# The Two Ronnies

*Peter’s miraculous escape from prison from Acts 12.*

*(Cast: Ronnie Corbett as himself; Ronnie Barker as Peter; the angel Gabriel; Rhoda, a servant girl)*

*Scene: Ronnie and Peter are in prison. This is a typical Two Ronnies sketched starting with Ronnie C beginning one of his stories sitting on a chair in his cell and talking to the audience. Peter is his cellmate and starts in the background. This veers between story-telling and drama, with a bit of mime as appropriate at the crossover. Two Ronnies theme music as Ronnie takes his seat.)*

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| Ronnie | And now I want to tell you the story of the time that changed my life. I was a footman *(stands up and acts silver service)* in the palace of King Herod until I was caught red-handed helping myself to the left-overs and sent to the cells – ugh *(shudders)*, cold, damp and dark – well, everyone did it – it would only have gone to waste – but I got a bit careless. I’d been working there for a number of years and had seen some things that no one should have to see. The king was vain, selfish and sadistic with some rather peculiar tastes. Although the Romans held all the real power, they humoured him, and his sense of self-importance went to his head. He obviously thought he was like God, and didn’t see our sniggers behind his back. He had a particular fetish about religious fanatics. I still feel sick when I think about the day I had to bring in the head of John the Baptist to the dinner table on a platter. And then a few years later, he did it again with James, a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. So when Peter, the leader of that sect, was thrown into my prison cell *(Peter is thrown in from backstage and sprawls on the floor)*, I knew what lay ahead of him. *(To Peter)* Well, hello. |
| Peter | Hello. |
| Ronnie | Who are you? |
| Peter | Who are you? |
| Ronnie | And what are you doing in my cell? |
| Peter | It looks like its my cell too now. |
| Ronnie | *(Offers him a hand)* Ronnie. Good to meet you. |
| Peter | *(Takes hand and gets to his feet)* Peter. Good to meet you. |
| Ronnie | Sandwich? |
| Peter | Thanks. What have you got? |
| Ronnie | Fish, fish or fish? |
| Peter | I’ll have fish then. I used to fish. |
| Ronnie | But you don’t any more? |
| Peter | No. I met someone who taught me to fish for men instead. |
| Ronnie | How d’you do that then? |
| Peter | He said, “Cast your net upon the waters.” |
| Ronnie | And then? |
| Peter | “Draw in your nets.” |
| Ronnie | And you find men in them? |
| Peter | Yes. Metaphorically, at least. |
| Ronnie | Metaphorically? |
| Peter | Yes. They’re not real nets. |
| Ronnie | So who taught you this? |
| Peter | Jesus of Nazareth? |
| Ronnie | Jesus of Nazareth. |
| Peter | Yes, Jesus of Nazareth. |
| Ronnie | You mean, you’re a follower of Jesus of Nazareth? |
| Peter | Yes, I’m a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. |
| Ronnie | O-oh! |
| Peter | What do you mean, o-oh? |
| Ronnie | And you’re a prisoner of King Herod. |
| Peter | As you can see. |
| Ronnie | And he’s got a big dinner party tomorrow. |
| Peter | Has he? |
| Ronnie | And you know what he likes to do to religious fanatics at dinner? |
| Peter | I’m not a religious fanatic. |
| Ronnie | Have it your way. But I expect he’s got plans for you. |
| Peter | Plans? |
| Ronnie | John the Baptist? *(makes sign of slit throat)* James? *(makes sign of slit throat)* Next Peter? *(makes sign of slit throat)* |
| Peter | I’m not worried. |
| Ronnie | You’re not worried? |
| Peter | No. |
| Ronnie | How come? |
| Peter | Jesus told me. |
| Ronnie | Told you what? |
| Peter | How I’d die. |
| Ronnie | How you’d die? |
| Peter | Yes, he told me I’d be crucified when I’m old. |
| Ronnie | And you’re not worried? |
| Peter | No. I’m not old yet. |
| Ronnie | How old is old? |
| Peter | I don’t know. But I do know who’s in charge. And it’s not Herod. |
| Ronnie | I wish I was so sure. |
| Peter | You can be. |
| Ronnie | How come? |
| Peter | Ask Jesus into your heart. |
| Ronnie | You mean become his follower? |
| Peter | Yes. |
| Ronnie | When I’m Herod’s prisoner? |
| Peter | Yes. |
| Ronnie | And he’s having a dinner party tomorrow? |
| Peter | Yes. |
| Ronnie | And I won’t be worried? |
| Peter | No. The peace of God will fill you. |
| Ronnie | You really believe that, don’t you? |
| Peter | Yes. |
| Ronnie | So, how’s he going to rescue you? |
| Peter | I don’t know. But he will. And now, if you don’t mind, I’m going to sleep. Good night. *(lies down)* |
| Ronnie | Good night. *(Returns to his stool. Looks round at Peter and shrugs his shoulder. Resumes his story)* And soon he was snoring loudly. |
| Peter | (*Sound of snores)* |
| Ronnie | Well, I was just about to kip down for the night, when the room was filled with light *(lights come on full)*, and I heard a loud whisper. |
| Gabriel | *(appearing in the light)* Psst! Peter! |
| Ronnie | I looked around, but I couldn’t see anyone, it was so bright. And the voice came again. |
| Gabriel | *(urgently)* Peter! Get up! |
| Peter | *(more snores)* |
| Ronnie | *(goes over to Peter and shakes him)* Peter! Wake up! It’s your rescue mission! |
| Peter | *(stirring, rubs his eyes)* What is it? |
| Ronnie | Wake up! It’s your rescue mission! |
| Peter | I must be dreaming. |
| Gabriel | Get up and get dressed. Then follow me. |
| Ronnie | Well, while he was getting dressed, the door of the cell flew open. I looked out, and the guards were fast asleep! |
| Gabriel | Come on, quickly! Follow me! |
| Ronnie | So Peter followed the angel *(acted)*. And I followed Peter *(acted)* – well, I wasn’t going to look a gift horse in the mouth, was I? And every time we approached a door, it flew open and the guards were asleep. And after the fifth door, we were out on the street, and the angel disappeared *(exit Gabriel)*. And we kept walking. |
| Peter | This feels real. I’m cold. |
| Ronnie | It is real. We’re free. Where do we go now? |
| Peter | John’s house. It’s not far. *(They reach the door)* Now, the special code. Dot Dot Dot *(Ronnie knocks three times quickly)* Dash *(Ronnie knocks once separately*) Dot Dot Dot *(Ronnie knocks three time again quickly)* |
| Rhoda | *(behind door)* Who goes there? |
| Peter | Peter. |
| Rhoda | Peter? We’ve been praying for you. *(Runs back to the stairs without opening the door. Calls upstairs)* It’s Peter! It’s a miracle! |
| Peter | Let us in. (*nothing happens*) Let us in. *(Rhoda opens the door a little, looks through, sees Peter, throws the door open and gives him a big hug)* |
| Ronnie | So we went in *(acted)*. There were about a dozen of them in the room, and they were thrilled to see Peter. Peter introduced me, told them to tell the others, and slipped out into the night *(exit Peter)*, leaving me to tell them what had happened. So I started, “Peter went fishing for men, and when he pulled in the net he found me in it.” *(Two Ronnies theme music)* |
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