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INT. KITCHEN.

ELLEN, 34, dressed in a pretty, natural-fiber shirt, jeans, and an apron, pulls an apple crisp out of the oven. She inspects it to make sure it has been evenly "crisped" and then sets it down on the stove top. On the counter, she has already set out four bowls and a gallon of all-natural vanilla bean ice cream. She grabs a serving spoon and begins scooping the apple crisp into the bowls as ADAM, her husband, walks in.

ADAM
They're asleep.

Ellen breathes a sigh of relief.

ELLEN
Thank you.

Adam comes up behind Ellen while she is scooping ice cream and wraps his arms around her waist.

ADAM
How much longer are they going to stay?

Ellen slaps his arm playfully.

ELLEN
As long as they like.

ADAM
Remind me again why you felt the need to cook for these people?

ELLEN
Because our daughter and their son have become friends.

ADAM
So now we have to be friends?

ELLEN
I thought you were enjoying yourself.

ADAM
Enjoying a lecture about the need to "balance gender identifying and gender neutral extracurricular activities in our daughter's schedule"? She's four.

(MORE)

ADAM (cont'd)
 She doesn't have curricular
 activities, let alone "extra"-
 curricular, gendered or otherwise.

ELLEN
 Well, I think Lisa's very smart.

ADAM
 Oh, please-

ELLEN
 (handing him two bowls)
 Honey, serve dessert.

Adam rolls his eyes and stands his ground for a moment, but then he smells the apple crisp and smiles.

ADAM
 Mmmmm.

ELLEN
 See, you want dessert. Go eat it.
 With our guests.

She spins him around, gives him a pat on the butt and sends him off down the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM. ABOUT TEN MINUTES LATER.

Ellen and Adam's living room is painted in a strong, contrasting color palette - no beiges or creams. The furniture is a mix of super-comfy and elegant natural wood. The walls are covered with paintings, mostly oil-based portraits.

Seated around the coffeetable are Ellen, Adam, LISA, 40, dressed in a casual suit which appears much more formal than ELLEN in her jeans, and NEIL, her husband, who looks uncomfortable in a suit which he probably wore straight from his day on Wall Street.

They are at a point where everyone has run out of things to say and they smile at each other while eating their apple crisp.

ELLEN
 So, you were talking about the PTA meeting next week. You know, we'd really like to become more involved in that.

Adam gives Ellen a look: "Are you crazy?"

LISA

Well, it's a big one this time.
After we get through all these
activity proposals, then we have a
few administrative motions on the
table.

Ellen hasn't been paying attention, she has been slyly
motioning to Adam to encourage him to talk to Neil, who is
staring blankly out the window.

ELLEN

Oh, uh-huh.

NEIL

(to Adam)

Did you do your own landscaping?

His interest suddenly peaked, he gets up and crosses to the
window. Adam follows him.

ADAM

Yes, I did... well, I had some help
from a guy at my firm - landscaping
is not really my area...

They move out of earshot and we are back with Lisa and Ellen.

LISA

Yes, there's one mother who's very
upset about the traffic patterns at
drop-off and pick-up and she's
designed a whole new system and she
tends to be a bit long-winded, so
it could be a long evening.

ELLEN

Oh, that doesn't sound like fun.

LISA

Nooo. But, don't let that turn you
off, most of the parents involved
are great and the activity
committee has come up with some
great ideas.

ELLEN

That's great.

LISA

We're also supposed to talk about mandatory immunizations this week, but I don't know if we'll have time.

Ellen has been splitting her focus between listening to Lisa and watching Adam and Neil to make sure they get along. But this last sentence stops her.

ELLEN

I'm sorry. Mandatory what?

LISA

Immunizations. You know, vaccines.

ELLEN

Right. Umm... what about them?

LISA

Well, there was an article in the Times last week about these parents who are getting exemptions from routine vaccinations, like measles-

ELLEN

Yeah, I read it.

LISA

Oh, so you know.

ELLEN

Yes.

LISA

Well, I had no idea. I thought all of those shots were mandatory before you could enroll for school.

ELLEN

Not if you get an exemption.

LISA

Right. Well, I just want to make sure we don't have any of these "exemption kids" at Rolling Meadows.

ELLEN

Uh-huh... and why is that?

LISA

Well, you read the article. I mean, I just can't imagine why someone wouldn't get basic immunizations for their children.

ELLEN

Well... I think some parents are wary of the pharmaceutical industry. I mean, they rush these vaccines through testing and then recall them when something goes wrong.

LISA

Well, I think they rush them through testing because they're excited about something that can save children's lives.

ELLEN

Maybe... or maybe they're just excited about making money. Did you know last year they had to recall the rotavirus vaccine because it was leading to deaths in children who had an adverse reaction to it.

LISA

Oh? I hadn't heard about that.

ELLEN

No, it was kept pretty quiet.

LISA

Huh.

ELLEN

Merck made sure it was kept quiet.

LISA

Really?

ELLEN

Yeah, and the measles vaccine has known links to the development of autism-

LISA

Now, the article said that wasn't proven.

ELLEN
But it has been.

LISA
You know something the Times
doesn't know?

The debate is starting to get uncomfortable. Neil and Adam
look over to the women, a little wary of their tone.

ELLEN
You can't believe everything you
read in the mainstream media. In
November, the Department of Health
and Human Services awarded damages
in the first case of a child who
developed autism after getting the
vaccine. There are over 4,000 cases
still pending.

LISA
Where did you learn about all of
this?

ELLEN
I researched it on the internet.

LISA
The internet? You're seriously
making fun of me for believing the
Times-

ELLEN
I wasn't making fun-

LISA
But you're getting all your "facts"
from the internet?

ELLEN
(defensive)
I read the statement from the HHS,
okay?
(trying to calm down)
Look I just think that it's a very
complex issue, and I don't think
mandatory-

LISA
Well, what about these "measles
parties"?

(MORE)

LISA (cont'd)

Purposely subjecting a child to another child with measles so that they can catch it? Do you agree with that?

ELLEN

You know... when we were kids it was a rite of passage to get chickenpox, and the reason was because once you've had it, you don't get it again, and our parents wanted us to get it when we were little because the older you are when you get it, the worse it is.

LISA

And so, it's the same with measles?

ELLEN

Well, the vaccine doesn't last forever. And there have been cases of kids who were vaccinated when they were little coming down with measles when they became teenagers. And what is usually a very simple week out of school when you're four becomes a very dangerous disease when you're an adolescent.

LISA

So, you do admit it's a dangerous disease?

ELLEN

Well, yes-

LISA

Because my great-aunt got the measles when she was eight years old, long before she was an adolescent. She was deaf and dumb for the rest of her life. Is that the kind of world you want to go back to? A world where outbreaks of measles and polio devastated families? Whole cities, even? You and I may be too young to remember, but when these vaccines came out it was nothing short of miracle. A miracle.

Ellen, very uncomfortably, shares a look with Adam across the room. Neil seems to be responding with some fear - who are these people?

ELLEN

I'm not saying it isn't a very difficult decision and that's why I think every parent has a right to choose-

LISA (CONT'D)

For the record, I think any parent who would knowingly subject their child to a disease like measles is guilty of child abuse, and if there are parents who are sending their children to my son's school without the proper immunizations, I have a right to do something about it.

ELLEN

(slowly)

Well, for the record, Adam and I have opted for exemptions from ten of the fifteen regularly administered vaccinations.

NEIL

Oh my god.

He steps away from Adam as if he might have cooties.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

It was a very difficult decision, but we had to weigh the chances, which are very, very slim by the way, of one of these diseases causing serious damage against the fact that the testing that's been done on most of these vaccines is completely insufficient.

LISA

How could you-

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Sally had the measles last year. She got it from the child of a friend of ours who also chose not to vaccinate. She called us when her child was diagnosed and asked if we wanted to bring Sally over to expose her.

(MORE)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

She was sick for a week with mild flu-type symptoms and then she was fine and she is now immune to ever getting the disease again and she's at no risk of developing autism from the vaccine or whatever long-term side effects we don't know about because Merck's long-term testing has been insufficient, and we are very happy with our decision, and I stand by a parent's right to choose what and what not to put into their child's body.

LISA

(standing)

I cannot believe-

NEIL

Honey..

LISA (CONT'D)

That you would allow your disease-ridden child-

ELLEN

Excuse me?

LISA

To play with my Johnny and expose him to God-knows-what...

ELLEN

"Disease-ridden"?

LISA

...without thinking that it might be prudent to inform me that my child was at risk-

NEIL

I think we better go, Lis-

ELLEN

Your child is not at risk! It's exactly that kind of ignorant fear that the pharmaceutical-

ADAM

Honey-

LISA

"Ignorant"?

NEIL

I'll get our coats.

LISA

"Ignorant"? With your voodoo science and your "internet research"?!

ELLEN

It's not "voodoo science", we're just asking that proper testing be done before-

LISA

I am bringing this motion to the PTA and you will either have to immunize your children or take them out of Rolling Meadows.

ELLEN

You can't do that! It's the law that if my personal beliefs-

LISA

The law has nothing to do with it - Rolling Meadows is a private school - you can go infect the public schools with your "personal beliefs" if you really think you have a right to-

Neil puts Lisa's coat on her. Adam crosses nervously to the door.

ELLEN

You're actually serious.

LISA

You have no idea how serious I am about protecting my child - protecting my child's health - something which you obviously know nothing about!

She storms out. Neil scurries out behind her and Adam slams the door shut.

ELLEN

(losing it, yelling at the closed door)

I know enough to keep her away from you, you Vaccine Nazi!

She takes a few breaths, paces, looks at Adam.

ADAM

Well... that was fun.