

ALEX/LOIS

(LOIS is unpacking a box.)

ALEX

Are you still unpacking?

LOIS

I'd kept some boxes taped up in the vain hope that one day we'd move back. Don't judge.

ALEX

You have many dreams. I'm going upstairs.

LOIS

No, no, Alex, you haven't told me about your day yet.

ALEX

Mother, as much as I miss our "processing" time, I have a lot of homework. Chemistry requires math. Math is hard; ergo, chemistry...

LOIS

Oh come on, aren't you excited?

ALEX

Yay, balancing equations. I'm complete.

LOIS

No, the school show.

ALEX

Oh, yeah, whatever. Sure. I hadn't really thought about it.

LOIS

You have to audition.

ALEX

I dunno - maybe - chemistry is, you know -

LOIS

Honey you love that show. After we took you to see it, you used to dance around the house singing the songs.

ALEX

I neither confirm nor deny.

LOIS

Come on, don't you remember when you were nine - belting all the songs on the subway. I love love love that no one on the subway even looked up. God, I miss New York.

ALEX

Yeah, I'm not nine anymore.

LOIS

True, if a nine-year-old did something like that in this town, we'd be lynched.

ALEX

Oh, are you still doing the town-bashing thing?

LOIS

Yeah, I thought it was a phase, too. But apparently some phases you can't grow out of.

ALEX

Hmmm.

LOIS

Honey, sit down.

ALEX

So what I'm hearing is that you want me to fail chemistry.

LOIS

Chemistry can wait. Listen, we need to have a conversation. I want to talk to you about those friends of -

ALEX

No, I've told you. It's not easy being the new kid, you should be happy I have friends.

LOIS

I know, but they're so -

ALEX

They're so... what?

LOIS

Nothing. Well, you know. They're just... different.

ALEX

Oh, say it. Say the "R" word. Come on, I want to hear it from your lips - oh oh, but try saying it without sounding like a racist.

LOIS

I can say Republican, you smart ass. I just worry, that's all.

ALEX

So you're fully aware that Jews don't have horns, right -

LOIS

I don't see what this has to do -

ALEX

And that not everyone from Ireland is an alcoholic -

LOIS

When do you become this person -

ALEX

Just because someone's parents voted for Bush doesn't make them the devil.

LOIS

I just don't want you to -

ALEX

What? Form my own opinions?

LOIS

No. I mean, yes, but -

ALEX

You're the one who always taught me to accept everyone for who they are.

LOIS

Fine - you got me. You're right. I'm being as judgmental as them.

ALEX

"Them!" Wow - Mom, you're so - so. Man, the way you're acting it's like I joined the Hitler Youth.

LOIS

Well, I don't know what to think. Alex, this is the first time in maybe three weeks that you've actually said more to me than "hey" or "when's dinner" or "where's Dad." What's with you?

ALEX

Fine. I'll tell ya. Hey. When's dinner. Where's Dad. And, adding to the repertoire: I have homework and oh I don't know, goals to get into college and be on my own, so I am going upstairs!

LOIS/MRS. HERROLD

(MRS. HERROLD has set up a small table with a sign that says "Protect our children." She walks around with a clipboard.

MRS. HERROLD

I love your shoes.

LOIS

Thank you.

MRS. HERROLD

I don't want to sound superficial, but I just love shoes. It's my only vice. Really. We haven't met. I'm Inez Herrold.

LOIS

Lois Patterson.

MRS. HERROLD

Alex's mother. We love her.

LOIS

Oh, is she friends with your kid?

MRS. HERROLD

No, Mr. Herrold and I have not yet been blessed with children. Not for lack of a whole lot of praying and a whole lot of trying. Sorry, that was crass.

LOIS

Not at all. So how do you know Alex?

MRS. HERROLD

She volunteers with us sometimes.

LOIS

Oh.

(takes in the sign, the clipboard, etc.) Protect our children. What from?

MRS. HERROLD

Well, I am sure you heard about what's going on at the high school.

LOIS

Oh God, are people protesting it? Please, let me sign your petition. We can't let these fundamentalists screw up our kids' education.

MRS. HERROLD

Oh. No, dear. I think you misunderstand.

LOIS

Have a... nice day.

MRS. HERROLD

We do things different here than y'all do in New York.

LOIS

Clearly. I should go inside and shop.

MRS. HERROLD

God be with you.

(LOIS walks away, by LARRY, who  
is straightening up the store.)

LOIS

Hi. Mr. Ames, right?

LARRY

That's my Dad. You can call me Larry.

LOIS

That woman over there - can you please ask her to move?

LARRY

Free country, ma'am. Last I checked, there was a first amendment.

LOIS

You're right.

(At the table, MRS. HERROLD tries to  
get MAN #1 to sign the petition.)

MRS. HERROLD

If we let this show go on, who knows what darkness our  
children will fall into?

(LOIS takes a breath, then turns to  
MRS. HERROLD.)

LOIS

Tell me, what exactly is in store for our children because of  
this show?

MRS. HERROLD

Some of them might choose a lifestyle that -

LOIS

This show celebrates.

MRS. HERROLD

Exactly. Thank you for making my argument for me. If they are  
exposed the unsavory elements in this show, they are just  
catering to Mr. Powell's agenda.

LOIS

Mr. Powell is just trying to enlighten our kids with some topics  
that hopefully will make them think about their choices.

MRS. HERROLD

So he DOES have an agenda.

LOIS

You're spreading hate, lady.

MRS. HERROLD

There is not one ounce of hate in my body. I love these children, this town, our way of life. Why can't you?

DAVE

All right, ladies, ladies. Gosh, uh - the gorgeous ladies of wresting videos are in the store, not here. Let's just all get along.

MRS. HERROLD

Dave, you're president of the school board, what do you think?

DAVE

Oh, I'm just a figurehead with a gavel.

LOIS

So you don't have any authority.

DAVE

I have a gavel and I'm not afraid to use it. Just joshin' ya. But seriously, this conversation of yours has to stop.

LOIS

Look, I'm not trying to foment anything here

MRS. HERROLD

What kind of word is that?

LOIS

Apparently a New York one, not a Texas one.

MRS. HERROLD

Dear, you have the right to believe what you believe, but I do, too. If you want to make up a petition that says the show is all good and rosy to do, I encourage you. But, Mrs. Patterson, and I mean this with not a drip of contention, there will not be many people in this town who would sign that petition.

LOIS

Are people that afraid of a show?

MRS. HERROLD

We love music, heaven knows I love me a good rock beat, but there are other shows.

LOIS

Well, if I have my way, it's gonna be this one.

ALEX/LOIS #2

(Grocery store - Lois pushes the cart while Alex follows from behind. Lois stops the cart.)

LOIS

You could have told me.

ALEX

Yeah, it's what every parent wants to hear.

LOIS

I'm not like the other parents.

(ALEX laughs.)

ALEX

Oh I know, we lived Park Slope, everyone loves the lesbians. Unless they're in your family.

LOIS

That's so unfair, I give to the Human Rights Campaign and I cannot tell you how many times -

ALEX

You couldn't look at me.

LOIS

What?

ALEX

After Mr. Powell cast me in the show - as a lesbian - that's when you stopped really talking to me.

LOIS

Oh honey, we weren't talking long before that.

ALEX

Be honest with me, weren't you just a little bit relieved when we left New York that you wouldn't have to see me spending all that time with Hailey?

LOIS

I don't know what you're talking about.

ALEX

Oh, you had to have known. Diaries don't jump on and off a nightstand and end up upside down.

LOIS

We could have talked about it.

ALEX

Admit it, it still would have been hard for you.

LOIS

Yes, okay. Yes. I admit it - my plan for my daughter didn't include her being gay, but then again, my plan for our life never involved us moving to Texas, but here we are.

ALEX

Yep, here we are. And we gotta live here.

LOIS

Yes. We do. Alex, I -

ALEX

(reaching for the grocery list) Here, let's split up the list.