

THE PLUMB-LINE TEST

By Rod

Based on Amos Chapter 7. To illustrate how a plumb-line may be used to test how vertically straight things are.

CAST

*Jethro Holding a plumb-line. ‘Engineer type’. Knowledgeable.
Amos Has a conker on a string in pocket initially . A bit childish/gormless.
Reuben Walks with stick, bent over to some extent. A bit cynical.*

Jethro on stage. Enter Amos and then Reuben.

Amos Morning , Jethro.

Reuben Ah, morning, Jethro.

Jethro Morning Amos, morning Reuben.

Amos I see you’re ready for a contest.

Jethro What do you mean?

Amos Well, you’ve got your conker on a string. Bet you can’t beat mine – it’s a twenty-fiver. *[Produces conker from pocket]*

Reuben That’s only because you baked it in the oven beforehand.

Amos I did not. I beat those others fair and square.

Reuben Oh yeah, and I’m the Queen of England!

Jethro Oh, no, this is not a conker – it’s a plumb-line.

Amos Oh, that’s a new one on me. I’ve never known someone attach a plum instead of a conker. I am not sure I want to risk ‘my precious’ against that. Plum stones are pretty hard.

Jethro It’s not a plum, it’s a lump of lead.

Amos A lump of lead. Well, why is it called a plumb-line then? That’s daft.

Jethro Well, you’ve heard of plumbers haven’t you?

- Reuben I've heard of them all right. But I've never managed to get hold of one when you need one. Except one's from Poland who don't speak a word of English.
- Jethro Well, plumbers used to work on lead pipes – before they replaced them with plastic ones. And the word for lead in Latin is plumbum.
- Amos Plumbum? Well, I'm not taking on your plumbum – whatever it's called in English, Latin or Polish.
- Jethro I don't want a contest; that's not what plumb-lines are for.
- Amos What are they for then?
- Jethro To see if things are straight.
- Reuben What, like my stick? Is that straight? *[Holds out stick horizontally]*
- Jethro I can't tell.
- Reuben Why not?
- Jethro It's horizontal. The plumb-line only works in the vertical plane.
- Amos Like the jump jet you mean; that was a vertical plane!
- Jethro It only works in the vertical axis – up and down to you and me.
- Reuben How about that then? *[Holds stick vertically]*
- Jethro Let me see. *[Puts plumb-line alongside stick]* It's not far off.
- Amos Can you use it on people? To see if they are upright?
- Jethro I guess you could.
- Amos Try it on me then. *[Stands to attention]*
- Reuben If he's fine, upright and upstanding then I'm a Dutchman.
- Amos How does it look?
- Reuben Pretty good. You're as straight as a pole, Amos.

- Amos Yes, and Van Reuben there is a Dutchman. Go on, Jethro, see how upright he is.
- Jethro OK then. Stand up straight for me Reuben. *[Reuben is bent over stick]*
- Reuben I am standing up straight.
- Amos How is he looking, Jethro?
- Jethro Not too good. I am afraid you have failed the pumb-line test, Reuben.
- Amos Yeah, more like 'doubled up Dutch', eh, Mr Van Reuben?
- Reuben Oh well, I suppose there is one small consolation.
- Jethro What's that then, Reuben?
- Reuben I may be like a doubled up Dutchman, but if he *[Pointing with stick at Amos]* is as straight as a pole – then old 'Amoskwanski' there should know the name of a good plumber.

THE END