

JENNY MUNDAY

RELATIVELY HARMLESS

Reprinted courtesy of the author.



Lilith is with her son, Ben, in the kitchen of her home, following the funeral of her husband, who died after a long illness. Ben is writing in a notebook. Lilith is always in constant motion – dancing. She also carries a camera with her at all times and obsessively snaps photos. During this monologue, the speed of her dancing and the speed of her talking pick up as she goes along – until they are almost in sync– this is the only time in the play that this happens.

LILITH:

(DANCING, ARRANGING FLOWERS, ARRANGING FOOD ON PLATES, TAKING PICTURES.)

We have to make a list of all the dishes that everyone brought and make sure that we get the right dishes back to the right people. Why do people always bring food? Who needs all this food? Who feels like eating anyway?

SHE SNAPS A PHOTO.

There's no room for all of this food. Where are we going to put it? Who's going to return all of these damned dishes? I'll have to send thank you notes to everyone. Can you please make sure you've got everyone written down properly?

BEN HOLDS THE NOTEBOOK UP SO SHE CAN SEE WHAT HE'S BEEN WRITING – SHE TAKES A PICTURE OF IT.

Do you think his sisters thought the service was alright? And that brother of his. Showing up late. He never came to see him in the hospital. He only came to see him twice in the ten years he was here – sitting in this house. What is wrong with that family? Was everything Okay? Was there enough food? Was the minister alright? Ben what were you talking about at the end of the service? I couldn't understand what you were saying. Who was that guy who played? Where did Zoey find

him? Why did she pick that song? And where is she? Everybody's been looking for her. Everybody wanted to talk to her. Where has she disappeared to? Why does she always pull that disappearing act anyway? Dorothy Shephard asked me if I thought I could volunteer for Meals on Wheels now that I would have more spare time. She says they need drivers. And Alice asked me if I thought I could volunteer at the Hospital now and Marion wants me to start canvassing with her for Save the Children and Sal wants me to volunteer at the stroke patients' recovery group every Thursday. Was the house clean enough? I tried and tried to get the stains out of the carpet. That damned carpet. I always hated that damned thing. What good is a beige carpet? Every single thing that's spilled on it shows up forever, but he had to buy that one – his pal could get it wholesale so whatever I wanted to do in terms of decorating didn't matter.

Everything had to match that damned carpet that just got dirtier and dirtier every year and the drapes and all the furniture – everything just got dingier and dingier as he sat there twenty four hours a day smoking cigarette after cigarette – he went through two packs a day, Just sat there for ten years smoking. The whole house stinks. The whole house is stained yellow. What did people think? Nicotine stains and smoke trapped everywhere. Did the funeral look cheap? Do you think they thought I was cheap? Do you think I didn'tDid they think the service was too Anglican? But what else could I do - he wouldn't go to church. He wouldn't do anything. I just went back to church to make sure he could get buried, but he never would talk to the minister when he came to the house – what could the minister talk about? He never even got to know him. He only met him after.....He offered to give him communion when he came to the house but he wouldn't do it. He said he was no damned Catholic and nobody was going to give him the last rights.....Do you think everything was alright? If only he hadn't.....if only we'd.....why didn't we ever.....why couldn't he.....why.....

HER VOICE FADES OUT AS SHE DANCES HERSELF
OFFSTAGE.

