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