

# 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 plum-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*