cold an hour ago.

Coll: Just down the road. Don’t nag me.

Brigid: You weren’t trying to get up the soldiers’ noses again, were ye?

Coll: (shrugs) I dunno. Maybe.

Brigid: Please, Coll, stay away from them. Don’t be bringing mischief on the family. I’ve got worries enough without you piling on.

Coll: Don’t go borrowin’ trouble. I can take care of myself.

Brigid: Borrowin’ trouble?! You could be arrested, or worse!

Coll: Or worse? You wouldn’t be meanin’ shot, now would ya?

Brigid: Heaven help us! Bite your tongue!

Coll: Shot, just like Stutterin’ Mike.

Brigid: They shot Michael?!

Coll: They did. This afternoon, down at the south barricades. They say he’ll live, as if that makes it all fine.

Brigid: What did he do?

Coll: What did HE do?

Brigid: Yeah? What did he do? Was he tormenting the soldiers?

Coll: That’s just like you, thinking it’s always our fault. That somehow we’ve asked for all this. Just a sheep, you are, just like Ma.

Brigid: You mind your mouth! Don’t you dare speak ill of the dead.

Coll: She was! Always on about how we should all just get on, that is what God would want, on and on. She might as well have marched with the bloody Orangemen!

(Orangemen—a name given to an association of Protestants in Ireland instituted to uphold the Protestant succession to the crown, and the Protestant religion as settled at the Revolution of 1688, and which derives this name from William, the Prince of Orange, on whose accession to the throne Protestantism
was established; it became dormant for a time after its institution, but it has shown very decided signs of life at political crises when Protestantism seemed in danger, such as often to call for some firm handling). Go along to get along, she’d say.

**Brigid:** I won’t listen to you disrespectin’ her, Coll. I just won’t have it.

**Coll:** You think she was right, don’t you?

**Brigid:** I just think that people...

**Coll:** Stutterin’ Mike is a person, Bridey. Wouldn’t hurt a fly.

**Brigid:** He must have done somethin’, now.

**Coll:** No! He was just on his way to look for work, just walking down the road, but he catches the eye of the Toad, that fat soldier who sits in that Pig, always wears the sunglasses even when it’s pouring out? And the Toad, he says, “Oy! You there? Where you off to?” And he points his rifle at Mike. Mike tries to say something, but he can’t get it out. And the Toad says, “What was that? I didn’t quite get that. You ought to answer me, mate.” And he squeezes one off just by Mike’s head. By now Mike’s so scared he’s shaking all over, and the Toad is still yelling at him, “Where are you going? Tell me! Now!” But Mike can’t get a word out, so he reaches into that ratty old jacket he always wears, to pull out that little pad of paper he carries to write on. He reached in… he reached in and the Toad shot him.

**Brigid:** (quietly) Saints protect us.

**Coll:** Ma was wrong. She was wrong saying we shouldn’t get involved, talking about how we have to go along to get along. That isn’t the answer.

**Brigid:** So I suppose you want to end up like Mike then, do you?

**Coll:** You just don’t get it, do you? If we-- if somebody, doesn’t do something, we’ll all end up like Mike.

**Brigid:** You’re so angry, all the time.

**Coll:** And you should be too! You have to live here. Just look how the Protestants get the best jobs, and you, having to clean their toilets! Not even money for a funeral dress!

**Brigid:** I’ve just had enough of the dying, Coll. Haven’t you? Haven’t you had enough of the madness?

**Coll:** What else have we got?

**Brigid:** Oh, Colleen, do you know you are becoming a burden of worry to me? What will become of you?
Coll: The girls are joining up more now. Doing their share.

Brigid: I've told you, I don't want to hear any more of the IRA.

Coll: Da is turning in his grave to hear you say that.

Brigid: Yes, and he’s in his grave, isn’t he? And why? Because of the bloody, bloody IRA! (Irish Republican Army) Ma always said when you’re born in the Bogside, you’re born to the shape of the grave, and she was right.

Coll: He gave himself to the cause.

Brigid: And what of us? What of us, Colleen? Sod us, right? Sod his family! Die like a martyr, oh fine and well, and leave us all to starve!

Coll: You didn’t know him. You didn’t know him at all.

Brigid: I know what he left me, though; that much I know. I know he left me the worry of how to survive, worrying every day if there’s money for bread and tea. The worry of this flat, falling down ‘round our ears. And the worry of you, determined to be just like him.

Coll: I am like him! I am! He saw the way things ought to be. He saw we ought to be free. He had a dream, and he gave it to me!

Brigid: It’s a pipe dream, bought with blood! It killed us a hundred years past, and it will be killing us a hundred years from now. It won’t change, Colleen, can’t you see that?

Coll: You thinking it won’t change makes Da a failure, makes all he did mean nothing!

Brigid: It means nothing! Don’t you see that?

Coll: It means everything! And I will make it mean more! I'll keep his dream alive. Me! I will! Me and the Volunteers…

Brigid: Hush, just hush, Colleen. If I thought those rotters would actually have you, I'd… (there is a knock, and Brigid meets Claire at the door)

SCENE 4

Brigid: Claire, sight for sore eyes you are. Take me away, take me away!

Claire: (to Coll) and I didn’t even wear my best frock. Why aren’t you down the chip shop finding yourself a punter?

Brigid: Okay, we’re off then. I’ll be home just after midnight, when our cleaning shift
ends.

Coll: I don’t like you going to that area. It isn’t safe.

Claire: She’s on one of her bents again, isn’t she?

Brigid: She is, at that, like Da made all again.

Coll: Did you hear about Stutterin’ Mike?

Claire: Isn’t he that….

Brigid: (interrupting) Come on Claire. I’ll tell you on the way.

Coll: I could walk you there, make sure no one bothers you.

Claire: (laughs) Got your black belt in karate and didn’t tell us?

Brigid: We’ll be fine. Lock the door behind us.

Coll: Bridey?

Brigid: Yeah?

Coll: Think you’ll be going down the pub between flats?

Brigid: Why?

Coll: Not the Two Sheaves. Heard the soldiers hang about there.

Brigid: Coll. (sighs) Say a rosary, read a book, please, just do something to take your mind off this.

Coll: If any of those loyalists get in your face, you tell’em your sister’s joined up!

Claire: Brid! She hasn’t!

Brigid: No, Claire. She just wishes. (to Coll) You mind who you go telling that nonsense! The next thing you know, we’ll have soldiers breaking down our door and knocking holes in the wall looking for guns. (kisses her on the cheek)

Claire: You best think of those locked up in Armagh and Long Kesh Prison, love. Not a place you’d want to be, I’d wager.

Brigid: Go on with ya, now.
SCENE 5

(Lights up on a lone figure dressed only in a blanket, with a hole cut out for the head.)

Prisoner: We wouldn't wear the prison garb. To defy them, we took our blankets and wore them instead. We weren't criminals, and we wouldn't wear the clothes of criminals. We were treated worse than criminals, worse than animals—no showers, no toilets, not even a toothbrush. Beaten without provocation. When we tried to starve ourselves in protest, they held us down and shoved feeding tubes into our throats. Why, I wondered? Why try so hard to keep us alive? Is the publicity so negative when we die? And then I realized, if we died from hunger, they couldn’t hurt us any longer. We would finally be out of their reach. It wasn’t enough for them to keep us from living free; they didn’t want us to have freedom at all—even in death. Even in death.

(Lights come up on Brigid and Claire)

SCENE 6

Claire: Did you ever think we’d be old cleaning ladies at the tender age of nineteen?

Brigid: No, but we must be the most stunning charwomen this office block has likely seen.

Claire: (laughs) Go on, now. How about Coll? Any luck for her finding work?

Brigid: Not yet. You know how it is.

Claire: I suppose she thinks she’ll make wads of cash once she’s in the IRA (laughs)

Brigid: Shhh, quiet girl! People ’round here wouldn’t find that half funny.

Claire: That sister of yours. She just wants to stand with the big boys, doesn’t she?

Brigid: Scary, is what it is. She must know it’s not a game, but...I swear. Just like Da, with the will of a bull. Big, stubborn ideas. She’s always on about something. When she was eight she wanted to become a tinker and live in a caravan and make a fortune in the dice games.

Claire: No!

Brigid: (they begin the walk home) Yes! And that’s not the half of it—she was going to save up her dosh and give it to the Cause!

Claire: Of course.
Brigid: She also wanted to be the first lady astronaut so she could go to the moon and drop bombs on Britain.

Claire: All the saints in heaven! You’re joking! That would be a first---the Bogside puts first terrorist on the moon.

Brigid: (smiles) Funny, but not. Da wanted a free Ireland so badly, and it ---it stained her somehow. Then when he died, well…it was like all his anger left his body and went directly into hers.

Claire: Lots of us are angry, and why not? Oh and come along now, could be worse, she could marry a tinker!

Brigid: (they both laugh) Tell me! Still, I would rather her marry a tinker than fall in with that lot.

Claire: Hard to avoid, it’s where we live. Might as well have tattooed those three letters on all our heads when we were born, Bridey.

Brigid: It’s a choice you make, Claire.

Claire: Not really. I mean, it’s more of a sickness, isn’t it? Like the flu. Or being born with a club foot. You don’t choose it. I mean, well, it chooses you, doesn’t it? It’s where we live. Like it or not.

Brigid: But she’s bright, so much better than all that.

Claire: She is. She is also a dreamer, just like your Da.

Brigid: Yes, but what is she dreaming of? Is it a dream or a nightmare?

(Lights up on chorus members, portraying Loyalists and Republicans--can be played by a number of people or only two. Each side speaks to the other, pointing fingers, building to shoving, and then gradually calming to a state of sadness.)

SCENE 7

R: It isn’t because they’re Protestant.

L: It isn’t because they’re Catholic.

R: It’s because they’re against a free United Ireland.

L: It’s because they’re not loyal to the Crown.

R: You’re interlopers (one that intrudes in a place or sphere of activity).
L: You’re trouble makers.

R: Patsies (a foolish person who is easily tricked or cheated).

L: Hoodlums.

R: Murderers.

L: Murderers.

R: You took our lands.

L: You took our peace.

R: You starved us out.

L: You terrorized us.

R: You bowed to imperialism (the effect that a powerful country has in changing or influencing the way people live in other, poorer countries).

L: You refused the law.

R: You drove us into poverty.

L: You couldn’t accept change.

R: Dublin abandoned us to butchers and thieves.

L: You became animals.

R: It was kill or be killed. Kill or be broken.

L: We hope for a change.

R: It will never change.

L: We hope they will stop.

R: We will never stop.

L: We want peace.

R: Britain out of Ireland or die!
L: Year after year...
R: Lifetime after lifetime...
L: Generation after generation...
R: Until it is a callus upon the soul of Ireland...
L: Until in looking back...
R: Everything

L: Everything
R: Blurred

L: Blurred.
R: We’re fighting for an ideal

L: We’re fighting for a symbol
R: We’re fighting

L: We’re fighting
R: An eye for an eye

L: A tooth for a tooth
R: A brother for a brother

L: A father for a father
R: And our children won’t talk

L: They talk with stones and bricks
R: And our children won’t talk

L: Our children fight
R: Die

R&L: in the streets.

L: And in the end,

R: In the end

L: I am you

R: And you are me

R&L: And it’s all the same.

(Lights up on Coll, who seems nervous, looking around for someone. Out of the shadows, a hand drags her inside a building.)

SCENE 8

IRA Member: You’ve got no business here, get yourself home.

Coll: Are you him?

I: Him?

Coll: Yeah, are you him? Eamon over the shops sent me.

I: I don’t know any Eamon.

Coll: If you can’t say, that’s okay. I want to join. I want to volunteer.

I: Whoever sent you sent you on a fool’s errand. You’re just a girl.

Coll: I’m fifteen. Some girls in Armagh Prison are barely older.

I: Go home.

Coll: I’m after the Green Jackets at the barriers every day!

I: That’s just aggro (deliberately aggressive, provoking, or violent behavior), everyone does it, makes good pub craic. All it’s good for.

Coll: My da, he was an IRA man!

I: Doesn’t matter, the dead are dead.
Coll: But I know things! He taught me! (the man only stares at her) Look, I’m better than him. I don’t touch the drink. I won’t make any mistakes!

I: Been up to Milltown Cemetery?

Coll: Sure, loads of times, with my Da. Paid our respects.

I: Milltown Cemetery is where you end up when you make mistakes. Buried with the rest.

Coll: You can’t scare me, you know.

I: Who’s trying to scare ya? I’m only giving you the facts.

Coll: Yeah, well, here’s a fact for ya. Our flat is just across from a checkpoint. Every day that we go out, there the Green Jackets are, giving us dirty looks. Waving their guns. Saying rude things. We shouldn’t have to live this way.

I: Welcome to the Bogside, girl.

Coll: I want to change things. We were born here, not them. It’s our home, not theirs. And one of the guards, he’s a right devil, always smiling after my sister. I hate him. I hate him, and I’ll see him dead. I will.

I: You might at that, and no loss, sure, but it won’t be because you’re with us. Now go on. (grabs her, shoves her back the way she came) Go home.

Coll: You’ll take me, you will. You’ll see what I can do.

I: (points behind her, a silent admonition (warning)

Coll: I won’t quit. I won’t. I’ll be the best. (turns around to go)

I: (after a beat) Like your brother?

Coll: (stops, doesn’t turn back, after a pause) My brother is shovelling slag in hell.

I: Your man there wanted to do you all. Didn’t know that bit, did ya? Off the lot of ya’ is what he wanted. Some of us said no, just the rat.

Coll: And did you say no?

I: Where there’s a rat, there’s a nest.

Coll: (after a pause) I’ll be back when I can prove myself.
I: You’ll stay away, girlie. You’ll stay good and far away.

Coll: I’ll show you. You can’t keep me from it.

I: You come here again, you’ll regret it, do y’hear me?

Coll: I’m not afraid of you.

I: (laughs) Then you’re dim. (pulls out gun and holds it to her forehead) How’s this? This is not fun and games, what we do. This is dead serious, this is. This is how it ends, just a matter of is it them, or is it you? And we don’t need the daughter of a bloody drunk or the sister of a traitor ---we don’t need you, understand? (shoves her) Now go. GO.

Coll: You’ll see. You’ll see. You’ll hear of me.

I: (raises gun again) GO! And if I see you about again, you won’t have a chance to wish I hadn’t!

SCENE 9
(Lights up on Covey, standing outside the post. Brigid enters, carrying a cloth bag of groceries.)

Covey: Been down the shops, eh? (looks around, motions her to the side)

Brigid: (looking around nervously) Look, it isn’t a good…

Covey: Relax. No one’s about. Haven’t seen another soul in half an hour.

Brigid: I should get these things home.

Covey: What’s the hurry? I’ve a long day ahead of me. Stay a minute.

Brigid: If anyone sees me, I’ve told you, Ian…

Covey: (raises his hands) Alright, alright, suppose you don’t want to hear about that sister of yours.

Brigid: What about her? Did you speak to her?

Covey: First, tell me that you’ll let me take you out, Brigid.

Brigid: Ian…

Covey: Come now, luv. I fancy you, I know you fancy me.

Brigid: But…
Covey: Two months I’ve been here now, breaking my poor heart chattin’ you up, how long will you make me wait?

Brigid: Ian, I don’t know. It…it’s a fool’s errand we’re on.

Covey: You don’t believe that, or you would never have spoken to me, and then there’s that little favor you asked me to do for your sister.

Brigid: Did you speak to her?

Covey: First, say you’ll see me, all proper-like. Not a bit of chat on the corner.

Brigid: (pauses) Fine. Now tell me about Coll. What did you say?

Covey: Played a bit of the bad guy. Put the fear right in her. No worries.

Brigid: Coll’s very determined, Ian. Are you sure? Are you sure you put her off it?

Covey: Straight off it, sweetheart. Gave her the one-two punch, I did. Never had anyone jump the barrier to get at her before—scared a couple of years out of her. Gave her the line, you know, Armagh prison, or worse. Didn’t endear myself to her, however.

Brigid: I only pray that it works. She has her jaw set, that one. Listen, thanks.

Covey: No thanks necessary. I’ll keep on her, count on that. So, when can I see you?

Brigid: I have to work every night until next Tuesday.

Covey: Tuesday it is, then. I’ll have to ask one of my mates to trade with me, but they’ll say yes if they know what’s good for them. No worries.

Brigid: Are you sure that…

Covey: Relax, luv. It will all be fine. (looks at watch) Back to it then. See you soon, yes?

Brigid: Yes. See ya.

SCENE 10
(Lights up on Coll entering. She speaks to another kid, known as the Finder)

Coll: Were you able to get what I need?

F: What do they call me?

Coll: The Finder.
**F**: And that’s what I do. Wasn’t easy, this—had to knick the battery off an Opal next to a church.

**Coll**: It wasn’t the priest’s car, was it?

**F**: What are you, daft? I wouldn’t steal from my own. You know that Anglican church, down the high street?

**Coll**: (giggles) You didn’t!

**F**: Did. Some spotty cow came out to discover her car was banjaxed (broken or damaged).

**Coll**: Brilliant! No one saw you?

**F**: Would I be here? One flask of grade-A battery acid, all for you.

**Coll**: You’re the best…

**Finder**: Why, thanks. ’Course, that’s nothing compared to my greatest exploits. Batteries are easy…

**Coll**: Is it true, what they say about you and the gas canisters?

**Finder**: That was a great one! After dark, crept around the back of an RUC (The Royal Ulster Constabulary was the police force in Northern Ireland from 1922 to 2001) supply truck, made off with a whole crate of their tear gas! You should’ve seen their faces the next day when ten Derry volunteers started hurling the gas at them for a change!

**Coll**: How do you keep from getting caught?

**Finder**: Move like a cat, keep in the shadows, never make a sound. Doesn’t hurt that all those Brit soldiers are thick as well!

**Coll**: (laughs) You’ll have to show me sometime.

**Finder**: How the soldiers are thick? Just look around! Dull as dirt, the lot of’em! (laughs)

**Coll**: (laughs) No, no. How you, you know, how you hide and sneak around. How you find things.

**Finder**: Sure thing, but you’ll have to practice a lot to get as good as me.

**Coll**: Well, I should go. Loads to do.
**F:** Hold yourself. Do you know what you are gonna do with this?

**Coll:** Of course.

**F:** Dangerous business.

**Coll:** I know.

**Finder:** You can get burned, blinded even, or worse…I think you know that.

**Coll:** I do know that. Let me have it.

**F:** You can’t mix it too quickly, right? You have to…

**Coll:** I know!

**F:** You have the rest? The bleaching powder and…

**Coll:** Yes. This was the hard one to get.

**F:** Are you sure you don’t want some help with it?

**Coll:** No. I can do it myself. I watched Da mix it loads of times.

**F:** Have it your way. And you never saw me.

**Coll:** Sure, yeah.

**F:** (turns to go, takes a few steps) Be careful, right? I mean, remember your da, and all…

**Coll:** Don’t talk about my Da.

**F:** But I…

**Coll:** Just shut it about him.

**F:** Sorry. (she turns to exit) Wait. Listen, when you toss that thing, don’t look, don’t wait, don’t even breathe. Just run. As fast as you can.

**Coll:** I will.
SCENE 11
(Lights up on the house, where Brigid and Claire prepare for work)

Brigid: Another cuppa tea before we’re off, girl?

Claire: Thanks, but I’ve had my fill. I’ll be floatin’ to work as ‘tis.

Brigid: Ah, that we should be able to float to anywhere but.

Claire: Let’s float to Majorca.


Claire: Aye, you could do. Have ourselves a time in one of those fancy boats with the handsome driver.

Brigid: They don’t call them drivers, Claire.

Claire: Well, what do they call them?

Brigid: (giggles) I don’t know, but not drivers.

Claire: Oh, I know! We’ll float to Hawaii.

Brigid: Hawaii?!

Claire: Why not? Lie on the beach and sip fruity drinks. Gorgeous native men.

Brigid: Someday maybe.

Claire: Yeah, our ghosts will float there, after we die and are buried in County Derry.

Brigid: We better go, else we’ll be late.

(Coll enters and hides the flask outside the house. She has just finished when Brigid and Claire exit and see her)

Brigid: Coll, get yourself inside. You’re just asking to be snatched up, running around so late every night!

Coll: I’m fine. I stay out of sight.

Brigid: Get inside, and stay there until I’m home in the morning. Do you hear me?

Coll: Yeah, yeah. (she goes inside)
Brigid: (to herself, as they cross) I don’t think it worked.

Claire: What?

Brigid: Huh?

Claire: What didn’t work? (lights up on Colleen, who begins to fashioning the bomb.)

Brigid: Had someone have a go at Coll, try to put her off this IRA madness. But I don’t think it worked.

Claire: Well, girl, I think you’re right that she’s like your Da. I don’t think the devil or Mother Superior from Holy Cross could change her mind, and that’s the truth. I don’t think she’d hurt anyone, though, if it came to it. I wouldn’t worry your head about it. She’ll come to her senses. (while pouring, a bit splashes on Coll, who grabs her arm)

Brigid: Did you know we’ve been on our own for two years now, Coll and me.

Claire: Has it been so long?

Brigid: Hard to believe now, isn’t it? And Claire, let me tell you, I’ve watched that girl grow harder every passing day since Da died. She was a lovey little thing, before…before. All hugs and pats. And she was Da’s shadow, followed him step for step. Is it any wonder, I ask you, how’s she turned?

Claire: She blames them, doesn’t she?

Brigid: Them? You mean the Volunteers?

Claire: No, them. The other side. The Brits, the Loyalists, the Protestants. Even though your Da did himself in, she sees it as their fault. The accident, him messing about with bombs, all of it. It’s about revenge, Bridey. Plain and simple.

Brigid: And then our brother…

Claire: Him too. Without the other side, he’d still be here as well. No enemies, no causalities. Black and white, at least to Colleen.

Brigid: How can I keep her from vengeance, Claire? How on earth can I do that?

Claire: I don’t know. (puts her arm around Brigid) I’ve always been good at pointing out the knot, but terrible at working it out.

Brigid: Ah well, we better be off, knots and all.
SCENE 12
(They exit, Coll lies down, the lights change to represent a darker mood. From upstage center, a figure appears. The music of grief begins. He makes his way to Coll.)

Liam: Coll, wake up… (Coll starts awake) Wake up, wake up… (She creeps to door and looks out) The time for sleeping is over. (She goes outside)

Coll: Go away.

Liam: Little sister.

Coll: Go away. You’re dead.

Liam: It’s me, it’s your brother L…

Coll: (covers her ears) We don’t speak your name!

Liam: You have to know. I have to tell you.

Coll: You’re dead. We covered the mirrors and hid your picture. You can’t come back.

Liam: Listen to me, little sister.

Coll: Go away! You’re dead and buried!

Liam: Shhh, listen. Listen. You have to stop yourself.

Coll: I don’t have to listen to you! You ruined us!

Liam: I was trying to stop it. I wanted to stop it all. It’s all madness. All of it.

Coll: You were a coward. You never had the nerve to fight.

Liam: I informed because I thought I could stop it. There is too much death.

Coll: They put a bullet in your brain! They could have killed us too.

Liam: Yes, they put a bullet in my brain. I was one of theirs, and they slaughtered me like a stranger.

Coll: You deserved it!

Liam: They were going to bomb a school. Children. It had gone too far. It was senseless.
Coll: Da said “whatever it takes!”

Liam: You don't believe that.

Coll: I do!

Liam: I was a part of whatever it took.

Coll: Shut up! Shut up!

Liam: Ma, died from the worry of it all, same as if they killed her.

Coll: Ma was weak!

Liam: Stop yourself, little sister.

Coll: I won't! We will be free!

Liam: Stop yourself.

Coll: Go back to hell where you belong!

Liam: Stop yourself, little sister. (he begins to cross slowly)

Coll: Go on!

Liam: Too much death.

Coll: Please….

Liam: Too much death.

Coll: Please…

Liam: I miss you.

Coll: Wait!

Liam: Miss you…

Coll: Wait…

Liam: Miss (he is gone)

Coll: Liam!!!! (She sinks to her knees, sobbing)
SCENE 13
(Lights up on Coll. screaming and sobbing in the street.)

Coll: Liam! Liam!

(Covey jumps the barrier and rushes over to her)

Covey: Are you all right? Did someone hurt you?

Coll: (sobbing) Liam…

Covey: Liam? Who’s Li…

Coll: (waking, she sees Covey and shoves him away.) Get away from me!

Covey: What happened? Are you all right?

Coll: Get away from me! Sod off!

Covey: Tell me who did this to you.

Coll: YOU! You did it! All of you! (She tries to hit him)

Covey: (grabs her arm) Who’s Liam?

Coll: (furious now) Don’t you speak his name!!! Don’t you speak his name!!

Covey: I just want to…

Coll: It’s because of you! He died because of you! Because of all of you!!

Covey: Calm down, now… (noticing a burn on her arm) What’s this?

Coll: Let me go!

Covey: That’s an acid burn…

Coll: Let me GO!

Covey: What have you been doing with acid?

Coll: LET GO!

Covey: What have you been doing? (He grabs her hair) TELL ME!

Coll: (kicks at him, manages to break free, runs) Rot in hell! (Covey runs after her)
Covey: Wait!!! Stop!!!

SCENE 14
(Quick change in lighting. The chorus is on stage, bin lids in hand. They begin to bang them rhythmically on the stage floor. The tempo gets faster and faster, stopping only to allow the lines. Each person grabs Coll and speaks to her in turn, pushing and pulling her this way and that as if to hide her, until things reach a frenzied pace.)

Person 1: They're coming, girl! The soldiers are coming!

Person 2: Run! Run! Quick! Hide!

Person 3: They're coming.

Person 1: They're after someone. It's you, isn't it?

Person 2: Hide! Hide! Don't let them catch you!

Person 3: They'll be searching the houses!

Person 1: (to Person 3) Make sure the guns are out of sight!

Person 2: They're coming! The soldiers!

Person 3: Don't let them catch you!

Person 2: Don't let them catch you!

All: Don't let them catch you!!! They're coming.

Person 1: They're coming.

(Lights up on Coll, running to the Finder, who rumble with a bin lid.)

Coll: It's me, help me get out of sight!

Finder: It's you? It's you they're after?

Coll: Yes, yes!

Finder: What did you do?

Coll: Just hide me!
Finder: And get us both deep in it? If the soldiers don't get to you, the 'RA will for stirring them up!
Coll: Please!

Finder: Why should I? I keep myself out of trouble.

Coll: It was the acid!

Finder: Yeah, what about it? I told you what happens after has nothing to do with me!

Coll: The acid you got for me! I spilled some and...

Finder: (grabs her) You what? ! I told you to be careful, didn’t I? Didn’t I?

Coll: (wincing in pain) It burned me, and... and...he—the soldier, he saw the burn on my arm! (holds her arm up)

Finder: Sweet mother…alright, come on then. Stick close!

Coll: I will!

Finder: If they catch up, you’re on your own.

Coll: Fine! Let’s go, let’s go!

Finder: (grabs her arm) Keep up. (They continue running. The banging begins in earnest again; this time the crowd addresses them both and they are again pushed and pulled as if through the back alleyways and doors of the Bogside.)

All: Find the shadows. (banging) Find the shadows. (banging) Put the dark between you and them. (banging) You and them. (banging) You and them. (banging) Put yourself in the dark. (banging) Put yourself in the dark. (banging) Become the dark. (banging) Become the dark. (banging) Become dark. (banging) Dark. (banging) Dark. (banging) DARK. (abrupt stop, as the Finder and Coll are shoved offstage.)

SCENE 15
(Lights up on Covey and Brigid)

Brigid: Have you had any word?

Covey: Afraid not. No sign of her, not yet.

Brigid: It’s been three days.

Covey: Don’t worry, we’ll find her.
**Brigid:** I’m as afraid of that.

**Covey:** Whatever she’s done, or whatever she’s planning to do, Brigid... Someone has to put a stop to it before she hurts herself, or worse.

**Brigid:** I think you’re wrong. Coll wouldn’t hurt anyone. She’s up on her hind legs, that’s all; she’d never do any real harm.

**Covey:** She has it like a sickness. She doesn’t know what’s she’s doing.

**Brigid:** She wouldn’t hurt anyone, I know it. She just wouldn’t!

**Covey:** It won’t be anyone, Brigid. It will be us, the other side, the enemy.

**Brigid:** As it always has been. Not people anymore. Just them and us. Our patch, their patch. What does it matter? Both are filled with blood.

**Covey:** The two of you have to get out of town, as soon as possible.

**Brigid:** Where has she gone? Where has she gone, Ian?

**Covey:** She’s gone to ground, I expect. They’re hiding her, protecting one of their own.

**Brigid:** Their own? She isn’t one of them! She isn’t!

**Covey:** I’m sorry, I just meant…

**Brigid:** And she won’t be! Do you hear me?

**Covey:** I just meant that she likely went to them to hide her, since they are so good at hiding.

**Brigid:** I wish I knew who, I’d have at them, I would!

**Covey:** Listen to me, don't go asking for trouble. Ask friends, but stay away from the others, understand?

**Brigid:** Promise me, Ian. Promise me you won’t let them hurt her when she’s found.

**Covey:** If I’m there, I’ll do what I can.

**Brigid:** I’d die if something happened to her, Ian. She’s the only family I have left.

**Covey:** I know. And I know your sister loves you, Bridey.

**Brigid:** She’s all I have. Everything.
**Covey:** You have me, and someday, maybe, I'll take you both away from here. This place is poison.

(Brigid lifts her hand to Covey's face, and Coll appears, running towards them. She cannot see Brigid, who is obscured by a wall. She calls out, and flings the flask bomb towards Covey.)

**Coll:** We will be free!

**Covey:** NO! (Everything goes to slow motion. Coll turns and runs offstage, Covey grabs Brigid and tries to shield her with his body. They fall to the ground as the explosion rings out. They lie still; a single tone hums. Liam appears upstage, bathed in red light. He opens his arms wide, and tilts his head back in a mournful pose. He moves to the still figures, and goes to his knees in weeping. He gently touches Covey, then Brigid. Brigid rises, puts her arms around Liam. They embrace, and then she sinks back down. Lights up on Coll, center stage.)

**SCENE 16**

**Coll:** For the first time, I am fully awake. My mind, my body, my soul. Awake.

**Liam:** Wake up, little sister. The time for sleeping is over.

**Coll:** I have a purpose. I won't be stopped.

**Liam:** You should have stopped.

**Coll:** We will all be free. I'll be free.

**Liam:** Now you will never be free.

**Coll:** Look at what I've done!

**Liam:** You have no idea what you have done.

**Coll:** Do you see, Da? Are you proud?

**Liam:** No. He's turning in his grave.

**Coll:** I'm brave, Da.

**Liam:** Murderers are cowards, little sister.

**Coll:** I'm not afraid!
Liam: Fear might have saved you.

Coll: See, Da, I've done my part!

Liam: You've added to the tragedy.

Coll: I've been changed.

Liam: Oh, how you've changed.

Coll: I've been transformed.

Liam: You have. You have blood on your hands now.

Coll: I've become something different…

Liam: There’s no going back.

Coll: I’m not me anymore…

Liam: The you of yesterday is gone forever.

Coll: What have I become?

Liam: You have become the weapon.

Coll: I have become the weapon?

Liam: Look at what they've made you do.

Coll: I have become the weapon. I have sharpened my ribs to spears. In my mouth, righteous fire. My arms are swords, every finger a knife. My legs, filled with black powder, my spine the fuse. My fury is coming for you, my wrath will have its freedom. My blood, enslaved by you for centuries, will have its vengeance. No longer will we be victims, born to the shape of the grave. (Covey, carrying lifeless Brigid, walks up behind Coll. He stands silently weeping. Liam turns away.) We will be free! We will be free! We will have our justice! Our suffering will end! Ireland will be united! I am the weapon. I am the weapon, and one by one, I will finish my enemies. I will finish you! I will finish you, and I will show no mercy. I will show no mercy, for a weapon knows nothing of mercy. I will show no mercy. (Blackout.)