

The Men Upstairs

Lights focus on a man center stage tied to a chair, gagged and blindfolded. He sits perfectly still facing the audience. Pause. As the light seeps in further we can make out AMES. He sits with good posture, in the midst of deep preoccupation with something.

Every now and then he cuts himself a thin slice of an apple with a pocket knife. It appears he is reading some form of newspaper quarterly. Pause.

AMES clears his throat, ruffles the paper, turns the page.

We hear a toilet flush from within the bathroom off to the left. After a moment out comes KELLY fastening his belt. He looks somewhat green around the gills. He takes out a handkerchief and wipes his brow.

Both Ames and Kelly WEAR IDENTICAL SUITS.

AMES

The toilet's backed up.

KELLY

Hmm.

AMES

I said the toilet's backed up.

KELLY

Right - thanks for telling me.

AMES

I just wanted to apologize for not bringing it to your attention earlier.

KELLY

Oh. That's all right.

AMES

I imagine it must've been something awful in there?
Was it hard to-

KELLY

I managed.

AMES

Yes. But no fun for the next fella, huh?

KELLY

Well I make it a point to wash up.

AMES

Yes. **(Pause)** ...You left the water running.

KELLY

I thought it might.. help things along.

AMES

Waste.

KELLY

.....

AMES

I was speaking only in regards to the condition of the toilet.

KELLY

Wasn't there a whadoyoucallit? When you used it-

AMES

No.

KELLY

Really? Because I remember there being-

AMES

There - is - no - plunger.

KELLY

..Maybe there's a backup - in the supply closet..

**(He goes to check supply closet, opens door
revealing various instruments of dubious purposes)**

AMES

A backup plunger?

KELLY

Ya never know. **(Ames looks disapprovingly at Kelly, who closes supply closet, then looks back at Ames)** ...You used the plunger.

AMES
(Defensively)

When?

KELLY

The other day.

AMES

Oh that's right... But then I put it back!

KELLY

..Well, I don't know what to tell you, Ames - other than I didn't bring it home with me. I doubt somebody.. walked off with it - I mean it was thoroughly used.

AMES

..Past it's prime?..

KELLY

These things happen.

AMES

Hmm. (**Pause**) So, if I wanted to have anything to do with the toilet then I may as well forget about it. Hold it in.

KELLY

That would be unhealthy, Ames.

AMES

Oh yes, from the vegetarian.

KELLY

Pescatarian. I eat fish.

AMES

I'm sure you do.

KELLY

You know a man's diet really is his own business. I simply say that if you're going to put something in your mouth... you might as well make it the best.

AMES

I wouldn't contest that..

KELLY

I would never turn my nose up at something that was important to you.

AMES

Are you ready, Kelly?

KELLY

Quite ready.

AMES

(Re: In the bathroom)

What you were doing in there.

KELLY

Oh, just my exercises.

AMES

What sort of exercises?

KELLY

My own personal exercises...I could show you?

(AMES cuts another slice for himself)

AMES

Do they help?

KELLY

They help me.

AMES

That's good - to do what helps. To recognize when one needs help. **(To the Prisoner)** Don't you agree...?

KELLY

Maybe if we removed the gag, you think?
I'd bet he'd like that.

AMES

Lets.
Go ahead,
Remove the gag.

(KELLY removes the gag. The PRISONER continues to sit still now only tied and blindfolded)

AMES

That's better isn't it?

(Silence)