



A FISHY TAIL

by Marc Harris

A SMITH SCRIPT

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Cast

CONNIE: A nurturing mother, wearing a summer dress/trousers, aged early forties.

STEVE: A confident man, wearing a shirt/tee shirt and trousers/shorts, aged early fifties.

FRED: An eccentric man, slow speaking, with a Cornish dialect, wearing a long sleeved shirt and trousers, aged early nineties.

ESTIE: A bright girl, wearing a swimming costume, aged nine.

Synopsis

The dramatic rescue of a girl on the Cornish coastline is linked by the account of an elderly man, who has waited to tell a similar story most of his life. Can they both convince those who doubt them, that the incredible events, connected by many decades apart, did really happen?

Setting

A summer's day on a beach in Cornwall.

SFX - Seagulls, waves, distant children playing (continuing throughout the drama.)

Lights.

CONNIE *(Kneeling in the middle of the stage beside Estie, who is lying on her side, motionless and silent. Distraught and shouting out)*
Help, help, please somebody. Help me, help. *(To herself)* I, I can't believe it, I'll never forgive myself. *(To Estie)* Oh, my darling Estie. *(Shouting out again)* Help, help.

STEVE *(Running from downstage right to Connie)* I heard you screaming. Who's this?

CONNIE (*Panicking*) She's, she's my girl, I only turned away for a moment, she was swimming in the sea.

STEVE (*Kneeling over Estie*) Right, let's take a look.

CONNIE I was keeping watch and, and then I found her here.

STEVE She's obviously been washed up with the tide. I need to place her on her back. (*Moving Estie*) How long has she been lying here?

CONNIE I err, don't know, it can't be long. (*Distraught*) Can you do something? Please.

STEVE I'll do everything I can, I promise. I'm Steve. What's her name?

CONNIE Esther. We call her Estie.

STEVE Estie, can you hear me? Can you hear me Estie? (*Pause*) She's stopped breathing.

CONNIE (*Distraught*) Oh, my baby.

FRED (*Walking slowly from downstage left – and standing throughout the scene*) Thought I'd see what the commotion was.

STEVE I'm going to begin CPR. Okay, here we go. (*Said a little quieter 'in the background', lasting for 15 seconds while Connie and Fred speak over Steve*) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

CONNIE (*Taking hold of Estie's hand*) Estie, please, I'm, I'm holding your hand. Can you hear me?

FRED *(In a matter of fact way)* She can't 'ear ya, ya know.

CONNIE *(Starting to cry a little)* Oh no.

FRED 'Ow old's she then?

CONNIE Nine.

FRED Thought she was. *(Pause)* Only nine, poor thing. Looks small for 'er age. She could 'ave swallowed a lot of water. Left 'er on 'er own did ya?

CONNIE *(Stops crying. Angrily)* I did not! Estie, Estie.

(Two breaths given by Steve to Estie, after finishing counting to 30).

STEVE *(Said quickly)* I don't think you're helping here much mate.

FRED I'm not your mate.

STEVE *(As before, said quieter 'in the background', lasting for 15 seconds while Connie and Fred speak over Steve)* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

FRED Mind ya. Looks like 'e knows what 'e's doin'.

CONNIE *(Frustrated and letting go of Estie's hand)* Of course he does. *(Fed up with listening to Fred)* Please, can't you just *(pause)* go away?

FRED It's a public place. Got as much right bein' 'ere as you folk 'ave.

Even more so as I'm born 'n' bred 'ere, boy 'n' man.

CONNIE *(Upset)* Well don't just stand there gawping.

FRED Human nature init? But I'm not gawpin'.

(Two breaths given again by Steve to Estie, after finishing counting to 30).

STEVE *(Said quickly again)* Do me a favour. Make yourself useful and stand in the way of the sun *(said deliberately and overemphasised)*, mate. *(As previously, said while Connie and Fred speak over Steve)* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

FRED Told ya before. I'm not your/

CONNIE *(Assertively)* Yeah, just make yourself useful.

FRED I'll oblige. *(Moving over Estie)* There. Shadow's over the poor thing now.

CONNIE *(Frustrated)* Aaah, you're so infuriating! She has got a name.

FRED Betty, Etty, what's 'er name again?

CONNIE *(Frustrated)* Aaah! It's Estie.

FRED You're not a couple then?

CONNIE No.

FRED 'Cause if ya were, you'd be the oddest couple I'd ever seen.