

## **“Saturdays at the Sculley’s” – “Kitchen Stories” starring Norwegian actors! 2004, PG, 95 minutes**

### **Major themes:**

- Human nature
- One-upmanship / mind games
- Becoming friends
- Observation vs. interaction

### **Background notes before viewing the film:**

Literal title is “*Psalms from the kitchen.*”

Director Bent Hamer was amused after perusing post-war research books on the efficiency of the Swedish housewife, and pondered on the idea of research being done on men. This led to him making the film *Kitchen Stories*. Interestingly, real studies such as this occurred not only in Sweden, but also in the United States in the 1950s.

A Dalecarlian horse or Dala horse is a traditional carved and painted wooden statuette of a horse originating in the Swedish province of Dalarna. In the old days the Dala horse was mostly used as a toy for children; in modern times it has become a symbol of Dalarna as well as Sweden in general. It is stoutly carved and painted bright red with details and a harness in white, green, yellow and blue.

As you probably already know, Sweden has taken a position of neutrality in armed conflicts since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. There was distrust between Swedes and Norwegians in this time period shortly after World War II.

Since 1734, all traffic (horses, carts, etc.) drove on the left-hand side of the road, for over 200 years. Every year between 1920 and 1939, parliament discussed whether to stay on the left-hand side or to switch to the right-hand side as all of their neighboring countries and the rest of the continent had done. In 1955 a national referendum was held and there was strong campaigning from both sides. One argument was that making two versions of cars like Volvos and Saabs for domestic and foreign sales was inefficient. Also, there are many unguarded, unmarked border crossings points (unlike the crossing in the film); people would not realize which country they were in and sometimes ended up driving on the wrong side. Right side campaigners used rational arguments based on facts, like safer overtaking. The "lefties" played on people's long-time habits and emotions; "Do you want to see your mother killed?" Of course such arguments paid off. The result was a landslide victory to stay on the left side –83 per cent against 15 per cent of the voters. Nevertheless, strong lobbying for switching side continued and this eventually led to the parliament deciding in 1963 that Sweden should eventually make the transition from left-hand traffic to right-hand traffic in 1967. This also led to the establishing of the Swedish National Traffic Safety Board during this period. Preparations for the switch started. On September 3, 1967, at 04.50 in the morning, the traffic everywhere in Sweden was directed over to the right side of the road and stopped. Everything stood absolutely still for 10 minutes, and at 05.00, when it started again, all road users in Sweden from heavy trucks to cyclists were already on the right side of the road, and they have stayed there since.



Scandinavia with Editable Countries

It is 4390 miles from Stockholm to the Congo. It is only 990 miles from Stockholm to northern Italy.

The actor who played Malmberg also played Captain Beauvais in Les Miserables!

### **Major Characters:**

- Isak Bjørvik
- Folke Nilsson
- Grant
- Malmberg
- Dr. Ljungberg
- Green

### **Scriptures:**

Colossians 1:27 (GWT) – *“God wanted his people throughout the world to know the glorious riches of this mystery-which is Christ living in you, giving you the hope of glory.”*

Romans 8:9 (ISV) – *“You, however, are not under the control of the human nature but under the control of the Spirit, since God's Spirit lives in you.”*

Romans 7:5 – 6 (ISV) – *“Sinful passions were at work in our bodies by means of the law, to bear fruit resulting in death. But now we have been released from the law by dying to what enslaved us, so that we may serve in the new life of the Spirit, not under the old writings.”*

1 Corinthians 10:13 (Weymouth) – *“No temptation has you in its power but such as is common to human nature; and God is faithful and will not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength. But, when the temptation comes, He will also provide the way of escape; so that you may be able to bear it.”*

Romans 12:2 (NLT) – *“Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”*

John 17:13 – 19 (NLT) – *“I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.”*

## Discussion points:

1. How did this film impact you?
2. Most of us are not accustomed to films with slow pacing and little dialogue. Discuss how silence can communicate more than words.
3. Discuss this quote – *“How . . . can one know anything about ones’ fellow man, if not speaking to him?”*
4. What lessons can we learn about how we interact with the world around us? Is it possible to observe someone without becoming involved? How does this impact our hearts?
5. Discuss how someone’s behavior tends to change when they know they’re being observed. How aware are we, as representatives of Christ, that others are always watching us?
6. Discuss how we, as carriers of Christ’s presence, cannot help but impact the environment and the people around us, whether with words or not.  
*“Preach the gospel at all times; when necessary use words.”*