

Sketches – Prison

<http://www.myfishbites.com/sketches-prison.php>

Set in prison

(One is sitting in a cell looking bored, when Two is thrown in next to him.)

One - Morning

Two - Morning

(Awkward silence, finally...)

One - How's the weather?

Two - What?

One - Just wondered if it was a nice day?

Two - We're stuck in a dark, cramped cell and you're concerned about the weather!

One - I haven't been outside for a while

Two - Right. It's ok at the moment, but the Met office said it'll rain later, and they're always right...

One - That's good. I'd hate to be locked up if the sun was shining. If it's going to be rain I think I'd almost prefer to be here. How long you in for?

Two - They think I'll be here for 10 years, but I'll be gone by next week... the Attorney General says I have an airtight case!

One - So, what are you in for?

Two - I'm the victim of an unfortunate circumstance

One - What unfortunate circumstance?

Two - I got caught! **(laughs)**

One - That's not unfortunate... that's incompetent

Two - Oh yeah right, you're obviously so good at avoiding the long arm of the law! Anyway, I had this fantastic scam going on!

One - **(Sarcastic)** Really?

Two - Yeah, it was awesome! You know there's been this whole religious craze going on since the Jesus-tomb-fish breakfast thing? Well, I says to myself, "Theo", my name's Theophilus by the way, "Theo, there's many a denarius just waiting to be made by a clever, sharp-witted, handsome entrepreneur like yourself!" So, you know what I did?

One - No, but I bet your going to tell me!

Two - I set myself up as a god-maker!

One - **(Pause)** A god-maker?!

Two - Exactly. Think about it... if the son of a carpenter can be God, then why couldn't I convince people that God can take any form?

One - So, what did you do?

Two - I started off in Athens. The Greeks have loads of gods anyway and I figured no-one would notice a few more. So I traded in my donkey for a toga and started chatting with the Greek philosophers. They were so concerned about being proved wrong they just agreed with everything I said. And, here's the crème de la crème of my plan, I even convinced them of the existence of an 'unknown God'! Pure genius!

One - Very clever, I'm sure, but so what?

Two - You're missing the piste de resistance of my scheme!

One - The what?! What are all these random phrases you keep coming out with?

Two - My Roman guard was part of the French invasion team! I picked them up from him. No idea what it means but they make me sound cultured which will get me in with the ladies!

One - Right... Good luck with that! Anyway, you were saying?

Two - Hmmm, where was I? Oh yes, my plan. As soon as I'd convinced the fools that my false gods were real, the rest was easy. People couldn't see the gods so they had to buy special objects to help them worship, and guess who was waiting to sell these objects? That's right... Me!

One - Let's get this straight... you created false gods... convinced people they exist and should be worshipped... then sold them the objects to help them worship the gods which don't exist because you made them up!

Two - Exactly. You design a product, and then create the need for your product!

One - I hate to admit it, but that's pretty smart!

Two - I know. I wish I could take credit for the idea – but it's a concept designed by some American super-corporation called 'Microcamel' or something like that.

One - So what went wrong, how come you ended up here?

Two - **(Sadly)** A case of too much, too soon. I was rich, successful and just way too good-looking! I came to Philippi to party and drank too much. I saw this guy on a donkey... I had an over-ripe mango in my hand... the temptation was just too great. I knocked him clean off and made my getaway on his donkey!

One - What happened?

Two - I was chased by the camel-mounted police, you know, one of those streamlined, aerodynamic, one-humped models? I didn't stand a chance, I wrapped the donkey around a tree and the rest, as they say, is history. But, there was one final twist... the guy I hit... he was only the magistrate who sentenced me! Anyway, how long you got left to serve?

One - 47 years, 9 months, 2 weeks and 5 days to go.

Two - Another 47 years?! How long have you been in here?

One - 52 years, 2 months, 1 week and 2 days.

Two - A hundred year prison sentence?! What did you do, assassinate Caesar?!

One - Our mutual friend, the magistrate said I was a 'political subversive', a menace to society whose mutinous opinions should never be heard by anyone again.

Two - What were these 'mutinous opinions'?

One - That God created everyone equal, that slavery is wrong and everybody should be free.

Two - You were arrested for that?

One - The slave-owners in this town have a lot of power and influence, especially when they own the magistrate. Just last week, we had two new inmates, Paul and Silas, decent types, quite musical really! Anyway, they got stripped and beaten and then thrown in here. Seems like the whole town was against them.

Two - Why, what had they done?

One - in the eyes of the authorities, they committed a most heinous crime, they healed a slave woman possessed by a spirit!

Two - Arrested for making someone well? This place is totally corrupt... I could make a fortune... if I ever get out of here... **(looks around)**... not much chance of that... why is this prison so solid and secure... it looks like it could survive an earthquake!

One - Funny you should say that!

Two - What do you mean?

One - It happened the very first night Paul and Silas were here. I was asleep when suddenly I got woken up by the sound of singing?

Two - Singing?

One - Yep

Two - Here in the prison?

One - Yep

Two - You have been here too long mate! You must be mad to think anyone would be singing in this place... screaming more like!

One - Nope. It was Paul and Silas singing hymns to God and that Jesus you were talking about earlier

Two - Then it's them who's mad! Their God sounds more false than the ones I made up! What kind of a God would abandon good people in this place?

One - But God didn't abandon them – as they sang, we heard this strange rumbling sound in this distance... it grew louder and the building began to shake... all the doors flew open and our chains fell off!

Two - And yet, you're still here! Why didn't you escape? Was it raining or something and you didn't want to get your hair wet!

One - The jailer rushed in. When he saw all the doors were open, he took out his sword and was about to kill himself!

Two - Good!

One - Not for me! I was right next to him. If he'd sliced himself open it would've me who got covered with blood and entrails!

Two - Gross!

One - Totally!

Two - You said 'if'. Why didn't he go through with it?

One - Paul stopped him!

Two - Of course he did... first he heals some dozy bird and annoys the Philippi mafia, then he sings songs to God whilst in prison, then he refuses to escape, then he stops the enemy from killing himself! What's wrong with the fool! Nobody can be that good! **(Bitterly)** Bet, he has perfect white teeth too! So, what happened next?

One - Well, like the rest of us, the jailer was kind of freaked out. But he figured that following Paul and Silas' God was probably a good idea, so he asked them what he needed to do, to be saved. They told him, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.' So he did, and he was!

Two - Just like that?! Accept Jesus, say sorry and get a free ticket to paradise! I'm sorry, I just don't buy it!

One - You don't need to... as you said, it's a free gift, you just have to accept it.

Two - Whatever! Carry on

One - There's not much more to tell, the jailer took Paul and Silas to his home. They baptised him and his family and his wife cooked them a meal.

Two - Now I get it! They get a free meal and a nice bed then disappear leaving you lot to rot here! Very clever

One - They came back!

Two - They what?!

One - Sure, they were here the next morning when the magistrate ordered their release, but Paul was not going to leave quietly.

Two - Why am I not surprised?

One - You see, Paul and Silas are Roman citizens and the Roman authorities would not be happy to find out that they had been beaten and imprisoned without a trial. Paul made the magistrate come down to this squalor and escort Paul and Silas out of here! Excellent!

Two - So what the point of this little episode? To show that if you're on God's side you are free whatever your circumstances?

One - Now you're learning. It also shows that God has the power to break anything that has a hold over his people – he can set you free from anything that is holding you back from living the maxed-out life he has planned for you... By the way, you better hope Paul doesn't go to Athens.

Two - Why not?

One - If I know Paul, he'll use your 'unknown god' to tell people about *his* God. When they realise that this is the One and Only True God, your business will be ruined!

Two - **(Panicking)** I've got to get out of here... now!

One - You could always try singing a hymn!

Two - I only know 'Cwm by i'ar'! (Kum by ya)

One - In that case, my friend, have a seat... you could be here a long time!

END

Sketch by Ben L, 2005.