

The River of Haircuts
By Kyle John Schmidt

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Cast of Characters

Mrs. Hadley
The Mayor
The Schoolmaster
The Mother
The Constable
The Meatguy

Setting

A remote village.

A Note on Style

This play should move very quickly. Lines should overlap. Characters should speak over each other.

Also, the actors should always remember that the events in the play are completely serious to the people portrayed. This is the worst day of their lives, and they may never recover.

(At the meeting of a village council. THE CONSTABLE stands near the door in a uniform and hat.)

MRS. HADLEY

I was at the grocery store. I was getting meat. And I'm looking at the meat guy. He's a nice looking guy. Nothing to write home about. But this time something's different. His hair. It's perfect here. Wonderful there. Like a wheat field on a summer's day, you want to get your fingers in there and let them run free. I mention it to my kid outside to make a joke. And he's smirking like he knows something. So the entire night. I'm thinking, you know something. You know something. And he's smirking and smirking. And finally I took a waffle, covered it with chocolate, pounded it on the table, and said, "Tell me what you know about that haircut."

THE SCHOOLMASTER

Can we talk about the library program?

MRS. HADLEY

This is Open Forum.

THE MAYOR

Open Forum is limited to civic issues.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

Like the library.

MRS. HADLEY

This is a civic issue.

THE CONSTABLE

Do you want me to throw her out?

MRS. HADLEY

You can't throw me out.

THE MAYOR

Constable.

THE CONSTABLE

I can throw anyone out.

MRS. HADLEY

There are rules.

THE MAYOR

Mrs. Hadley.

I move to close Open Forum. THE MOTHER

Hey. MRS. HADLEY

I second that motion. THE SCHOOLMASTER

Wait. MRS. HADLEY

All those in favor. THE MAYOR

Aye. THE SCHOOLMASTER, THE MAYOR, THE MOTHER

No. Stop. MRS. HADLEY

All those opposed. THE MAYOR

I want to talk about the meat guy's haircut. MRS. HADLEY

According to the rules, the town council is not obligated to discuss anything brought up in Open Forum. THE MAYOR

Well, FUDGE on your RULES. MRS. HADLEY

I move to censure Mrs. Hadley. THE MOTHER

Come on. MRS. HADLEY

All those in favor. THE MAYOR

MRS. HADLEY

I didn't mean—

THE SCHOOLMASTER, THE MAYOR, THE MOTHER

Aye.

MRS. HADLEY

All those opposed. Aye.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

You're not allowed to vote on your own censure.

THE CONSTABLE

I'll throw her out.

THE MAYOR

Constable.

MRS. HADLEY

Throw me out. I dare you.

THE MAYOR

Mrs. Hadley is reminded that—

MRS. HADLEY

I am an elected official.

THE MAYOR

—if she is censured twice in one meeting—

MRS. HADLEY

You will not silence me.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

Can we talk about the library?

THE MOTHER

If one of my kids came home popping off about—

MRS. HADLEY

Are you calling my kid a liar?

THE MOTHER

—a supernatural river—

I never said supernatural—

MRS. HADLEY

That STYLES HAIR.

THE MOTHER

CUTS. HAIR.

MRS. HADLEY

Do not raise your voice at me.

THE MOTHER

My kid says there's a river in the woods that cuts hair—

MRS. HADLEY

I'm throwing her out.

THE CONSTABLE

(THE CONSTABLE grabs MRS. HADLEY.)

(Overlapping:) Get your hands off me.

MRS. HADLEY

(Overlapping:) Order! Order!

THE MAYOR

(Overlapping:) The library. What about the library?

THE SCHOOLMASTER

(Overlapping:) She raised her voice at me.

THE MOTHER

Release Mrs. Hadley.

THE MAYOR

Someone said to throw her out.

THE CONSTABLE

No one said to throw her out.

THE MAYOR

I thought this council voted.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

THE MOTHER
If one of our members—

THE SCHOOLMASTER
Deliberated.

THE MOTHER
—is going to be unruly—

MRS. HADLEY
You're unruly.

THE SCHOOLMASTER
Democracy!

THE MOTHER
—then the constable should throw her out.

MRS. HADLEY
My kid is not a liar.

THE MAYOR
The town council is not in the practice—

MRS. HADLEY
Go to the grocery store.

THE MAYOR
—of discussing—

MRS. HADLEY
Ask the meat guy.

THE MAYOR
—magical supposition.

MRS. HADLEY
WHERE DID HE GET THAT HAIRCUT?

THE SCHOOLMASTER
Can we please talk about funding the library?

THE MAYOR

I don't see how we keep the funding.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

It's an investment in the future.

THE MAYOR

We have exhausted our budget.

MRS. HADLEY

Billions of dollars.

THE MAYOR

Mrs. Hadley.

MRS. HADLEY

I can promise you.

THE MAYOR

Mrs. Hadley.

MRS. HADLEY

With tourism. And licensing fees. Pilgrimages.

THE MAYOR

Mr. Hadley.

MRS. HADLEY

If we use this river that cuts hair.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

The school doesn't have heat. I'm running out of chalk.

THE CONSTABLE

And the constabulary need money too!

THE SCHOOLMASTER

The constabulary gets too much money.

THE CONSTABLE

We need better billy clubs.

THE MAYOR

You just got new billy clubs.

THE CONSTABLE

We need more billy clubs.

THE MOTHER

We shouldn't have to pick between schools and safety.

MRS. HADLEY

I'm trying to find us new ways to source revenue.

THE MAYOR

A fantastical river is not a way—

MRS. HADLEY

It's not fantastical.

THE MAYOR

—To pay for our very real deficits.

MRS. HADLEY

I have spent all day in the town records.

THE MAYOR

Unless we raise taxes.

MRS. HADLEY

The founders of this village—

THE MOTHER

We cannot afford to raise taxes.

MRS. HADLEY

—were known for their haircuts.

THE MAYOR

If you want a library program—

MRS. HADLEY

Go look at the pictures.

THE MAYOR

—you have to raise taxes.

MRS. HADLEY
Their haircuts. Those aren't natural.

THE MOTHER
Or cut expenses.

THE SCHOOLMASTER
Like the constabulary.

THE CONSTABLE
We need better billy clubs!

MRS. HADLEY
Where did those haircuts come from?

THE MAYOR
Mrs. Hadley, you are off topic.

MRS. HADLEY
We were talking about finding revenue streams—

THE SCHOOLMASTER
If we can't fund the library—

MRS. HADLEY
—and I identified a whole river.

THE SCHOOLMASTER
—my students will fall behind.

MRS. HADLEY
No one gives a FLYING FLIP about the LIBRARY.

THE MOTHER
I move to censure Mrs. Hadley for the second time.

MRS. HADLEY
No.

THE SCHOOLMASTER
I second.

MRS. HADLEY
This isn't legal.

THE MAYOR

All in favor.

THE MAYOR, THE SCHOOLMASTER, THE MOTHER

Aye.

MRS. HADLEY

Conspiracy! This is a conspiracy!

THE MOTHER

Throw her out!

THE CONSTABLE

(To MRS. HADLEY:) Let's go.

MRS. HADLEY

(To THE CONSTABLE:) Your hat.

THE CONSTABLE

(To MRS. HADLEY:) Get up.

MRS. HADLEY

(To THE CONSTABLE:) You're wearing a hat.

THE CONSTABLE

(To MRS. HADLEY:) If you do not leave immediately—

MRS. HADLEY

(To THE CONSTABLE:) Why are you wearing a hat?

THE CONSTABLE

(To MRS. HADLEY:) I will use my billy club.

MRS. HADLEY

(To EVERYONE:) UNDER HIS HAT! LOOK UNDER HIS HAT!

THE CONSTABLE

(To MRS. HADLEY:) DECORUM. DECORUM! Get your hands off my—

(THE CONSTABLE's hat comes off. Gasps. His hair is amazing.)

THE MOTHER

Your haircut.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

I never knew you had such . . .

THE MAYOR

(Near tears:) Beautiful . . .

THE MOTHER

Where did you get that haircut?

THE SCHOOLMASTER

How?

THE CONSTABLE

The river. It just knows.

MRS. HADLEY

I told you. I told all of you.

THE CONSTABLE

I wouldn't have believed it myself. Until. These teenagers. Suspicious looking. I followed them into the woods last night.

THE MOTHER

Where were their parents?

THE CONSTABLE

Through a copse and cavern into a maze of tunnels. By torchlight I found them by this subterranean river. Laughing. Chewing gum. And dipping their heads in the water.

THE MOTHER

We'll have to notify the parents.

THE CONSTABLE

And coming out with bobs and curls. Braids and up-do's. Highlights and streaks. Things I would have never thought would work on anyone.

THE MOTHER

It had better not have been one of my kids.

THE CONSTABLE

I made a sound and they scattered like well-coiffed mice. And then I like some silly teenager I tried putting my poor, old head in those dark, mysterious waters. To my wonder and disbelief, this miracle formed atop my crown.

THE MAYOR

Extraordinary.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

The dawn of an epoch.

THE MOTHER

What a time to be alive.

MRS. HADLEY

And no one believed me.

THE CONSTABLE

I've never felt good looking. Ever. But now. This haircut.

THE MAYOR

Why didn't you say anything?

THE SCHOOLMASTER

He should have said something.

THE MOTHER

The village council should have been told.

MRS. HADLEY

This is a breach of public trust.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

We should cut his hair!

THE MOTHER

I move to strip the constable of his position.

THE CONSTABLE

No.

MRS. HADLEY

I second that motion.

THE CONSTABLE
Please.

THE SCHOOLMASTER
And cut his hair!

THE CONSTABLE
I beg of you!

THE MOTHER
Call the vote!

THE CONSTABLE
But someone has to keep the rule of order.

THE MAYOR
All those in favor of stripping the Constable of his position.

THE CONSTABLE
When the River of Haircuts gets out, you'll have pandemonium. Gruff men. Loose women. Thieves. And violators.

MRS. HADLEY
It won't be like that.

THE CONSTABLE
They'll storm the banks.

MRS. HADLEY
It'll be tourists.

THE CONSTABLE
Trample the village.

MRS. HADLEY
Families with children.

THE CONSTABLE
Take the river.

THE MAYOR
We have to protect the village.

THE MOTHER
The constables have the billy clubs.

THE CONSTABLE
We'll billy club the invaders!

MRS. HADLEY
We can't inflict violence on tourists.

THE MAYOR
If they try to confiscate our river.

THE MOTHER
There won't be violence if they follow our rules.

THE SCHOOLMASTER
There's always violence.

THE CONSTABLE
Violence doesn't happen to peaceful people.

MRS. HADLEY
Violence can happen to anyone.

THE MOTHER
Not if they follow the rules.

MRS. HADLEY
Your kids. My kids.

THE MOTHER
It won't be my kids.

MRS. HADLEY
They could be the victims.

THE MOTHER
My kids follow the rules.

THE MAYOR
The river needs order.

MRS. HADLEY
Order creates violence.

THE CONSTABLE
Violence just happens.

MRS. HADLEY
Nothing just happens.

THE SCHOOLMASTER
The River of Haircuts just happened.

(A long pause.)

THE MAYOR
I move to move the administration of the River of Haircuts to the Constabulary.

MRS. HADLEY
The Constabulary is under the Mayor.

THE CONSTABLE
We serve the people.

THE SCHOOLMASTER
Under the direction of the Mayor.

MRS. HADLEY
This is a power grab.

THE MAYOR
This is not a power grab.

THE SCHOOLMASTER
Tyrant! Tyrant!

MRS. HADLEY
The River should be managed by the people.

THE SCHOOLMASTER
Like the school system.

MRS. HADLEY
Citizen advocates.

THE SCHOOLMASTER
Like the school system!

THE CONSTABLE

The school system is always losing money.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

That's because we never get any funding.

THE MOTHER

I don't like that children are using the River of Haircuts without parental approval.

THE MAYOR

After the river is secured, the business community can help develop it.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

The business community?

THE MAYOR

The business community can put in—

THE SCHOOLMASTER

We don't need greedy people—

THE MAYOR

—an infrastructure—

THE SCHOOLMASTER

—ruining a natural resource—

THE MAYOR

—so we can monetize—

THE SCHOOLMASTER

—with marketing!

THE MAYOR

—the river.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

And theme restaurants!

MRS. HADLEY

We should not be ceding power to the constabulary.

THE MAYOR

There's nothing wrong with the constabulary.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

They have an unchecked number of billy clubs.

THE CONSTABLE

I am a public servant.

MRS. HADLEY

They can't be trusted.

THE MAYOR

Mrs. Hadley.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

The Constable knew about the River of Haircuts but didn't tell us.

MRS. HADLEY

If they can't trust us, why should we trust them?

THE MAYOR

We must secure the river.

MRS. HADLEY

The Mayor is trying to usurp power.

THE MAYOR

I am not trying to usurp power.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

Usurper! Usurper!

THE MOTHER

THERE COULD BE CHILDREN AT THE RIVER OF HAIRCUTS RIGHT NOW.

MRS. HADLEY

I move to depose the mayor.

THE MAYOR

You can't depose me.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

I second.

THE MAYOR

You're the usurper.

MRS. HADLEY

All those in favor.

THE SCHOOLMASTER, MRS. HADLEY

Aye.

THE MAYOR

What happens when visitors to the River of Haircuts are replaced by armies. Endless battles until the river is flooded with blood and appendage, bile and organ, the guilty and the innocent.

MRS. HADLEY

You've been deposed.

THE MOTHER

I didn't vote for deposing!

THE MAYOR

You need a consensus before deposing.

THE MOTHER

I'm not going to participate in a power grab by a schoolmaster and foul-mouth.

MRS. HADLEY

Foul-mouth?

THE MOTHER

Twice you cursed. Twice!

MRS. HADLEY

I never cursed.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

Fudge and flying flip.

THE MOTHER

And you were censured!

MRS. HADLEY

It was an accident.

THE MOTHER

I would wash your mouth out.

THE MAYOR

Someone could be moving on the River of Haircuts right now while we namby-pamby around.

THE CONSTABLE

The Constabulary are the only people capable of securing the River of Haircuts.

MRS. HADLEY

You're not allowed to participate in this debate.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

You're just the Constable.

THE CONSTABLE

If I'm not allowed to voice my opinion—

MRS. HADLEY

You're not on the village council.

THE CONSTABLE

Then I will run out and tell everyone.

THE MAYOR

Constable.

THE CONSTABLE

Like a town crier!

THE MAYOR

Constable.

THE CONSTABLE

WE HAVE A RIVER OF HAIRCUTS!

THE MAYOR

You are being disruptive.

THE CONSTABLE

WE HAVE A RIVER OF HAIRCUTS!

MRS. HADLEY

We will strip you of your powers.

THE CONSTABLE

WE HAVE A RIVER OF HAIRCUTS!

THE MOTHER

I can't stop thinking that my children might not have a good haircut because of how we act today.

THE MAYOR

I move to make the constable a member of the village council.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

That's not in the town charter.

MRS. HADLEY

You're diluting my vote!

THE MOTHER

I second.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

You can't pack the council.

THE MAYOR

All those in favor.

THE MAYOR, THE MOTHER

Aye.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

This is unprecedented.

THE MAYOR

All those opposed.

MRS. HADLEY, THE SCHOOLMASTER

Aye.

THE MAYOR

And tie-breaks are decided by the mayor. So motion passes. The Constable is hereby on the council.

MRS. HADLEY

This is illegal.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

Tyrant! Tyrant!

THE CONSTABLE

I second the motion to move the administration of the River of Haircuts to the constabulary.

THE MAYOR

All those in favor.

THE CONSTABLE, THE MAYOR

Aye.

THE MOTHER

I won't vote for anything until we can guarantee haircuts for future generations of the village.

THE MAYOR

Come on.

THE MOTHER

We must preserve the River of Haircuts for our children.

MRS. HADLEY

The motion to move the administration to the constabulary fails.

THE MAYOR

I table the vote until after a debate.

MRS. HADLEY

It's dead.

THE MAYOR

Not until I say it is.

MRS. HADLEY

You're abusing your power.

THE MAYOR

It's in the rules.

MRS. HADLEY

There's nothing to debate.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

There's always something to debate.

THE MAYOR

Let's debate!

THE SCHOOLMASTER

What about the hairdressers?

THE MOTHER

What about the hairdressers.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

If we have a river to give us haircuts, what do we do with the hairdressers.

THE MAYOR

Some people may prefer a non-river haircut.

MRS. HADLEY

And we can have a fund set aside to retrain hairdressers put out of work.

THE MAYOR

With money the business community earns charging access to the River of Haircuts.

THE MOTHER

But why should good haircuts only go to people who can afford it?

THE CONSTABLE

And it's not our fault the hairdressers didn't make good life choices in school.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

It's not the school's fault.

THE CONSTABLE

And the hairdressers can all become constables.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

We don't need more constables.

THE CONSTABLE

Yes we will.

MRS. HADLEY

Martial law! Martial law!

THE SCHOOLMASTER

We don't even know if the River of Haircuts is safe. What if someone falls in? Are they lacerated? Cut to pieces? What if a child falls in? Someone's elderly mother? Is a good haircut worth the risk?

THE CONSTABLE

You're only saying that because your sister cuts hair.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

I would say it anyway.

THE CONSTABLE

The council wasn't meant to protect—

THE SCHOOLMASTER

I have safety concerns.

THE CONSTABLE

Your sister's business.

THE MAYOR

I move the Schoolmaster be removed from the council.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

You can't remove me.

THE MAYOR

You have a conflict of interest.

THE CONSTABLE

I second.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

My sister's business is not a conflict of interest.

MRS. HADLEY

Another power grab!

THE MAYOR

All those in favor.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

We should all care about the hairdressers!

THE CONSTABLE, THE MAYOR

Aye.

THE MOTHER

I am not voting until we decide to keep the River of Haircuts to ourselves.

THE MAYOR

Stop being disagreeable

THE CONSTABLE

It's undemocratic.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

Being disagreeable is the root of democracy.

THE CONSTABLE

That's why no one likes a democracy.

THE MOTHER

Someone has to think of the children and their future access to haircuts.

MRS. HADLEY

We need a new election.

THE MAYOR

We don't have time for an election.

THE CONSTABLE

This would have all be decided if we had a king.

MRS. HADLEY, THE MAYOR, THE SCHOOLMASTER, THE MOTHER
WE DON'T NEED A KING.

THE CONSTABLE

The river will be found out. These things always get out.

THE MAYOR

The world will storm our river.

MRS. HADLEY

Tourists. On pilgrimages.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

And then everyone will move to the village.

MRS. HADLEY

They won't move—

THE SCHOOLMASTER

Housing prices will skyrocket.

MRS. HADLEY

Just tourists.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

We'll be priced out.

THE MOTHER

I don't want to leave my home.

MRS. HADLEY

This river will change this village.

THE MOTHER

My children grew up in that home.

MRS. HADLEY

But we have to change with it.

THE MOTHER

I worked hard on my garden.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

The invaders will vote us out. Do you think you will be here in 5 years? When everyone comes. Will you be here? Will you? The rich with their smiling and their tricks will topple the gates and we'll be left with nothing. Looked down upon. Stupid townies. The idiots. With our drooling mouths. Who sold it all for dust and pennies.

THE MOTHER

I move to restrict the River of Haircuts to current citizens and their descendants under the administration of the Constabulary with the school in charge of studying the river before it is put to use.

MRS. HADLEY

This does not solve our budget issues.

THE CONSTABLE

I second.

THE MAYOR

And we cannot afford all the constables we'll need to protect the river.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

I third.

MRS. HADLEY

You can't horde a natural resource.

THE MOTHER

Call the vote.

THE MAYOR

I am not calling this vote.

THE MOTHER

It's in the rules.

THE MAYOR

It is not fiduciarily responsible.

THE CONSTABLE

CALL THE VOTE.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

You have to follow the rules.

MRS. HADLEY

FUDGE ON THE FLYING FLIP RULES.

THE MOTHER

Constable, please remove Mrs. Hadley.

THE MAYOR

Do not remove Mrs. Hadley.

THE MOTHER

She has been censured twice.

THE MAYOR

And we allowed her to stay.

MRS. HADLEY

The village council is not a forum for martial law.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

It's not martial law if we already voted to remove you.

THE MAYOR

Mrs. Hadley, don't move.

THE CONSTABLE

Mrs. Hadley.

THE MAYOR

If you leave they can remove me from office—

THE MOTHER

We're following rules.

THE MAYOR

—and vote on their measure.

THE CONSTABLE

Mrs. Hadley, it's time to go.

THE MAYOR

Don't move.

MRS. HADLEY

You are an unelected—

THE CONSTABLE

Mrs. Hadley.

MRS. HADLEY

—GOON.

THE CONSTABLE

I will use force.

MRS. HADLEY

GOON.

You are giving me—

THE CONSTABLE

GOON.

MRS. HADLEY

—NO CHOICE.

THE CONSTABLE

GOON.

MRS. HADLEY

HIT HER!

THE MOTHER

I will not be a party to violence.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

MRS. HADLEY!

THE CONSTABLE

Stand down.

THE MAYOR

GOON.

MRS. HADLEY

(THE CONSTABLE raises his billy club.)

(THE MEAT GUY enters. Everyone stops.)

We are in a meeting.

THE MAYOR

Who's that?

THE MOTHER

The meat guy.

MRS. HADLEY

From the grocery store?

THE MAYOR

THE SCHOOLMASTER

What's he doing here?

THE CONSTABLE

His hair.

THE MOTHER

It's gone.

(It's true. THE MEAT GUY is completely bald.)

THE MAYOR

Sir, we are in a meeting.

MRS. HADLEY

Let him speak.

THE CONSTABLE

We have to know what happened to his hair.

THE MOTHER

Tell us!

THE SCHOOLMASTER

Find your words.

MRS. HADLEY

And don't spare us the detail.

THE MEATGUY

I was at the river in the cavern by the woods helping my little brother. Zeke. His hair has always been flat here. Sad there. I really thought he could make something of himself if he just had something that worked for him. Everyone there was showing off. Doing cannonballs into the water and coming out with Fades and French Braids. Bouffants and Pompadours. And when Zeke finally had the courage to dip his own hair in the water: tremendous ruby red ringlets appeared followed by such joy as there has ever been in my little brother. But such beauty was never meant to last on this poor earth. For just then: explosions ripped across the river and tore through the cavern.

THE CONSTABLE

Oh terror!

THE SCHOOLMASTER

Our river!

THE MOTHER

Heavens!

THE MEATGUY

Through smoke and fire, over broken bodies and their perfect hair, I crawled myself to safety. Only looking back once to see my beautiful brother Zeke bashed in the skull by a flying stone. And his kingly ringlets sinking beneath the water while the River of Haircuts was erased in the hellish bombfire!

MRS. HADLEY

Terrible tale!

THE MAYOR

Poor man!

THE CONSTABLE

Tragedy.

THE MEATGUY

Hold your lamentations for the final blow. When I had finally crawled out of the wreckage and met the sun with my flowing tears, I found myself encircled by the terrible villains who had done the deed.

(GASPS!)

THE MEATGUY

They were dancing and celebrating, crowing about the deathblow done to the River of Haircuts. And though my body was broken, my brother taken, and my heart ripped in twain, still these devils could not leave well enough alone! For they spied my lush ankle-length locks and descended upon me. Held my hands. Lashed my feet. Pinned my chest. And clipped me like a lamb in autumn. My hair shorn to the sad skin you see now.

THE MAYOR

But who? Who did this?

THE MEATGUY

I can't . . .

THE MOTHER

Jealous neighbors?

THE MEATGUY

No . . .

THE SCHOOLMASTER

Foreign spies?

THE MEATGUY

Please . . .

THE CONSTABLE

Anarchists?

THE MEATGUY

Hairdressers. It was the hairdressers!

THE SCHOOLMASTER, THE MOTHER, THE MAYOR, THE CONSTABLE, MRS. HADLEY
Oh.

THE MEATGUY

Never doubt the terrible rage that wakes when someone finds they've been replaced.

MRS. HADLEY

How can the River of Haircuts be ruined?

THE MAYOR

I never got to use it.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

Now my hair will always look like this.

THE MOTHER

How am I going to face my kids?

THE MAYOR

Why didn't I get to use it?

THE CONSTABLE

It doesn't matter.

THE MAYOR

I wasted my life scheming and parliamenting.

MRS. HADLEY

Why were we always arguing?

THE SCHOOLMASTER

I should have just gone.

THE CONSTABLE

A good haircut should be a happy accident.

MRS. HADLEY

We could have stopped this from happening.

THE MOTHER

What will my descendants' haircuts look like?

MRS. HADLEY

Why didn't we stop this!

THE CONSTABLE

If we all had good haircuts, they wouldn't be special anymore.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

That's easy for you to say.

MRS. HADLEY

You got your haircut.

THE CONSTABLE

But if I show it, they'll shear it off!

THE MAYOR

Why didn't I get my haircut.

THE CONSTABLE

I'm going to have to wear a hat for the rest of my life!

THE MAYOR

We are not men, we are barbarians! Beasts in clothes. Animals. Greedy pigs who can't share their truffles.

MRS. HADLEY

And our hair will never get better.

(A long pause. A little deflated:)

THE SCHOOLMASTER

I move that we talk about the library program.

THE MOTHER

I second.

THE MAYOR

All those in favor . . .

(But no one's heart is in it. Looks of regret. Sadness. Desire.)

END OF PLAY