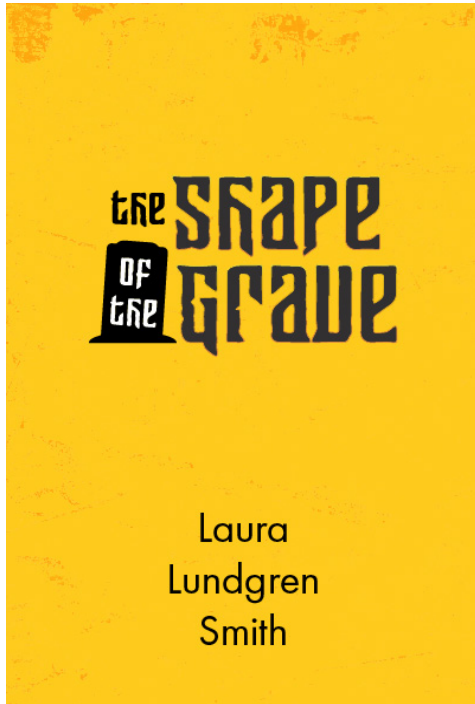


2026 UIL ONE ACT PLAY:
THE SHAPE OF THE GRAVE by Laura Lundgren Smith



Drama

3 W, 3 M, 2 Any, 7-8 Ensemble (Any)

Setting: Early 1970s, Northern Ireland

Set during the era of “The Troubles” – conflict raging through Northern Ireland between the Irish Republican Army and the British – the play follows fifteen-year-old Colleen, whose family has been devastated by the conflict. Feeling that she must give meaning to her loss, she resolves to join the fight for Irish independence from Britain. However, her experience with the paramilitary world (implicitly the Irish Republican Army) challenges her assumptions. Meanwhile her older sister Brigid is determined to stop her from repeating their father’s mistakes. The play asks how far individuals, communities and nations will go — what it costs, and what it leaves behind.

Characters

- Colleen (female) — a 15-year-old girl, part of a nationalist/republican milieu.
- Brigid (female) — Colleen’s older sister, cautious, wary, protective.
- Claire (female) — Brigid’s best friend
- IRA Member (male) — an unnamed member of the Irish Republican Army (or a paramilitary figure representing that side)
- Covey (male) - a British soldier and Brigid’s suggested love interest
- Prisoner (any) — an unnamed prisoner character.
- The Finder (any) — resourceful, assists Colleen with bomb-making
- Liam (male) — Colleen and Brigid’s deceased brother
- Chorus (any): the Republicans, the Loyalists, the Protestors, the People

Key Themes

- **Loss/Grief** – how the conflict impacts individuals and families, and how loss fuels action.
- **Radicalisation/Idealism** – Colleen’s desire to join the fight and what she discovers.
- **Legacy/History** – the father’s past, the sisters’ present choices, and the broader national story.
- **Moral Cost of Conflict** – how far will one go, what is sacrificed for “cause” or “freedom”.
- **Identity/Belonging** – both personal (sister, daughter, nationalist) and communal (Irish, British, divided society).
- **Hope/Caution** – the tension between desire for change and the recognition of danger.

2026 UIL OAP THE SHAPE OF THE GRAVE:
AUDITION INFORMATION

Auditions:

- Actors should choose 1 or 2 of the following excerpts from the play (see next page) and prepare an audition monologue video.
- Please frame your video from the waist up, ¾ body, or full-body.
- Upload your video to this folder: [THE SHAPE OF THE GRAVE AUDITION MONOLOGUE VIDEOS - Google Drive](#)
- Audition monologue videos must be received by Sunday, Nov. 16 at NOON.

Callbacks (by invitation only):

- If called back, you will be asked to read from selected scenes from the play.
- Sides will be posted on [MacTheatre.com](#) on the audition info page.
- Callbacks will be held on Tuesday Nov 18 from 5-8PM in the FABT.

THE SHAPE OF THE GRAVE: AUDITION EXCERPTS

1. (female)

COLLEEN. 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. Mike can't get a word out so he reaches into that ratty old jacket he always wears, to pull out that little pot of paper he carries to write on. He reached in... he reached in and the toad shot him.

2. (any gender)

PRISONER. We wouldn't wear the prison guard. 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? It wasn't enough for them to keep us from living free; they wanted they didn't want us to have freedom at all – even in death. Even in death.

3. (female)

COLLEEN. Yeah, well, here's a fact for you. Our flight is just across from a checkpoint. Every day that we go out, they're the Green Jackets are, giving us dirty looks. Waving their guns. Saying rude things. We shouldn't have to live this way. 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 red devil, always smiling after my sister. I hate him. I hate him, and I'll see him dead. I will.

4. (female)

COLLEEN. 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 be victims, born to the shape of the grave.

5. (male)

IRA MEMBER. *(Laughs)* Then you're dumb. *(Pulls out gun, points it at her.)* 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. *(Raises gun again.)* GO! And if I see you about again, you won't have a chance to wish I hadn't!

6. (female)

BRIGID. Did you know we've been on our own for two years now, Colleen and me. Hard to believe now, isn't it? And Claire, let me tell you, I've watched that girl grow harder every day since Da died. She was a lovely 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 she's turned? How can I keep her from vengeance, Claire? How on earth can I do that?