

The audience gasped.

At first, when I saw this video, I thought this was a bit of unnecessary drama, as if the GASP light had gone off in the studio audience. But as the camera lowered on to the row of jerkostaters, pouring over each of their faces, I could see that these people were slumped in their chairs, some of their heads had fallen back, some had fallen to the side. And right between the middle two chairs was a machine, a kind of pump, with fluids in separate bags, and tubes ran between the machine and each of these men and women sitting on stage.

The man with the headset moved rapidly and gracefully from person to person, checking them. He touched the first two. "I think they're dead," he said, in a Texas drawl. He went right down the line, the third, the fourth. "Yep, they are." He had checked them all and now he went to the machine, kneeling to look at it, and craning ~~he~~ his neck to see the back of it.

He stood up and turned to Oprah. "It has a light sensor on it."

The food came.

"Oh good," Amanda said. "Now we can talk about The Happening."

I laughed, but then I said, "Oh, I seriously do still want to talk about it." And she might have tuned me out at that point and started cutting her sandwich (yes, that's right; I remember now, it was an open-faced turkey sandwich; I do remember it sitting there, because I could see the bread, it was all mashed potatoes underneath and I said, "Where's your sandwich?" And she said, "This is all of it." And she said, "There's bread under there." And she lifted it up so I could see, because I didn't believe her at first.)

"All I think is," I said, "if you take The Happening as it's presented, and you simply believe what the characters are telling you, then I agree that it's an awful film. The trees are stupid and the people running through the grass are stupid."