

JONAH'S FISH LINE

By Rod

This sketch is based on Jonah Chapter 2 – his prayer from the inside of the fish – with reference to events either side in Chapters 1 and 3. Gabriel could either be visible on stage or simply heard from off stage. If on stage he needs a computer screen and a hands-free telephone.

CAST

Jonah Needs to be male

Gabriel Could be male or female (Gabrielle)

Stage is empty. Jonah comes flying on to stage covered in seaweed and fish, etc as if he has just been swallowed by a large fish. He is now inside the fish so is in darkness. He picks himself up, gropes around and then produces a mobile phone from his pocket. He starts to dial. The phone rings.

Gabriel Hello, this is the Prophet Support Line. My name is Gabriel. How may I help you?

Jonah [Distressed] It's me, Jonah. I need help.

G Jonah! It's good to hear from you. Although you are rather faint. It's not a very good line.

J I'm in the main.

G You're on a train? Is that the train to Nineveh?

J No, not on the train. I'm in the main. The Spanish main. I'm in the sea.

G In the sea? What are you doing there? You're supposed to be going to Nineveh. There's no need to go by sea. Didn't you use your satnav?

J I threw it away.

G You did what? Why?

J It was driving me crazy. It kept saying, "You are going in the wrong direction; make a U-turn. You are going in the wrong direction; make a U-turn."

G I'm just bringing up your details on screen. Yes, I see you took a boat from Joppa bound for Spain. That really is in the wrong direction.

J Yes, I feel really guilty about that.

G Why's that Jonah?

J Well, we hit a massive storm – and it was all my fault. I was running away from God and He was angry with me. Because I did this I endangered the lives of the whole ship's company. They're probably all dead now because of me.

G No Jonah, there you are wrong. Actually you did a good job.

J What! How come?

G Well, they've been on the line to us for the first time ever. God is really pleased with you for recruiting some new customers.

J How did that happen?

G Once you persuaded them to throw you overboard the storm stopped. So they then believed your story about running away from God and began to worship Him themselves.

J That's jolly good for them I suppose – but I'm still in trouble. I need rescue. I got chucked into the sea in the middle of a raging storm and then I got swallowed by this great big fish. Can you please send a rescue party?

G There's no need.

J What! You must be joking! Please don't abandon me now. Tell God I'm really sorry for trying to run away from Him. I realise that's impossible anyway; He's the God of the whole world. Please ask Him to come and rescue me.

G There's no need to send a rescue party because we already have.

J Oh! .. Great. When will it arrive?

G It's already arrived.

J Oh, sorry. I couldn't see it because I'm inside this great big fish.

G Look around you, Jonah, and you'll see the rescue party.

J But, it's pitch black.

G OK, *feel* around you.

J [*Feeling around him as if touching sides of fish's belly*] All I can feel is slime – and the inside of a fish.

G That's right.

J I can't feel any rescue party.

G Oh yes you can.

J But all I can feel is this fish [*Realising*] Oh I get it; the rescue party is the fish.

G Well done, Jonah, go to the top of the class.

J That's all very well – but how can I get out of here? It's like being in a tomb. I feel as though I'm already in my grave.

G You know you said you were really sorry about running away from God?

J Yes, I am. I realise now just how powerful He is; He is the one true God.

G Powerful enough to raise someone from the dead?

J [*Thinking*] Well, yes, I guess so. [*More confidently*] I reckon He can do anything He wants to.

G So getting one of his followers out of a fish's stomach shouldn't be a problem...?

J Oh, I see what you're driving at. Yes, I believe He can do even that.

G Are you sure?

J Absolutely, and you can tell Him that, if He gets me out of this smelly fish, I'll follow Him wherever he wants me to go. In fact, I'll do it gladly.

G Excellent. So now hang on Jonah. Get ready for a bumpy ride.

[Jonah is 'vomited forward on to the floor making lots of screaming noises "Whoa", etc. Slowly he gets up. His phone rings. He answers it.]

J Hello.

G Hi there, Jonah, it's Gabriel.

J Oh, hi.

G You should be on the shore now.

J Yes, I am. It's quite a pretty beach actually. *[Excitedly]* It's fantastic. What a feeling! I feel as though I have conquered death.

G That's great to hear, Jonah. *[Slight pause]* Oh, and incidentally, Jonah, – just in case you were not too sure... After all it wouldn't be too surprising if you had become rather disorientated.... The way to Nineveh is to the right.

J Nineveh?

G Yes, Nineveh.

J You mean God still wants me to go to that godless city with all its worthless idols?

G *[As if completing the sentence for him]* Where there are lots of people who need to hear about a powerful God who loves them and can set them free. Just as you were set free from your watery grave.

J *[Pause. Jonah is clearly thinking and deciding.]* And the way to Nineveh is to the right you say?

G To the right. You've got it.

J Okay, here I go. *[Glances and half turns to the left, but then turns purposefully to the right]* Nineveh – here I come! *[Exit to his right determinedly]*

THE END