

The Ketchup Bottle

by Tony Devaney Morinelli

CAST:

#1 AND #2

Props: A TABLE AND TWO CHAIRS. TWO PLACE SETTINGS WITH FOOD. A KETCHUP BOTTLE.

Setting: TWO PEOPLE SITTING AT A TABLE: ONE IS TRYING TO EAT, THE OTHER IS SLOWLY TEARING THE LABEL FROM A KETCHUP BOTTLE.

As 1 eats with knife and fork, 1 sees 2.

There are a series of attempts to continue eating, each interrupted by 2 tearing the label from the bottle.

This interaction may go on as long as it can be effectively sustained .

Finally, 1 has had enough.

1. Do you have to do that? *(This line may be attacked either "through the teeth" or with a wild outburst. Try different ways to see which suits the actor.)*

2. Do what?

1. What you're doing.

2. What am I doing?

1. THAT !

2. What "THAT"?

1. THAT! *(Points to the bottle and label)*

Do you have to scrape the label off the ketchup bottle?

2. Why?

1. Because it's annoying that's why?

2. It's only a label.

1. That's not the point. It's annoying?

2. What's annoying about it?

1. Your fingers, like this *(imitates "2's" scratching)* — And the way you stare!

2. Whadda you mean?

1. You go like this *(demonstrates)* and your eyes glaze over like you're on drugs or something.

2. You're nuts you know that.

1. I'm nuts? I'm nuts? You sit there scraping the glue off a ketchup bottle label like you were prying into the secrets of your navel and I'm the one whose nuts!

2. The secrets of my navel? The secrets of my navel! How would such an idea enter any normal person's head. You

are completely warped.

1. You do it to annoy me don't you? You know I like to keep things nice and you just make a mess of them to annoy me.

2. Why is it that everything I do bugs you?

1. That's not true.

2. Yes, it is. You always have something to say about everything I do.
The way I fold my napkin.

1. The way you don't fold your napkin!

2. My sniffles.

1. Your snorting!

2. There's always something you're complaining about.

1. That's not true.

2. Everything I do bugs you.

1. Don't be ridiculous.

2. Remember last week?

1. What last week?

2. The straw.

1. (Flatly) The straw?

2. Yeh, when I showed you that neat trick with the straw.
(2 *demonstrates the trick.*)

You know. You pull off the wrapper so it stays all scrunched up and then put tiny....

1 tiny drops of coke on it.

2, Yeh, and it squiggles like a snake.

1. And makes a mess all over the table!

2. But it's kind of neat, you gotta admit.

1. It's a mess. Coke all over, wet paper stuck to the table.

2. Why can't you just accept me for me, the way I am.

1. We are what we do. You can control those things. You don't have to be a pig.

2. Now I'm a pig!

1. I didn't say you are one, all I said was you don't have to be one.

2. Are you so perfect? All you ever do is complain.

1. It's not complaining. It's constructive criticism.
2. Constructive?
 1. I'm looking out for your welfare.
 2. I think I'm old enough to take care of myself thank you very much!
 1. Well, you're not old enough to sit still at the table.
 2. I was perfectly fine at the table. You're the one who started the fuss. I was minding my own business
 1. Tearing off ketchup bottle labels. How infantile!
 2. "Unless you become as little children"....
 1. Don't quote the bible to me, and anyhow, that's not what it means.
 2. How do you know what it means. Are you a priest or something?
 1. You don't have to be a priest to know that that's not what it means.
 2. Oh, pardon me Mr Biblical Scholar.
 1. Listen to yourself How childish.
 2. Look. I was just sitting here, minding my own business, not bothering anyone...
(Each trying to outdo the other)
 1. ...Tearing off labels from ketchup bottles...
 2. ...perfectly content minding my own business...
 1. sitting right there in my face and making a mess all over the table with all those little bits of paper.
 2. Get over it!
 1. I won't get over it! There's no need to
 2. No need to what? - Complain about every little thing.
 1. I'm not complaining. I'm trying to lead a decent life.
 2. What's life got to do with a ketchup bottle?
 1. Nothing. It's not the bottle it's the label.
 2. The label!?
 1. You know what I mean.
 2. No I don't know what you mean. I don't think you do either.
 1. It's the principle of the thing. Look what you've done.

2. What have I done?

1. Look at the bottle.

2. So?

1. It has no label. How are you supposed to know what's in there?

2. Whadda ya mean what's in there. It's ketchup!

1. But you took the label off

2. So what. It's still ketchup.

1. How am I supposed to know that?

2. Any moron can see that it's ketchup.

1. So I'm a moron!

2. I didn't say you were a moron. I said you can see that it's ketchup!

1. It could be anything in that bottle - hot Tabasco sauce!

2. It's ketchup! You can see it's ketchup! You can tell it's ketchup! It looks like ketchup and it smells like ketchup!

(2 grabs 1's hand and pushes 1's index finger into the bottle.)

Here, stick your finger in it! It tastes like ketchup!

(1 puts finger into the bottle. Brings finger to the mouth and tastes it. Then, enjoying the taste, moves to put the finger back in the bottle for another lick. There is a long pause of disbelief in the part of 2. Then:)

2. Do you have to do that!

1. Do what:?

2. What you're doing.

1. What am I doing?

2. That!

1. That?

2. Your finger!

(1 looks at finger.)

1. I just want to be sure.

2. Sure of what!?

1. Sure of ketchup.

2. Ketchup!? With your finger? You're gonna put your finger back in the bottle after you put it in your mouth?

1. I just wanted to see
2. You're gonna put your germy fingers back in that bottle after they were in your mouth?
1. It won't kill anyone. I'm not sick.
2. How can you do a thing like that? It's revolting. (Lights out.)