Breach

a short screenplay by Geoffrey Gould

INTERIOR: ELIZABETH'S HOME CELLAR

From the darkness we hear voices, slowly coming into view standing in a circle are seven robed woman: ELIZABETH, ROWAN, KATHLEEN, HOLLY, PENNY, FRAN, and JENNY. Each wear a cords-like belt about their waists.

The eldest is JENNY, in her 80s or early 90s, and is the High Priestess of this white-witch coven.

JENNY

The Work is done. The Circle is open, but never broken. Merry Meet--

All smiling, the other women join in happily.

ALL THE WOMEN

Merry Part... and Merry Meet again.

The group whoop it up a bit, and a few clap. Jenny picks up a small silver tray with several large cookies.

JENNY

Let's head upstairs and finish off our cakes and ale...

A few of the women blow out candles, another grabs a small goblet and a bottle of mead, and the group heads upstairs.

INTERIOR: ELIZABETH'S HOME: LIVING ROOM SLIGHTLY LATER

The tray of cookies lays empty on the coffee table. The ladies are laughing, one or two holding the last mouthful amount of cookie they're eating.

JENNY

Girls, girls...

The smiling ladies quiet down to listen.

JENNY

With our Holly having reached Third Degree, she will be taking over my role as High Priestess, at least until the hospital tests are done.

FRAN

When are you going in?

JENNY

I'm going in on Tuesday. I'm sure it's not as bad as they've been making it out to be.

ROWAN

When will the test results come back?

JENNY

Probably a couple of weeks or so.

What time did you need me to pick you up Tuesday?

JENNY

The appointment is at ten, so if you're at my place by seven, that'll be enough time to fight traffic and to check in. You know me: I'd rather be--

Smiling, the others all chime in with her.

JENNY AND THE OTHERS ... an hour early than a minute

The group laughs.

late.

EXTERIOR: ELIZABETH'S HOME FRONT PORCH, A WHILE LATER

Having changed back into regular attire, the ladies are departing, saying their farewells to Elizabeth. Up the walk comes TOM, in his 30s-40s, Elizabeth's husband, which the ladies each hug hello happily. He pleasantly accepts their greetings.

TOM

Hey ladies! Merry meet an'all...!

JENNY

(during her hug) Tom, hey, how's it goin'...?

TOM

So far so good. That abundance spell you guys did seems to be manifesting. There's strong hints at the office of my getting a promotion, thank you thank you...!

JENNY

Well, you and Elizabeth are kind enough to lend us your home for our full moons and sabbats, so here's hoping. I'll light another green candle for you two tonight.

Awesome; thanks again!

JENNY

Blessed be...

TOM

(sincerely)

Blessed be.

Tom joins Elizabeth on the porch; the two wave at their friends as they get into their respective cars, a few are carpooling. Penny gets into the back seat of Kathleen's car.

TOM

(to Elizabeth)

Did you save me a cookie?

ELIZABETH

Always.

The happy couple go inside, closing the door behind them.

INTERIOR: KATHLEEN'S CAR

PENNY

Everything's gonna be okay with the med tests, right?

JENNY

No worries, Penny. It's all just basic stuff, but to be on the safe side, I've pre-paid my apartment for next month in advance.

KATHLEEN

Y'know, Mom, you can always stay with Phillip and me.

JENNY

I prefer being self sufficient. The protection wards on my apartment are just as strong as your homes.

PENNY

True, but protection magick doesn't really deal with possible medical issues. Usually.

JENNY

I know dear, but I've lived alone since Nathan passed on, and I'm sure he's proud of what I've done.

KATHLEEN

I've been meaning to mention, Mom. I've been dreaming about Dad the last few nights.

JENNY

So have I. I don't know yet if it means everything's gonna be fine, or whether I should be prepared to move on to the Summerlands myself. That's why I'm letting Holly take over High Priestess duties for now, as well as having made sure my affairs are all in order.

PENNY

When you do go to the Summerlands, many *many* years from now... are you still doing the plant pod thing?

JENNY

The Capsula Mundi? Yes, that's all handled and paid for. It's more planet friendly than a coffin, and (theatrically)

from my unembalmed remains will grow a strong tree, under whose branches what visitors come to my grave will have shade and shelter.

KATHLEEN

(to Penny)

I have all the paperwork on that, as does the funeral home. As morbid a subject as it is, Mom's very efficient.

JENNY

"Death is just another path, one that we all must take..."

PENNY

(smiling)

Thanks, Gandalf...

The three laugh as the car drives down the street.

TITLE CARD: TUESDAY

INTERIOR: JENNY'S APARTMENT

Jenny's apartment is very neat, tidy and inviting. Jenny and Kathleen enter, and sit relaxed on the sofa.

JENNY

Well, that's done.

KATHLEEN

One less thing to worry about. I'm sure the blood work will come up just as healthy.

JENNY

Thanks again for the lift.

KATHLEEN

I'll let the gang know the doctor said you're in tip top shape.

JENNY

Well, it's more like "mostly" tip top shape. Actually more like, (MORE) JENNY (cont'd)

"surprisingly healthy for my age"...

(sarcastically)

... which always sounds *so* nice...

KATHLEEN

(smiles)

Better that than his asking if you have all your ducks in a row...

JENNY

True true. Did you want to stay and have lunch?

KATHLEEN

I need to do some grocery shopping, but if you like, I can come by and bring you over for dinner. Paula would love to see you.

JENNY

Oh I love her so much. Sure. You can swing by after you've got your groceries, and I'll be ready. I'll put out food for Nessie.

As though summoned, an adorable small black Scottish Fold cat hops up, insisting on attention. She looks small enough to be a kitten, but she's just small, with wide mischievous green eyes.

KATHLEEN

(caressing the cat)

Hey Nessie girl.

(to Jenny)

I love that name.

JENNY

What else was I gonna call a Scottish Fold cat...?

They smile, and hug, and Jenny walks Kathleen to the door.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

INTERIOR: JENNY'S APARTMENT BEDROOM, SLIGHTLY LATER

Jenny relaxes on the sofa, Nessie curled up nearby. Suddenly Jenny turns when she hears a soft voice.

NATHAN

Jenny.

Sleepily, Jenny looks over to see sitting in the nearby chair her late husband Nathan, still in his 40s-50s.

JENNY

Nathan...?

NATHAN

Hey, how's it goin'...?

JENNY

I've missed you.

NATHAN

Same here.

JENNY

So... should I be worried, or is this just a social call...?

NATHAN

I don't think "worried" is the right word, love. Hey there li'l Nessie...!

Nessie has awakened and is staring intently at Nathan.

JENNY

Wait, the Cat Distribution System brought Nessie to me after you passed.

NATHAN

I stop by now and then to check on you on occasion. Nessie has been the only one to see me. I'm surprised none of the coven has Seen me, particularly Rowan, though I'm pretty sure she can Sense something when I've visited.

JENNY

Rowan's strong psychism and clairvoyance comes in handy on our paranormal investigations. I guess brief Visits from you might not qualify as proper hauntings.

NATHAN

That would make sense.

JENNY

Is this just a visit... or are you my... Escort?

NATHAN

(after a sad pause)

Escort.

JENNY

(scoffs)

Pfft. Great. And Kathleen was coming to take me to see Paula.

NATHAN

She still is. We'll be gone just before she arrives. Smart move putting Holly in charge of the coven, by the way. She was aways one of our best students.

JENNY

True that.
So... how does this work?
Will it hurt much?

NATHAN

It won't hurt at all.
Remember my Uncle Ed?
It'll pretty much be like that;
as though you just Switched Off.

JENNY

Is the Summerlands as we believe?

NATHAN

(smiling)

No need to believe. It's all true. And I can show you how to visit back here; we can both keep an eye on our loved ones.

They stand, facing each other.

After a moment, they lovingly embrace.

JENNY

(tearfully)

Gods, I've missed you so much, Nathan.

NATHAN

I've missed you too, Jenny. It's great to be back in your arms.

Jenny smiles, a single tear scooting down her cheek. Nessie can be heard crying plaintively.

NATHAN

(staring at Jenny)

It's okay Nessie, when your time comes, the Rainbow Bridge is a real thing. You'll be with Jenny again.

JENNY

I... I guess I'm ready now.

Nathan glances away from Jenny, down at the sofa. Jenny looks, and sees Nessie sitting on the lap of Jenny's body, though Nessie is still looking up at the two standing in front of her..

JENNY

Oh. Well...

(to the cat)

Take care of Kathleen, Nessie.

(takes a deep breath and

exhales)

... Alrighty then...

NATHAN

(tenderly)

You're gonna love the Summerlands. It's almost as beautiful as you.

Jenny smiles.

The apartment door opens, and Kathleen enters the empty apartment. She sees Jenny's body and rushes forward.

KATHLEEN

Oh no no no...

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

INTERIOR: KATHLEEN'S HOME, LIVING ROOM, THE NEXT DAY

Kathleen's husband PHILLIP (40s) is on the phone.

PHILLIP

Okay, thank you so much. Yeah, it definitely is a good thing she had the rent all paid up. We should have her stuff out within a week or so. Cool, thanks again.

Kathleen comes in as Phillip hangs up..

KATHLEEN

How'd it go?

PHILLIP

Well, the management company will refund the prepaid rent beyond this month, and they'll keep the deposit to cover cleaning and such so they can rent out the place. I spoke with Tom and Bill, we should have the place cleared out within the week.

How's the coven taking it?

KATHLEEN

They should be over the shock of it soon enough. What sucks is how unexpected it was. I mean, she was at the doctor's That Day. You'd think they'd have caught something.

PHILLIP

It's almost like my Dad. They thought his feeling weak and poorly was due to the bronchitis from the previous week, unaware of the start of his aneurism: took him out twelve hours later.

KATHLEEN

Well, at least Mom'll be helping the world be a little greener.

PHILLIP

Not sure I'd want to be thought of as compost.

KATHLEEN

I guess it's better than Edgar Allen Poe level "food for worms" references an'all...

PHILLIP

I guess. At least the funeral is set. With your mom not being embalmed, she has to be buried relatively quickly.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

EXTERIOR: CEMETERY, AFTERNOON

The coven is in attendance, along with a few spouses. The ladies are dressed in regular funeral attire, but about their waists are the colourful cords, each with various small medals with such, the cords subtly signifying to fellow neo-pagans their being members of a witch's coven. Wearing black robes, a high ranking member of the pagan community stands as officiant.

OFFICIANT

Reunited with her husband, our beloved Jenny is now at peace in the Summerlands, as she makes one final contribution to Gaia, Mother Earth, and nature. May we each remember to visit here now and then to see the progress of the tree her remains will birth and nourish. Understandably, Jenny's coven and the pagan community at large will miss her terribly, until it is each of our own time to move on as well. May Jenny's gods and goddesses care for her always. Blessed Be...

CONGREGATION

Blessed Be...

OFFICIANT

The Circle is open...

CONGREGATION

... but never broken.

ALL

Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again.

The gathering relaxes, breaking ranks, as it were. Each toss a handful of sod into the hole. Kathleen and Phillip's adorable six or seven year old daughter PAULA tugs at Phillip's pants, as she points.

PAULA

Daddy, who's that...?

Kathleen and Phillip squint. Several yards away is a car, next to which stands CHARLES GREY, a man in his 50s, wearing a trenchcoat. As Phillip and Kathleen speak, he approaches.

PHILLIP

Don't tell me it's some Bible thumper here to make trouble.

KATHLEEN

No I think... I'm pretty sure that's... Charles.

PHILLIP

Your mom's landlord? Y'think he's here to pay his respects?

KATHLEEN

I dunno; he's never struck me as the sympathetic type.

Charles is close enough to speak, and he extends his hand.

CHARLES

My condolences on your loss.

Phillip, then Kathleen, each shake his hand.

KATHLEEN

(warily)

Thank you, and thanks for coming. I'm sure it'd mean a lot to Mom.

CHARLES

Do you know the results of the autopsy?

Phillip begins to take a step forward, but Kathleen gently takes his arm.

PHILLIP

I'm not sure this is the time or place--

KATHLEEN

From what we can understand, she simply passed away unexpectedly. A great-uncle Ed on my father's side died pretty much the same way. Dad always said it was like Ed simply switched off.

CHARLES

When do you think you'll have the place emptied?

PHILLIP

(struggling to hold back anger)

The bigger furniture and important documents are all out; we just have to box up knicknacks and such. Does it matter? The place is paid up to the end of the month.

CHARLES

Yeah, about that...

Charles hands them a manilla envelope to Kathleen, who opens it.

PHILLIP

What is this?

CHARLES

An invoice for Future Rent.

PHILLIP

What "future rent"...?
I spoke with the management company. They said everything was good to go.

CHARLES

Yes, but you see, Ms. Shelly is in breach of her rental agreement.

PHILLIP

(growly)

How d'y'figure *that*...?

CHARLES

She died before her lease was up. That's months she hasn't paid for.

KATHLEEN

Are you freakin' kidding me?
That's what you're going with?
You'll be laughed out of court!

CHARLES

We'll see about that.

PHILLIP

You know the place can actually be *rented out* once it's cleaned up. That's maybe one month empty while you get it cleaned and maybe repainted.

CHARLES

And an unknown amount of time for someone to actually rent the place.

Kathleen is looking over the paperwork.

KATHLEEN

You're demanding sixteen *thousand* dollars...?!

PHILLIP

Fine. Court it is. You've given your "regards." I suggest you leave Right Now, unless you want more than one body in that hole.

Charles realizes he should probably keep quiet. He turns and heads back towards his car.

PHILLIP

Sixteen thousand. He's insane. Even if we had that amount we could barely hire a lawyer to fight it.

KATHLEEN

Mom had enough that if we're really forced legally to pay it, it can come out of her estate.

PHILLIP

I'd prefer going the court route. It may cost us sixteen but I want it to cost him a hundred.

KATHLEEN

Fran!

Fran hastens over.

FRAN

What's up?

KATHLEEN

Does your paralegal work cover real estate?

FRAN

Not so much, why?

PHILLIP

Jenny's landlord wants to sue for sixteen thousand, claiming Jenny dying is a breach of her lease.

FRAN

Even I don't think it works that way...

KATHLEEN

Do you know anyone you can recommend who might be able to advise us?

FRAN

I'm not sure, but.. we *could* try and contact Jenny, and ask her.

PHILLIP

Contact Jenn--

FRAN

I'm not saying like a "how's it goin' over there?" type contact, but we *can* let her know what's going on. She may have some advice.

KATHLEEN

Hopefully she's even able to communicate this close to having died.

PHILLIP

Wait, you think this'll work?

FRAN

Only one way to find out.

INTERIOR: ELIZABETH'S HOME CELLAR

Holly is leading the Circle. The robed group stand at the circle's perimeter, their eyes closed.

HOLLY

The Work is prepared. The Circle is cleansed; the Quarters are Called; Protections are in place; the cone of power has been raised.

Across the Veil we call to you, Jenny Shelly, beloved High Priestess of this coven.

Speak to us if you can; advise us how to proceed against Charles

Grey: he who would steal so much from you and your kin.

A flash of light comes through the cellar windows, followed by two massive cracks of thunder. The women slightly jump.

PENNY

Wow, that seems a bit on the nose.

KATHLEEN

Mom was always one for theatrics...

Another flash and crack of thunder.

EXTERIOR: CEMETERY, SIMULTANEOUS

Jenny's grave shifts and rises, beginning to breach.

INTERIOR: CHARLES' HOME OFFICE, SIMULTANEOUS

Charles is working at a desk, startled by a thunderclap.

INTERIOR: ELIZABETH'S HOME CELLAR, CONTINUOUS

More lightning and thunderclaps. The women almost have to shout to each other over the din.

FRAN

I can't tell; is this real thunder, or Jenny, trying to communicate...?

KATHLEEN

Rowan, are you getting anything...?

ROWAN

Not yet, but I *can* tell... this isn't the weather of the world.

PENNY

If she's referencing movie-Gandalf, that might mean Jenny is nearby.

ELIZABETH

Or at least she might be hearing us and understanding the situation...

The thunder stops. The women all glance at each other in the now deafening silence.

PENNY

Is that it?

HOLLY

It may have been a good first attempt. We can convene again tomorrow, if everyone's available.

ELIZABETH

I'm up for it.

KATHLEEN

Okay, let's call it for tonight. Let's close down the Circle...

The women stand up and prepare to release the Circle.

INTERIOR: CHARLES' HOME OFFICE, SLIGHTLY LATER

There is a squeak as the outer door opens.

At his desk, Charles looks up, a bit concerned. Has someone broken in? Charles cautiously opens his office door to the outer area of his offices.

He looks around, and finds the exterior door slightly ajar. He walks over and closes it, then looks down, noting the floor. There are dirty bare footprints on the floor. His eyes follow the trail, that lead back into his office. From the doorway he looks inside. It seems clear. Charles steps inside. He sees a green check sitting on the front of his desk. Curious, he reaches to pick it up as the open office door behind him swings shut.

Charles turns and finds himself face to face with Jenny, mostly covered in fresh soil, her dead eyes a milky white, sunken into her pale, drawn-back skin-tight face.

Before he can even cry out, Jenny's reaches out quickly,

Before he can even cry out, Jenny's reaches out quickly, grabbing him by the throat, effortlessly pushing Charles back, up against the desk.

In absolute terror, his eyes as wide as they can go, Charles grabs at Jenny's wrist but her arm is unyielding, holding him fast. Wanting to scream, Charles can barely vocalize. With her free hand, Jenny reaches forward and grabs the check from the desk, stuffing it into Charles' mouth. A nightmare-fuel rasp emerges from her cracked, blue lips.

JENNY

Paid in full. You *will* leave my family alone. For what you have done, you will learn True Karma...

Jenny casually tosses Charles to the side onto the floor. Clutching at his own throat, he is unable to remove the paper from his mouth as he weeps and screams, and even though Jenny is no longer there, Charles cannot stop his muffled screaming.

The front office door slowly closes, the tracks of dirt fade away, leaving a clean floor.

INTERIOR: KATHLEEN'S HOME, MASTER BEDROOM, NEXT MORNING

Kathleen wakes up, still a bit tired from the previous evening's events. She rises from the empty bed, tossing on a bathrobe and heads downstairs.

INTERIOR: KATHLEEN'S HOME, LIVING ROOM, CONTINUOUS

Kathleen is distracted, seeing one of the few bankers boxes along the wall, one of which having its lid partially open. She goes to it and examines its contents as Phillip enters from the kitchen.

PHILLIP

Hey, how did it go last night?

More than we expected, less than we'd hoped for. Why is this box open?

PHILLIP

I dunno. It was closed when I went to bed last night.

KATHLEEN

It's Mom's banking stuff. It's like someone was looking over her checkbook.

There's a knock at the door. Kathleen and Phillip glance at each other. They both open the main door, leaving closed the locked heavy metal outer screen door. Outside stand two uniformed police officers, and a police detective in a suit. Kathleen and Phillip do not speak.

DETECTIVE

Uh, hi... hello?

Kathleen and Phillip remain silent, waiting.

DETECTIVE

Can you come outside for a minute?

Kathleen and Phillip are too well informed.

KATHLEEN

Why would we come outside?

DETECTIVE

We just want to talk.

PHILLIP

There are three of you. Talk to each other.

DETECTIVE

Look, I'm not here to cause any trouble. I just want to know about Jenny Shelly. Is she here?

KATHLEEN

My mother died on Tuesday. She was buried two days ago.

DETECTIVE

Do you have a death certificate?

PHILLIP

You mean the one that should easily be searchable and findable in your databases?

DETECTIVE

Why're you being so hostile?

Sorry, we have no way of knowing if you're good cops or bad cops, and we as well as friends have had some unpleasant experience with some of the bad ones.

DETECTIVE

Do you know a Charles Grey at least?

KATHLEEN

My late mother's landlord? What about him?

DETECTIVE

Something happened to him, and we're trying to find out what.

KATHLEEN

So why are you *here*...?

DETECTIVE

(evasively)

I can't get into specific details --

Kathleen and Phillip back up and start to close the door.

DETECTIVE

(almost desperate)

Wait wait wait!

The door slowly opens again; Kathleen and Phillip say nothing.

DETECTIVE

Gray was found this morning at his office, screaming and babbling incoherently. It's like... it's like his mind's been broken. He's been hospitalized.

With confused expressions, Kathleen and Phillip stare at them silently, waiting for the other shoe to drop.

DETECTIVE

There was a check made out for sixteen thousand dollars, hand signed by Jenny Shelly. It was crumpled up and lodged in his mouth.

KATHLEEN

If it's a check she wrote before she died, why would he put it in his mouth?

DETECTIVE

The check was dated... today.

Good luck. I can assure you there is not a thing we can do to assist your investigation, even if we wanted to. Have a nice day.

DETECTIVE

Are you sure you can't--

KATHLEEN

If you come back with a valid warrant I'll talk with you. Come back with a fake or flawed warrant and I'll have Internal Affairs and the local news on you before I even call our attorney.

They close the door. The Detective looks defeated, but understands that's as far as he's going to get with them.

Inside, Kathleen and Phillip look at each other.
Paula walks up, a contented, purring Nessie in her arms.

PAULA

Who cleaned up the mess?

PHILLIP

What mess honey?

PAULA

Last night Grandma Jenny came by, and she tracked dirt right through the house. I told her she might get in trouble making a mess, but she said it was okay, she just had to get something.

KATHLEEN

What did she have to get, Paula?

PAULA

(pointing)

I dunno. She got something out of that box over there. She pulled out a piece of paper and wrote on it, and left. I think she has a cold; her voice was deep and scratchy.

Kathleen and Phillip look at each other, slightly horrified.

EXTERIOR: CEMETERY, AFTERNOON

Kathleen, Phillip, and Paula, along with the female coven members, stand at Jenny's grave, at which it is clear something clawed its way out... and later crawled its way back in.

Holly steps forward and with her shoe gently tamps down the grass respectfully so it's flat again.

HOLLY

Guess she heard us.

KATHLEEN

Blessed be, Mom.

EVERYONE ELSE

Blessed Be.

Paula turns and sees Jenny and Nathan a few yards away smiling at them. The two are wearing white robes, with witches cords around their respective waists.

Paula tugs at her parents' clothes.

PHILLIP

Yes honey, what is it?

PAULA

Isn't that Grandpa Nathan, from the photos?

The group turns, looking around.

ROWAN

(seeing them)

Oh my gods...!

KATHLEEN

What? What is it?

ROWAN

I... I can see Jenny. Paula's right; Nathan is with her.

Kathleen puts her hands up to her mouth in shock and surprise.

Paula merrily waves to her smiling grandparents, who wave back.

Jenny seems to be calling out something to them, but it's silent.

ROWAN

Crap, Jenny's saying something but I can't make out what.

PAULA

Really? She said, "I'll always be watching over you."

ROWAN

You can hear her, Paula?

PAULA

Sure. She sounds like she's gotten over her cold too. She said that Rowan needs to teach me how to "Keep Seeing"...?

ROWAN

(loudly, to Jenny)

I'll do that, Jenny! I think she's probably more talented than me!

Jenny gives her two thumbs up as she and Nathan fade away.

PAULA

Whoa, that was Cool!

(to Rowan)

Are they aboard the Enterprise now?

ROWAN

Not exactly, but you're right, that was way cool.

Phillip is hugging Kathleen who is gently crying.

HOLLY

It's okay, Kathleen. I doubt that's the last time Jenny visits.
After all, we're all her family.

The group head away from the grave, as we rise up above them watching them depart.

FADE TO BLACK ROLL CREDITS

POST CREDITS BONUS SCENE INTERIOR: PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

Charles sits in the corner of a stereotypical padded cell, breathing heavily. He slowly rises to his feet, seeming to have calmed down. He uses the wall to make his way to the door. Suddenly a voice behind him causes him to spin around.

JENNY

Hey Charles; rent out my place yet...?

On seeing her, Charles loses his mind (a bit more), shrieking and crying, collapsing onto the floor weeping. After a moment, Nathan steps out from behind Jenny. He glances down at Charles.

NATHAN

(to Jenny)

Y'see? I always knew I was smart never to get on your bad side...

SMASH CUT TO BLACK