

T.M.S. (Total Male Syndrome)  
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TIME: A week before Christmas

PLACE: Liza's living room

RUNNING TIME: 10 minutes

CAST:

ROB (m): Age 12-13 your clueless young teen

LIZA (f): Age 12-13; perfectionist

HANNAH (f): Age 12-13 - down-to-earth, pragmatic

JESSIE (f) Age 12-13: tired of doing all the work

T.M.S. (Total Male Syndrome)

*AT RISE we are in LIZA'S living room. They could be under a Christmas tree. Wrappings and ribbons are scattered as they attempt to wrap toys for a holiday service project from school. ROB is playing video games. LIZ holds up a present not beautifully wrapped. There may be other scattered presents - also not beautifully wrapped as well as some bags of toys.*

LIZA

I can't do this! Why is nothing looking pretty? I think we should have a theme.

ROB

What are you talking about?

LIZA

You know, like everything is sparkly gold with matching ribbons - or red and green. Something that ties them all together.

HANNAH

Are you thinking that the kids care more about the wrapping than the toy?  
*HANNAH also holds up a not-perfectly wrapped present.*

LIZA

I do!

JESSIE

Well, it would be nice to have them beautiful. But too expensive. We'd have to buy all new paper and bows. Let's just use the donated stuff? What do you think, Rob?

ROB

*Intent on the game.*

Come on! Go! GO! YES!

*Back to the LIZA and HANNAH.*

What?

LIZA

Don't you think it would look nicer for the kids if all the wrapping and bows and ribbons matched?

ROB

Yeah. Sure. Whatever.

HANNAH

Liza! The kids are just going to tear them apart in one minute. It doesn't make sense to buy all new wrapping. What do you think, Rob?

ROB

That works.

*Back to video games.*

NO!

JESSIE

He's not listening.

I know. HANNAH

What? ROB

T.M.S. HANNAH

Totally. LIZA

What? ROB

You could help you know. You're getting credit for this also. JESSIE

What? ROB

If you don't do some work, we'll throw you off the project. LIZA

What are you talking about? ROB

Your service hours. You're not doing anything! No honor roll for you! HANNAH

He'll use the T.M.S. defense. LIZA

Definitely. JESSIE

T.M.S.? ROB

T.M.S. Total Male Syndrome. You have it. My Dad has it. Every boy in school has it. HANNAH

What? ROB

LIZA

*Talking to him like he is three years old.*

It's an inability to hear what females are saying. You have selective hearing. All guys do. It in your genes.

ROB

What?

HANNAH

Go back to your video games.

ROB

No, really. I want to know what you are saying.

JESSIE

Wow! A cohesive sentence. We got his attention. Now - get him to do some work.

HANNAH

*Handing him a toy.*

Here you go, Rob. Get wrapping.

ROB

What? You want me to sing? I can't rap. I can't keep all those words in my head.

HANNAH

W-R-A-P Rob! Help us. We did the shopping. We picked the names. We planned everything. What are you - along for the ride?

ROB

I'll go. Where're we going?

LIZ

We were speaking metaphorically, Rob!

ROB

Metaphors? More English class? I thought we were doing a service project.

JESSIE

Wow. His T.M.S. is very advanced.

ROB

What do you want me to do? Just tell me and I'll do it.

LIZA

Am I talking? Does he hear me? I hear me. You hear me. ROB, DO YOU HEAR ME?

ROB

You don't have to yell.

LIZA

Grrrr! This is frustrating me. I need some cookies.

ROB

Cookies? Did I hear "cookies?"

LIZA

Your selective hearing works well, Rob. I'm getting some cookies. Mom baked Christmas cookies yesterday. Maybe a sugar rush will help.

JESSIE

How about some music?

LIZA

Sounds good. I need all the inspiration I can get!

ROB

What do you want me to do?

LIZA and HANNAH and JESSIE

Wrap some presents!

*LIZA runs into the kitchen while  
HANNAH puts on some music..  
ROB takes some wrapping supplies and toys  
and goes off to a corner - possibly  
near his video games. JESSIE works.*

HANNAH

What do you want to hear?

JESSIE

‘tis the season suff.

*LIZA comes back with a plate of cookies.*

LIZA

Where's Rob?

HANNAH

Over in the corner. Probably figuring out some new strategy for the video game.

LIZA

Should we call him over to help? When you have T.M.S. sometimes you need things spelled out for you. Like -

*Loudly*

- if you want service hours you need to put in the time!

END OF EXCERPT