

LURINDA

What's so wrong with "Ma?"

RANCY

Nothing. Mother.

LURINDA

Rancy, I-

RANCY

Sorry, Lurinda.

LURINDA

Could we not be so formal, please? / Please??

RANCY

Formal? I'm formal? You're the formal one when you're inviting the Reverend to this weekly feast you can't afford, so you can be the head of the women's committee?

LURINDA

That's not fair, Rancy. I work all day every day to provide for you and this family.

RANCY

This family!?! We haven't been a family since Dad died.

LURINDA

Rancy, that's not fair. (beat) Clean up. Set the table. I'm not in the mood.

RANCY

Oh I'm sorry, Maaa. Allow me to set the table, Maaa. Can I do anything else for you, Maa/aaaaaa?

LURINDA

RANCY, I'm TIRED. Just- could you just show me the SLIGHTEST bit of respect and clean yourself up before they get here?!

RANCY

What's wrong with how I look?

LURINDA

It's the bare minimum you could do after the night we had, I / just-

RANCY

The night we had?

LURINDA

I just want to have a nice, clean, civil meal, in peace. Is that too much to ask? Is it?!
Just one nice meal?

RANCY

(beat) Sure. Fine. We'll eat civilly. Peacefully. Cleanly. Mother.

LURINDA

(snaps) I survived two cross county moves, widowhood, and life as a single, working mother, but who, who, WHO could ever have ever prepared me to mother this child?

RANCY

I'm not a child; I'm fourteen.

LURINDA

AND YOWRE GOOD AT IT.

(LURINDA and RANCY attempt a truce
and work on setting the table together.)

RANCY

... Last night wasn't pleasant for me either, you know.

LURINDA

Fine.

RANCY

I was scared.

LURINDA

So you said.

RANCY

I didn't make it up.

LURINDA

We'll talk later, alright?

RANCY

Because you think I'm lying?

LURINDA

(lays down the law) No one was in your room last night.

RANCY

Yes there was!

LURINDA

Rancy, don't be a child. We searched the entire house and didn't find anybody. Didn't sleep / until-

RANCY

I heard them! I did! I heard, "Rancy! Rancy!" J felt his breath on my face, Mother! I'm/ not making it up!

LURINDA

-didn't sleep until four in the morning, and I had to be at the church by seven.

RANCY

I had school this morning too; I'm not lying! 'm NOT LYING! I'm/ not- There was-

LURINDA

Fine. FINE you 're not lying. There's an invisible man determined to ruin our lives through sleep deprivation. But since he's here, come on! Come on down! Come on down invisible man! Come on down and let's let you SET THE TABLE!

RANCY

..... 'm not lying. It did happen.

LURINDA

Fine. Sure. It happened. Can we- Can we just set the table? In silence? For five minutes? Five minutes of silence, please?