

The Breach

Synopsis

The Breach deals with the relationship between two women; one Jewish (Sharon), the other Catholic (Cathy) whose friendship is tested by a careless remark. The play takes us from kindergarten, through middle school, high school, and college during which time they maintain a close, personal friendship. However, as adults, when Cathy remarks that a particular store owner “tried to Jew me” their relationship suffers severe strain. Still, they agree to meet annually for lunch where they review events of the past year. One year, however, Cathy doesn’t arrive as she had passed away unbeknownst to Sharon. At her grave Sharon feels deep remorse as she comes to realize what a great friend Cathy had been.

Cast of Characters

Cathy Doople	Holy Communion guests
Sharon Rosen	Bas Mitzvah guests
Mrs. Doople	Bill Haggarty
Gus Doople	Miss Eberstadt
Florence Rosen	Miss Ferguson
Irv Rosen	Master of Ceremonies
Eric	

Two families stand apart. Stage right is Cathy Doople and her parents. Stage left is Sharon Rosen and her parents. The daughters stand between the parents. They are pre-teens. Mrs. Rosen and Mr. Doople hold newspapers. Cathy and Sharon step out from her parents.

Sharon: *(to Cathy)* When did we meet? Do you remember?

Cathy: *(to Sharon)* Of course. We were playing jump rope in the schoolyard. We did Double Dutch. We were good!

Sharon: You sure?

Cathy: Positive. Anyway, it doesn't matter. You're my best friend and I hope we stay friends till the day I die.

Cathy and Sharon return to their families. Irv and Gus meet center stage.

Irv: How's the tailor shop?

Gus: Good. People seem to be buying more suits these days. How's the deli?

Irv: Excellent. Lunch has really picked up since that office building opened.

Gus: Glad to hear it.

Irv: Gus, I have something to tell you.

Gus: What?

Irv: This morning when I went outside, I was covered with snow.

Gus: Snow? What's snow?

Irv: Nothing. What's new with you?

Irv laughs uproariously while Gus looks at him emotionless. They return to their families.

Florence opens the newspaper and shows Irv a story.

Florence: (to Irv) Did you read what's happening in Montgomery, Alabama? There's this Negro woman, Rosa Parks, who refused to give up her seat on a bus and now there's a bus boycott. A young preacher's leading it. His name's Martin Luther King. He looks like someone we should pay attention to.

Irv: Good ol' Marty King.

Florence: Marty King. What, everyone's Jewish by you?

Gus shows the newspaper to his wife.

Gus: Did you read this story about a Martin Luther King? He's some kind of agitator, probably getting instructions from Moscow. We need to keep an eye on him.

Mrs. Doople: Whatever you say, dear.

Gus: By the way, why does Cathy need a Jew friend? I don't like it. There are many good Catholic boys and girls right on our street. (to Cathy) I don't want you playing with that Sharon Rosen anymore.

Cathy: Why?

Gus: Just do as I say.

Cathy turns to her mother.

Cathy: Mom, she's my friend.

Mrs. Doople looks directly at Gus then turns to Cathy.

Mrs. Doople: You can be friends with whoever you like.

Cathy smiles broadly. Eberstadt stands before Cathy and Sharon who sit on the floor.

Eberstadt: Okay, children, I'm going to divide you into two reading groups. If you remember you took a little test last month to see how well you read and based on that test I created two groups-the Tigers and the Bears. Listen for your name. First, the Tigers: Nancy Donahue, Jim Hogan, Ann Porter, Sharon Rosen, and Tom Baker, Next, the Bears: Rosemary Devine, Patrick Rush, Tom Karr, Cathy Doople, and Doris Cook.

Sharon and Cathy look at each other mouths agape. Cathy starts to cry.

Eberstadt: Cathy, what's wrong?

Cathy: I want to be in Sharon's group.

Eberstadt: You will but I need to help you with your reading.

Cathy: I want to be in Sharon's group now!

Sharon: Miss Eberstadt, I can help Cathy.

Cathy continues crying. Eberstadt can see the great affection they have for each other.

Eberstadt: Okay.

Eberstadt returns to Irv. Cathy and Sharon meet center stage.

Sharon: I wish we were in the same class.

Cathy: I know. I never get to see you anymore.

Sharon: I have an idea. At 2 o'clock you say you have to go to the bathroom. I'll say I need the bathroom. Then we can meet in the bathroom.

Cathy: Good idea.

Sharon and Cathy sit on the floor. Miss Gordon enters and stands near Sharon. Miss Ferguson enters and stands near Cathy. Both Sharon and Cathy look up at a clock and raise their hands.

Gordon: Yes, Sharon?

Sharon: Miss Gordon, may I use the bathroom?

Gordon: Hurry back.

Sharon stands and walks to the side.

Ferguson: Yes, Cathy?

Cathy: Miss Ferguson, may I use the bathroom?

Ferguson: Is it necessary?

Cathy: Oh, yes. It's an emergency.

Ferguson: Hurry back.

Cathy and Sharon meet and hug each other. Suddenly they turn to their respective teachers who figured out the ruse. The girls appear shocked. The girls sit on the floor looking at a television.

Sharon: I'm so excited. Who's your favorite Beatle?

Cathy: I like George.

Sharon: George? How can you like George? He's so quiet.

Cathy: Who do you like?

Sharon: You know, Paul. Look in my bedroom. That's all you see-pictures of Paul.
What's your favorite song?

Cathy: *She Loves Me.*

Sharon: Oh, my God! Oh, my God! I can't believe it.

Cathy: What?

Sharon: Song's called *She Loves You* not *She Loves Me*. Oh, my God! You are like
the number one stupidest girl in the whole world.

Cathy: I'm sorry.

Sharon: How you not know *She Loves You*? The whole world knows *She Loves You*.

Cathy: Can we please watch the show? It's almost on.

Sharon: Oh, my God.

Cathy: Why?

Sharon: He found out I was smoking and now I'm grounded.

Cathy: How'd he find out?

Sharon: A neighbor saw me smoking in Bruce Wexler's car and told him. We were gonna see *Easy Rider* this weekend and now I have to break the date. I hate him so much.

Cathy: It's only a weekend, not so long.

Sharon: Yeah, you're right.

Sharon and Cathy walk from each other then turn and meet. Sharon holds a paper.

Sharon: Can you believe I got a 79 on a science test? I would have gotten an 80 except I forgot to write my name and Kamerman took off a point! I need the 80 to make Honor Roll.

Cathy: If I got 79 my parents would have a party.

Sharon: I forget to write my name and now my whole life is ruined. How am I gonna get into college?

Cathy: Did you talk to him?

Sharon: Yeah. He said, *(sarcastic voice)* "Rules are rules."

Cathy: Next time write your name.

Sharon: You're right. Thanks.

Sharon tidies up her apartment. There are candles, incense, ashtrays, on various pieces of furniture. She is in full hippie regalia. There's a knock on the door.

Sharon: Come in.

Cathy enters wearing a conservative blouse and skirt.

Cathy!

They hug.

Welcome to Penn State. Any trouble getting here?

Cathy: No, it was easy.

So glad to see you. There's so much going on- rock concerts, flea markets-perfect time. You're staying here of course.

Cathy: Are you sure? My father gave me money for a hotel.

Sharon: No way. You're staying right here. You can use my bed. I have a futon.

Cathy: Thanks. You have a Catholic church I hope. I need to go to mass in the morning.

Sharon: There's one not far from here. I'll show it to you later. Listen, I got big news-tomorrow we're having an anti-war rally. Guess who's coming? Abbie Hoffman! He was one of the Chicago Eight. I'm sure you know Nixon started bombing Cambodia.

Cathy: I know.

Sharon: So you'll come.

Cathy: Sharon, I have to tell you something.

Sharon: What?

Cathy: I support the war.

Sharon: What?

Cathy: I support the war. I feel if we don't stop communism, we'll be fighting them on the beaches of California.

Sharon: How they gonna get here-in bathtubs? They don't have a navy.

Cathy: It doesn't matter. I can't be against the war. My cousin Tommy's in Vietnam and I don't want anything to happen to him.

Sharon: Just go with me, okay? You don't have to cheer or anything.

Cathy: *(pause)* Alright.

Sharon: And you can't be wearing these clothes. It's 1970. Would you mind looking a little hip? Do you wear jeans?

Cathy: Of course, I wear jeans. What do you think, I'm square or something?

Sharon: I won't answer that.

Sharon looks in her closet and takes out a pair of jeans.

Here, try these on.

Cathy: Where?

Sharon: Here, it's just me. *(pause)* Alright, go in the bedroom.

Cathy exits while Sharon looks for a top. Cathy returns wearing the jeans.

Wow, you look great!

Cathy: Really?

Sharon: Such a beautiful body going to waste. Here, try this.

Sharon gives her a tie-dye top.

Put it on. Here. No one's looking.

Cathy takes off her blouse and puts on the top.

Now some beads.

Cathy puts beads around her neck.

And a hat.

Cathy puts on the hat.

There you are- a 100% certified freak.

Cathy: A what?

Sharon: A freak, a hippie. Freak's another name for hippie. Now say, "Far out, man!"

Cathy: Far out, man!

Sharon: And flash the peace sign when you say it, like this.

Sharon flashes the peace sign.

Sharon: Far out, man!

Cathy flashes the peace sign.

Cathy: Far out, man!

Sharon: Groovy, man!

Cathy: Groovy, man!

Sharon: Right on, man!

Cathy: Right on, man! Okay?

Sharon: Perfect.

There's a knock on the door.

Who is it?

Eric: Eric.

Sharon: One minute.

Sharon tidies up then opens the door. Eric, a student, enters. He has long hair, wears jeans and a T-shirt.

Eric: Who's this?

Sharon: This is my friend, Cathy, from Philadelphia.

Eric: How are you?

Cathy: Good.

Eric: Do you smoke?

Cathy: Sorry, no.

Eric: Too bad. Got some good stuff. *(to Sharon)* You wanna smoke?

Sharon: Sure.

Eric sits and rolls a marijuana cigarette.

Cathy: Sharon, remember the time your father grounded you for smoking?

Sharon: This is not that kind of cigarette.

Cathy: What do you mean?

Sharon takes the cigarette from Eric, lights it with a lighter, and inhales.

Oh, my God! Sharon, you've really changed.

Blackout.

Sharon and Cathy meet center stage. Cathy carries a bag containing a blouse.

Cathy: Sharon, you won't believe what happened. I need a blouse for work so I went to Weinberg's to see what they got. Weinberg shows me one for \$11.99 which I think is high so I go across the street to Sullivan's and I see the same blouse! Here, look.

Cathy takes the blouse out of the bag and shows it to Sharon.

Guess how much? \$8.99- three dollars cheaper! Can you believe Weinberg tried to Jew me like that?

Sharon is shocked.

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean it.

Sharon: I have to go.

Cathy: Please, I didn't mean it. It just came out. I'm sorry.

Cathy grabs Sharon's arm.

Sharon!

Sharon: Please, let go.

Cathy lets go of Sharon's arm. Sharon exits.

Cathy: I'll call you later.

Cathy stands forlorn. She approaches her father who sits reading a newspaper.

Cathy: Dad, I did something terrible today.

Gus: What happened?

Cathy: I showed Sharon my new blouse and said Weinberg tried to Jew me.

Gus: So, what's the problem?

Cathy: You can't say that.

Gus: Say what-that Weinberg tried to Jew you? That's what they do-cheat you any way they can.

Cathy: You can't say those things. I hurt her and now I think maybe I lost a friend.

Gus: Best news I've had in years. You don't remember, you were too young, how your mother and I fought over you having a Jew for a friend but your mother insisted so I gave in. Now Sharon's angry? Fine, you don't need her. I don't know why you wanted a Jew for a friend in the first place.

Cathy: I was in kindergarten. I didn't know anything about religion.

Gus: Well, now you know. And let me tell you something. I don't care what the Pope said- they killed our Lord. Never forget that.

Barbara walks passed her father who sits reading a newspaper.

Irv: Hey, not even hello?

Barbara stops.

Barbara: Hi.

Irv: What's the matter? You look upset.

Barbara: I had a fight with Cathy.

Irv: What happened?

Barbara: She showed me a blouse she got at Sullivan's then said she first went to Weinberg's but "He tried to Jew me."

Irv: Huh, what I say? This is how they feel, how they think. It's in the blood. They can't even help it. Now you know- you can't be friends with the goyim. Look, you're leaving for med school next week. I'm sure you can find someone who's a good friend *and* Jewish. Look, I'm not saying she's not a nice girl. I've always liked her but you see they're different. Make friends with Jews. You'll be happier.

Cathy picks up and phone. Irv answers. Sharon stands near Irv.

Cathy: Hello, Mr. Rosen. It's Cathy. Can I speak to Sharon please?

Irv: I'm sorry, she's not here right now.

Cathy: Do you know when she'll be back?

Irv: I can't say.

Cathy: Please tell her I called.

Irv: I will.

Sharon opens an envelope, takes out a letter, and looks at it as Cathy reads.

Cathy: Dear Sharon, Words cannot express how sorry I am for what I said. I knew it was wrong the moment I said it. You know I would never say anything to hurt you or say anything wrong about your religion. After all, Jesus was Jewish. I hope you will forgive me so we can be friends like we've always been. Love, Cathy.

Sharon crumbles the letter into a ball and throws it into a trash can. Cathy stands outside as Irv and Sharon see her.

Irv: You have to speak to her. I can't have her standing outside every day. It makes your mother nervous.

Sharon: Alright.

Sharon and Cathy meet center stage.

You can't be standing here. It makes my parents nervous.

Cathy: What can I do? I've called a hundred times. I even wrote a letter. What else can I do?

Sharon: Nothing. I can't be your friend.

Cathy: How can you say that?

Sharon: You hurt me.

Cathy: I'm sorry. It just came out.

Sharon: It didn't just come out. It's how you feel.

Cathy: It's not. I would never hurt you.

Sharon: But you did.

Cathy: I said I'm sorry. Can't you accept that?

Sharon: No.

Cathy: Sharon, we've been friends since kindergarten. You just can't throw it all away. Come on.

Sharon: No! Now please leave.

Cathy: You can't mean that.

Sharon: You wanna see?

Cathy: Sharon!

Cathy tries to hug her. Sharon pushes her away.

Sharon: Get off of me! Now leave before I call the authorities.

Cathy looks at Sharon, turns, then slowly walks away as Sharon watches.

Sharon: Wait.

Cathy turns as Sharon approaches.

Sharon: What day is today?

Cathy: Tuesday.

Sharon: The date.

Cathy: August 23.

Sharon: Here's what I'll do. I'll meet you every August 23 for lunch. We'll meet at Country Diner say around 1 o'clock.

Cathy: What?

Sharon: I said I'll meet you once a year at the diner.

Cathy: Once a year?

Sharon: Yes.

Cathy: That's crazy.

Sharon: Hey, I shouldn't see you at all.

Cathy: What if I have something to tell you?

Sharon: It can wait.

Cathy: I have to wait a whole year to see you?

Sharon: Yes, and don't try to get in touch with me. I'm leaving for med school next week so I'll be busy.

Cathy: Why you being so hard?

Sharon: Tell me now. Yes or no?

Cathy: You should learn to forgive.

Sharon: I'm waiting.

Cathy: *(pause)* Yes.

Sharon and Cathy sit across from each other at a restaurant table.

Sharon: How was your year?

Cathy: I met a man.

Sharon: Who?

Cathy: A friend of my cousin. His name's Jim, Jim Haggerty. We've gone out a few times.

Sharon: You like him?

Cathy: Very much.

Sharon: Is it serious?

Cathy: Could be. Says he'd like a big family. He's an only child.

Sharon: What kind of work does he do?

Cathy: Construction.

Sharon: Lives in Philly?

Cathy: Montgomery County.

Sharon: Does he mention marriage?

Cathy: We've talked about it.

Sharon: And?

Cathy: Just talking. You know, around the edges.

Cathy: How 'bout you? Any love interests?

Sharon: I'm too busy studying and besides I'm not interested in men. I guess you've heard about Women's Liberation.

Cathy: Of course.

Sharon: And?

Cathy: I agree. Women should get the same money men get but I don't feel women need to be so independent. I think a woman can find great happiness with the right man.

Sharon: Guess we have our differences on that one.

Cathy: Don't you ever want to get married, raise a family?

Sharon: Maybe but not now. I just want to be a doctor.

Cathy: I'm sure you will, and a great one. But I also think it's nice to come home to someone who cares about you.

Fade out, fade in. Sharon sits across from Cathy as before. Cathy shows Sharon a ring.

Cathy: I'm getting married!

Sharon: What happened?

Cathy: We had dinner in New Hope and right there in the restaurant he gets on his knees, shows me the ring, and asks me to marry him. Everybody cheered and the restaurant gave us a cake though I think he ordered it ahead of time.

Sharon: Congratulations! I'm so happy for you. When's the wedding?

Cathy: Next April at Mother Mary Redeemer in North Wales. Sharon, please come.
It would mean so much to me.

Sharon: I'd love to, but I can't.

Cathy: Why?

Sharon: You know, the agreement. We only meet in August.

Cathy: But this is my wedding.

Sharon: I'm sorry but we have an agreement.

Cathy: Screw the agreement! It's my wedding- the most important day in my life and you talk about an agreement? If I had three children and you lived in China I'd go to your wedding.

Sharon: If you don't like it this can be our last meeting.

Cathy: How long, Sharon? How long must I suffer for a careless mistake? All year I want to talk to you, tell you what I'm doing and all I get is a lousy few hours in a crummy diner. You know what people tell me? They say I'm a fool. They say if I had any self-respect I'd tell you to go to hell. But I don't. You know why? Because I love you.

Sharon: That's very nice, but a deal's a deal.

Cathy: Damn you, Sharon. Damn you!

Bill enters. Cathy puts on a coat with a suitcase beside her.

Bill: Don't go. It's an eight-hour bus ride. Tell her you moved to Pittsburgh and can't make it.

Cathy: Bill, I'm going. We meet every year and I promised to be there.

Bill: It's ridiculous. Just call and tell her you can't make it. She'll understand.

Cathy: I can't.

Bill: Why?

Cathy: I don't have her number.

Bill: What?

Cathy: I don't have her number.

Bill: How can you not have her number?

Cathy: She won't give it to me.

Bill: She won't give it to you? What kind of friend is that? She refused to come to our wedding, won't give you her number, but you persist in seeing her.

Cathy: She's my friend. I may not be her friend but she's *my* friend. Anyway, this may be the last time I see her.

Bill: Don't say that. You don't know.

Car honks.

Cathy: Taxi's here. I'll be back in a few days.

Cathy exits. Cathy and Sharon sit across from each other in the diner.

Sharon: How was the wedding? Tell me everything!

Cathy: I brought pictures.

Cathy opens her handbag and shows Sharon the pictures.

Sharon: Your mom looks good, So that's Bill- looks so handsome in his tux.
Look at the size of that cake! Bring me a piece? *(laughs)*.

Cathy: Finished it all.

Sharon: Some friend.

Cathy: *(hint of sarcasm)* Yeah, some friend.

Sharon: Where'd you go on your honeymoon?

Cathy: Bermuda.

Sharon: Not bad. Only a few hours flight. So, no more Cathy Doople.

Cathy: That's right. From now on I'm Cathy Haggerty!

Sharon: Hope you have a very happy life together.

Cathy: I hope so. *(pause)* Listen, I almost didn't come.

Sharon: Why?

Cathy: We moved.

Sharon: Where?

Cathy: Pittsburgh.

Sharon: Pittsburgh? Why Pittsburgh?

Cathy: Bill found a good job-construction.

Sharon: I remember. How'd you get here?

Cathy: I took the bus.

Sharon: The bus? So much work.

Cathy: It's okay. I wanted to see you.

Sharon: Listen, next time fly. I'll pay.

Cathy: That's very kind, but I'm not sure there'll be a next time.

Sharon: Why?

Cathy: I have some issues.

Sharon: What kind of issues?

Cathy: I'd rather not say until I'm sure.

Sharon: You'll be fine.

Cathy takes a small paper from her pocketbook.

Cathy: Look, here's my number. Call a few days before the 23rd to make sure I'm coming.

Cathy hands Sharon the paper.

Would you mind telling me your number?

Sharon: (pause) I can't.

Fade out. Fade in Sharon stands outside the diner, checks her watch.

Sharon: Looks like I'm early. Guess I have time for a walk.

Young Sharon and Cathy appear as Adult Sharon watches a series of flashbacks.

Sharon: At 2 o'clock you say you need to use the bathroom, and I'll say I need to use the bathroom then we can meet in the bathroom.

Cathy: Good idea.

Young Cathy walks a few steps from young Sharon then returns.

Sharon: What's your favorite Beatle song?

Cathy: *She Loves Me.*

Sharon: Oh, my God!

Cathy: What I say?

Sharon: Song's called *She Loves You*. You are like the number one stupidest girl in the whole world.

Young Sharon and Young Cathy exit. Adult Cathy appears and speaks with Adult Sharon.

Sharon: I hate my father. He caught me smoking and now I'm grounded.

Cathy: It's only a weekend. Not so long.

Sharon: You're right. Thanks.

Adult Cathy walks away then returns.

Sharon: Can you believe I got a 79 on a science test? I would have gotten an 80 except I forgot to write my name and Kamerman took off a point.

Cathy: Next time write your name.

Sharon: You're right. Thanks.

Adult Cathy walks away then returns. She flashes the peace sign as she speaks.

Cathy: Far out, man! Groovy, man! Right on, man! Okay?

Sharon: There you are- a 100% certified freak. Listen, I decided something.

Cathy: What?

Sharon: Today we'll be friends like we always were. I'll visit you in Pittsburgh, meet Bill, and play with your children. We'll go to dinner, all of us maybe take a trip somewhere. Let me get back. I can't wait to tell you.

Sharon enters the diner and takes a seat. She periodically checks her watch, leaves the table then returns continually checking her watch. She looks in her handbag.

Where's her number? Damn, I left it in New York.

After some time, Sharon leaves the table, walks downstage center, kneels, and speaks as if addressing Cathy's stone.

Sharon: Hey, where were you? I waited all day at the diner and you didn't show up. Can't you do anything right? I had something to tell you. I decided to end our meetings and be friends like we always were, but it was too late. I was looking for something we say when a friend dies but I couldn't find anything. The closest I found was this:

Sharon takes a small prayer book from her handbag and reads:

"Her kindness, her patience, her comforting words softened the trails of many a day." Do you know what this is? This is said at the death of a sister. Cathy, I'm so stupid. I am like the number one stupidest girl in the whole world.

Fade to dark.

End of Play

