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Under the Surface

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UNDER THE SURFACE

written by

Tyler Marlow

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Dedication

Thank you Eddie Woeckner, Kaylee Dale, Maddie Kellet, Ailye Edwards, Faith Wool, Miles Ward, Jordan Wagner, Emily McEvoy, Riss Treimer, and Lucy Dunn for bringing this show to life.

Synopsis

Fisher Guy has been living with his dog ever since his sister left for Charm School. His parents died so they have been living alone in their own peaceful existence. Without warning, Fisher Guy is arrested for a murder he didn't commit. Without any evidence to support his claim against the young man, the Sheriff is forced to let him go. Fisher Guy is determined to find the killer and put them behind bars. While investigating, he finds his sister, Elise, and Girly Pop in the town. He teams up with Girly Pop and starts his investigation again when the killer strikes again. This time it's personal for Girly Pop; her ex-boyfriend was the victim. Fisher Guy was arrested again and Girly Pop broke him out of jail. They continue their investigation until the Sheriff is found dead. When the pair check the latest crime scene they find a pair of gloves that Elise always wears. After they confront her, Fisher Guy forms a plan to arrest Elise. They set up a trap and arrest her. The play ends with Elise being taken away by the State Cop.

Cast of Characters

6 male/2 female

*Can be substituted for female actors

FISHER GUY	Lead guy. Younger man that's about 16-17ish. Lives alone with his dog. Loner but a very nice guy. Socially awkward. Kinda attractive. HEAVY southern accent. He wears a straw hat, western shirt, blue jeans, and boots.
GIRLY POP	Love interest. Young girl who's 15-17ish. Super sweet girl. Absolutely stunning. Wears her hair in a braid. Loves horses. Wears a dress, boots, and a cowboy hat. Always wears elbow length gloves.
ELISE	Fisher Guy's older sister. Mid 20's. Very narcissistic. Not extremely attractive but thinks she is. Talks about herself and her opinions a lot. The murderer. Wears a dress, boots, a dainty woman's hat, and elbow length gloves. Always talks in a condescending tone to Girly Pop.
SHERIFF	Girly Pop's dad. Very strict man. Late 40's. Sheriff of the town. Wears a stereotypical sheriff outfit and cowboy hat.
*CORONER	Shows up after every murder. 50s-60s in age. Preferably male. Always wears all black and slightly dressed up. No cowboy hat, but a hat of some sort would be preferred
PICKLES	A smaller dog. Very sweet. The most handsomest weenie boy. Wears a pickle bandana. He will follow Fisher Guy everywhere and appear in almost every scene with him.

*BALD MAN	A bald guy that is in jail with Fisher Guy. Very crazy, needs to have a nervous energy. Should be in an asylum but is not. Wears a prison jumpsuit
*PAPER BOY	Younger looking, delivers bad news to Fisher Guy. Dresses in “Newsies” fashion
*STATE COP	Shows up to arrest Elise, looks like he’d rather be at home with his wife. Very bored demeanor. Wears a police outfit that is still old timey-ish but slightly more modern than the Sheriff’s outfit

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ACT I

Scene 1

Setting: Fisher Guy's House

At Rise: FISHER GUY is sitting in a little wooden boat with PICKLES. They are in a little pond surrounded by bushes. A little house is nearby. FISHER GUY is holding a fishing pole and trying to catch something. Suddenly, he stands up.

FISHER GUY

I've got one!

(He pulls back hard on his fishing rod and up comes a little fish.)

FISHER GUY

You would think that for all that fight it would be a lot bigger, wouldn't you, boy?

(He climbs out of his boat and walks over to his house. He carries his fishing rod and fish. PICKLES follows close behind.)

FISHER GUY

Well, let's get the fire going, Pickles.

(FISHER GUY walks into his house to grab a box of matches and a frying pan. He comes back outside and after several attempts, the fire is lit. FISHER GUY sits on a metal bucket and takes the fish off the hook. He puts the fish in the frying pan and starts to cook it.)

FISHER GUY

At least we caught something.

(FISHER GUY cooks the fish for a while longer before taking it off the fire. He stands up and puts the hot pan on the metal bucket. FISHER GUY and PICKLES go into the house and come back out with a plate after a minute or two. FISHER GUY sits on the frying pan, jumps up, and runs to the pond. After a moment he crawls out and moves the frying pan. He sits on the bucket, gingerly.)

FISHER GUY

Sometimes I wish you would tell me about that, Pickles.

(FISHER GUY eats the fish and tosses little bits to PICKLES. Pause.)

FISHER GUY

Pickles, do you remember Elise?

(PICKLES doesn't look at him and is sniffing the pan.)

FISHER GUY

Of course you don't. You were a puppy when she left us. Sometimes I wonder if she's still in that Charm School. Or if she still cares about me. Maybe she found a husband and has kids. I dunno. It's kinda cruel to leave a kid alone for years and then run off and have kids of your own. I just wish I knew what happened to her, you know? For all I know, she was taken out by that H. H. Holmes feller. She knows where I live, why won't she write? I know I was a pain sometimes, Pickles, but so was she!

(pause)

I dunno, I just don't get it.

(During this, the SHERIFF walks in and looks around. He doesn't see FISHER GUY. SHERIFF isn't looking where he's going and falls into the pond. He yelps, startling FISHER GUY.)

FISHER GUY

Mr. Sheriff, what a pleasant surprise!

SHERIFF

Get me out of here, Fisher Guy!

FISHER GUY

Wow. What happened to "How do you do"? That's mighty rude of you, Mr. Sheriff.

SHERIFF

How do you do. Now get me out, Fisher Guy, I'm warning you…

FISHER GUY

Alright, alright. Jeez, Mr. Sheriff, don't get your panties in a twist. Here, give me your arm.

(The SHERIFF is out of the water by now and is furious. FISHER GUY walks over and peers into the pond. PICKLES follows close behind.)

FISHER GUY

Well look what you've done, Mr. Sheriff! You scared all my fish away! Now what'll I do for fun?

SHERIFF

You and your fish. When are you going to realize that fishing isn't everything?

FISHER GUY

Fishing's not EVERYTHING. Pickles is here too.

(FISHER GUY bends down to pet PICKLES.)

SHERIFF

You can't live alone with your dog forever.

FISHER GUY

(in a very sassy manner)

Oh, but I can.

SHERIFF

Grow up, Fisher Guy. Anyhow, I need to talk to you about something.

FISHER GUY

You've got it, Mr. Sheriff. What's up? You need help catching some sorta criminal or something? Or is that raccoon stuck in your house again?

SHERIFF

Jimmy "Fisher Guy" Taylor, you are under arrest for the murder of our town's detective. You have the right to remain silent, anything you say can and will be used against you in the court of law.

(The SHERIFF has FISHER GUY's hands behind his back and is handcuffing him. FISHER GUY is stunned but doesn't resist. PICKLES stands next to FISHER GUY and the SHERIFF, not understanding what's going on in the slightest.)

FISHER GUY

What're you doing!? I haven't murdered anyone! I don't know what you're talking about! Is this some sort of gag?

SHERIFF

You have a right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you.

FISHER GUY

I've been here all day! With Pickles! Tell him, boy!

(PICKLES doesn't say anything because he is a dog and dogs don't speak English.)

SHERIFF

Right. With Pickles. He can't provide an alibi for you. He's a dog.

FISHER GUY

Bruh.

SHERIFF

Come on, Fisher Guy. Let's go.

FISHER GUY

This is unlawful imprisonment! You're not allowed to do this! I'll have you fired for this!

SHERIFF

I don't think you will.

(FISHER GUY is taken by the SHERIFF. PICKLES follows closely behind.)

SHERIFF

Why's your dog following us?

FISHER GUY

Pickles is trying to help me! He wants you to let me go.

(The SHERIFF rolls his eyes, picks up PICKLES, and carries him in one hand. Despite this, he is gentle with the dog.)

FISHER GUY

You're not holding him right! He doesn't like that!

(The SHERIFF ignores him and drags FISHER GUY off stage.)

Scene 2

Setting: The Jail House

At Rise: FISHER GUY is in a jail cell. There is another one right next to him with an older, balding man. The BALD MAN has a harmonic and is playing a simple tune very poorly. FISHER GUY sits on the floor, covers his ears, and rocks back and forth. PICKLES is nowhere to be seen.

FISHER GUY

Hey, yoo hoo, Mr. Guy. Ummm… Can you play any Johnny Cash?

BALD MAN

I AM JOHNNY CASH!!!

FISHER GUY

…Okay then.

(mumbles to himself)

This guy's crazy.

(The BALD MAN goes back to his harmonica. Pause.)

FISHER GUY

So, what're you in for?

(The BALD MAN sets down his harmonica.)

BALD MAN

I went to the bank because Mama said that's where you get money from. But Daddy says that bad people are in banks sometimes so I brought a gun for protection. So I walked into the bank with my gun out to show I was friendly. When I asked them for some money they got scared and called the police on me!

(a beat)

FISHER GUY

Um… I don't think banks like it when you point guns at them.

BALD MAN

Apparently not. I've been here ever since.

FISHER GUY

Oh… How long's that been?

BALD MAN

I dunno, I can't tell time.

(pause)

What about you? Did you do the same thing?

FISHER GUY

I got accused of killing someone. I didn't though, I swear! I was at home all day with Pickles!

BALD MAN

Pickles? Like the food?

FISHER GUY

No, Pickles is my dog.

BALD MAN

Oooooo, I could go for some pickles right about now. Do you have any on you?

FISHER GUY

No, that's the problem. Pickles can't talk so he can't agree with what I've been saying.

BALD MAN

Of course pickles can't talk. What kind of pickles are you eating?

FISHER GUY

I would never eat Pickles!

BALD MAN

Why wouldn't you eat pickles?! They're delicious! What's wrong with you? You must be some sort of pickle-hating monster.

FISHER GUY

I'm not a monster! I just want him to be okay!

BALD MAN

What do you mean "him"? Pickles aren't he's or she's. They're pickles!

FISHER GUY *(sighs)*

I give up.

(FISHER GUY sits on the floor. A moment passes. The SHERIFF walks in with PICKLES attached to a leash.)

FISHER GUY

Pickles!

BALD MAN

So that's Pickles! Guess you don't want to eat that one. Too much hair.

SHERIFF

Well, Fisher Guy, I've got to let you go. Apparently there's not enough evidence to convict you.

FISHER GUY

That's what I've been telling you! Pickles was with me the whole time! He can testify for me. Right, boy?

(The SHERIFF rolls his eyes.)

SHERIFF

Well, here's your dog. I'm going to pay my respects to our detective and check out the crime scene. It would be good for your image if you came with me.

FISHER GUY

My image?

SHERIFF

Yeah, it's not just me who thinks you killed a member of my staff. A lot of people think so too. If you really want to clear your name, you should come. Show you're sorry, if you really didn't do it.

FISHER GUY

If? What do you mean "if"? I didn't-

BALD MAN

Can I come too? Pretty please!

SHERIFF

No, you should stay here.

BALD MAN

But why? I'll be good! I pinky promise you I will, sir!

(BALD MAN holds out his pinky through the bars of his cell. The SHERIFF rolls his eyes and shakes his head.)

SHERIFF

No.

(He leaves.)

FISHER GUY

Well, Pickles, we may as well go to the detective's crime scene with Mr. Sheriff. Maybe if we go, that'll make people less suspicious, like he said.

BALD MAN

I dunno, fellar, that sounded suspicious in itself.

(FISHER GUY goes to leave.)

BALD MAN

Wait! I should go with you!

(FISHER GUY leaves the jail. The BALD MAN picks up his harmonica.)

BALD MAN

Always the bridesmaid, never the bride.

(BALD MAN starts playing the Bridal March song on his harmonica.)

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Scene 14

Setting: Fisher Guy's House

At Rise: FISHER GUY is sitting in his boat with PICKLES, fishing again. GIRLY POP walks in with a folded-up net.

GIRLY POP

Why'd you pick her house?

FISHER GUY

First of all, it was my house first. Second of all, she would never expect it here! I already checked and she went into town about ten minutes ago. She should be back before long.

GIRLY POP

Where should we put the net? And, wait a second, why are you in your boat?

FISHER GUY

I've been waiting for a while and I wanted to see if I couldn't catch a fish or two before you got here. Nothing's biting though. What kind of net did you get?

GIRLY POP

Just a big fishing net. I figured that would be the easiest to explain. I'll wait on the roof with the net and you hide in the bushes. When she's in the right spot, yell "Now!" and I'll drop the net.

FISHER GUY

Okay. Do you need any help getting onto the roof?

GIRLY POP

No thanks, I've got this.

(She uses the ladder propped up against the house.)

FISHER GUY

You're much better at climbing than my dad was.

(FISHER GUY and PICKLES get out of the boat and hide in the bushes. They aren't waiting for long before ELISE enters with arms full of groceries.)

ELISE

I'm so glad I get to live here alone now that my brother left! Little Fisher Guy was totally roughing it, so I'll have to spruce the place up a bit.

(She steps on the porch.)

FISHER GUY

Now!

(GIRLY POP throws the net and barely misses.)

ELISE

Fisher Guy, what on Earth are you doing?

FISHER GUY

My name's Jimmy. And this is my house and I won't have a murderer living here! I heard what you said after I left with Isla Mae.

ELISE

No, you couldn't have! And even if you did no one would believe you! Where's Girly Pop?

GIRLY POP

Hey, can you please stop calling me that?

ELISE

After all I've done for both of you, this is the thanks I get?

FISHER GUY AND GIRLY POP

Yeah.

ELISE

I won't have this! Get off of my property and never come back and I won't have the Sheriff called on you.

FISHER GUY

Well, you really can't call the Sheriff on us unless you have a Ouija board.

ELISE

I'm tired of your jokes, Jimmy. This is why I left you. You never change and will never grow up!

(During this exchange, GIRLY POP climbed down the ladder and retrieved the net. She unceremoniously drops it on ELISE's head.)

FISHER GUY

Well, well, well, look how the turns have tabled.

GIRLY POP

Isn't the phrase "how the tables have turned?"

FISHER GUY

Yeah, but I like my version better.

ELISE

Girly Pop! Fisher Guy! Why?

GIRLY POP

Because murder is wrong? I thought that part was obvious.

FISHER GUY

Yeah, last time I checked you weren't supposed to run around killing people for no reason.

(ELISE stays silent, fuming. Pause.)

FISHER GUY

What now?

GIRLY POP

Let's take her to jail. I'm sure Clarence would appreciate the company.

(FISHER GUY grabs one shoulder and GIRLY POP grabs the other. They walk away with PICKLES trailing behind.)

Scene 15

Setting: The Jail House

At Rise: ELISE is in a jail cell. Right next to her cell is the BALD MAN's cell.

BALD MAN

Do you like jazz?

ELISE

I don't care for it, no.

BALD MAN

Oh.

(pause)

You're kinda mean.

ELISE

I am not, good sir.

BALD MAN

Yeah, you kinda are. And you're rude too.

ELISE

Sir, I am not rude. You are rude bec-

BALD MAN

Yes you are, you killed Mr. Sheriff. He was so nice to me!

(ELISE stays silent. FISHER GUY and GIRLY POP enter.)

FISHER GUY

Hey, Clarence! How's Elise doing?

BALD MAN

She's being mean to me!

ELISE

I am not, you're being dramatic.

BALD MAN

Nuh-uh! I am not dramatic!

(The BALD MAN tries to do a hair flip. FISHER GUY and GIRLY POP share a look.)

GIRLY POP

Don't worry, she'll be gone soon. The state police are on the way.

BALD MAN

Yay!

ELISE

You shouldn't have arrested me. I did nothing wrong.

FISHER GUY

You killed three people.

ELISE

For good reasons.

FISHER GUY

Like…

ELISE

I killed our only detective so I wouldn't get caught. Then I killed Cooper because he broke Girly- I mean, Isla Mae's heart.

GIRLY POP

We were eleven! Eleven! It was more of a title than anything! And we broke up on a mutual agreement! I told you that!

ELISE

I wanted to help you. And then I killed your dad because he hurt you emotionally.

GIRLY POP

That’s still not a good reason to kill someone! Jeez, what’s wrong with you?

ELISE

There is nothing wrong with me. My actions were perfectly justified.

FISHER GUY

No, they weren’t stop lying to yourself.

BALD MAN

Burnnnnnnnnnn!

GIRLY POP

I don’t really think that was much of a burn.

ELISE

Sir, please see your way out of our conversation.

BALD MAN

I don’t wanna. You see your way out of my conversation.

ELISE

We are in the same conversation.

BALD MAN

Nuh-uh. I would never be in a conversation with a meanie like you.

ELISE

I am not a meanie. You just don't understand my motives.

BALD MAN

Whatever, meanie.

(STATE COP enters.)

STATE COP

Hey kids, where's the sheriff?

FISHER GUY

He's dead.

STATE COP

Oh. He was one of the victims. Right.

(STATE COP lowers his hat.)

STATE COP

I'm sorry.

GIRLY POP

Thanks.

STATE COP

Where's the killer?

FISHER GUY

Right there.

(He points to ELISE. FISHER GUY opens the cell door. STATE COP looks her up and down in a confused way.)

STATE COP

A girl? Are you sure?

FISHER GUY

We're sure alright.

(He shrugs. GIRLY POP glares daggers. The STATE COP notices.)

STATE COP

You're under arrest. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law.

ELISE

Thank you, officer. I was already well aware of my rights.

STATE COP

Alright, let's go, ma'am. You're going away for a long time.

(ELISE and the STATE COP exit.)

FISHER GUY

Well, what now?

GIRLY POP

I don't know.

(pause)

It feels so weird now that my dad and best friend are gone.

FISHER GUY

Yeah, she's my sister too. My door's always open if you ever need anything or just want to talk.

GIRLY POP

Thanks.

(pause)

FISHER GUY

I guess Pickles and I should head home so we can catch something for dinner.

GIRLY POP

Yeah, I should go to my dad's old house and try to live there.

(GIRLY POP goes to leave.)

FISHER GUY

Wait!

(GIRLY POP stops and turns.)

FISHER GUY

Isla… would you… want to get food with me sometime?

GIRLY POP

I like food.

FISHER GUY

Me too!

(GIRLY POP leaves. FISHER GUY picks up PICKLES and hugs him.)



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