

# **The Barbershop Samaritan**

A Musical Christmas Dramedy in Four Acts

By Shawn Thornburg

**Premise:** A barbershop called The Quartet in a middle-class area in an unnamed town; time period unknown. The barbershop is operated by four barbers who also form a barbershop quartet singing group.

## **Cast:**

Wallace “Wally” Barton, Barber 1

Gerald “Gerry” Tenore, Barber 2

Rupert “Rube” Alton, Barber 3

Archibald “Archie” Basing, Barber 4

Bo Massey, a homeless vagabond

A mysterious stranger

**Set:** The stage is bisected by a center wall that goes from the back wall toward the audience and acts as the “front” wall of the barber shop. It should have an operational door, a large window, a hanging sign that says “The Quartet” on the front and “The Quintet” on the back (for the epilogue), and a classic barbershop spiral rod. The barbershop interior should be stage left, and both it and the street area should be open to the audience. There should be four barber seats in the shop in front of counters that hold standard barber appurtenances like combs, brushes, scissors, razors, shaving cream, etc, with a fifth set offstage for when the fifth barber is added, and at least four normal seats for waiting customers. The area around them should be wide open to allow lots of rapid movement.

**Wardrobe:** The barbers wear long-sleeved white shirts covered either by matching striped blazers and vests or by dark-colored solid vests, and have aprons to put on while in the shop. Bo is dressed in whatever clothes can be distressed and dirtied, but these should be on top of some nice clothes, which should be on top of clothes that match the barbers’ uniforms. The mysterious stranger will have plain, light-colored clothing. The barbers’ families can be in any plain clothes.

**Props:** Bo will have a backpack full of miscellaneous items, a piece of cardboard as a sign asking for money (the message on the sign should be sincere, not humorous), a cardboard box (presumably to sleep in), and any other items that fit the character. There should be a feather duster, broom, rags, full trash bag, and a spray bottle of window cleaner for the shop, four Christmas carol books, and four newspapers.

**Notes:** Gender-specific pronouns referring to Bo or the mysterious stranger can be switched out as necessary.

## **Act I**

### **Scene I**

**Opening:** the barbershop, empty.

#### **Song “The Merry Twist”**

(Toward the end of the song, the mysterious stranger enters the shop and becomes a customer. Wally starts to cut the stranger’s hair as soon as the song ends and the other three barbers sit in the waiting chairs and start reading newspapers. Bo enters stage right, sets up a cardboard box, and starts unpacking stuff from her backpack. The barbers talk to each other as she does.)

#### **Wally**

(Breaks from cutting the customer’s hair and stares out of the window for a few seconds.) Oh boy, look what just blew into town. There goes Christmas. Gerry, take a look. (Goes back to cutting hair.)

#### **Gerry**

(Puts down newspaper and cranes neck to look through window from his chair.) Oh great. That’s how far we’ve come? Vagabonds running amok for the holidays? Rube, get a load of this. (Elbows Rube and points to the window.)

#### **Rube**

(Gives Gerry an angry look at being elbowed.) Hey! Watch it, wise guy. (Follows Gerry’s pointing hand and looks toward window.) What, you want me to clean the window or something? Do it yourself.

#### **Gerry**

Don’t look *at* the window, Rube, look *through* it.

#### **Rube**

Oh, is that what you do with windows? I didn’t know. (Cranes neck and looks through window.) Oh yeah, yep, there’s someone there alright. Good thing I looked. (Sighs and turns to Archie.) Hey. (Archie doesn’t respond.) Hey you. (Pulls Archie’s newspaper down.) Hey! Archie!

#### **Archie**

What?

#### **Rube**

(Points at window.) Look. It’s a window. (Puts his own newspaper up.)

#### **Wally**

Rube, you can be such a rube sometimes. Archie, come over and take a look.

#### **Archie**

(Crosses to window.) Well my goodness, it’s a real live homeless person!

**Wally**

Yeah, a real live pain in the neck if you ask me. It ruins the image of the neighborhood and could really hurt business. Why don't you go get rid of it?

**Archie**

It? That's a person out there, Wally. How would you feel if you were out there and someone called you "it"?

**Wally**

(Slowly raises voice as he speaks, up to the point of yelling toward window.) I wouldn't be out there in the first place 'cause I'd get up off my lazy bum and get a job!

**Mysterious Stranger**

(Gets up from chair, takes off barber cape, fishes in pockets.)

**Wally**

Hey! I'm not done yet. Do you want me to finish cutting your hair or what?

**Mysterious Stranger**

(Shakes head, then hands Wally a roll of bills and leaves, giving everyone a disapproving look. After leaving the shop, while the others continue to talk, crosses the "street" and gives Bo a roll of bills.)

**Gerry**

What got into him? Did you cut him?

**Wally**

I don't think so. (Examines scissors; sighs and sits in barber chair.)

**Archie**

Maybe he thought your jokes were a bit too harsh. (Crosses to original seat, grabs his newspaper, and sits down.)

**Wally**

(Looks out window.) Great, he's giving the bum some money. Now it'll never leave. (Counts money in roll. Chuckles.) Joke's on him, though: he overpaid me by ten dollars.

**Rube**

(Lowers newspaper.) Can you believe this? (The other three stare at him. Rube continues to look at newspaper in his lap, shaking head.)

**Gerry**

(After a few seconds of silence.) What, Rube?

**Rube**

(Waves hands dismissively.) Oh, nothing, it's just nothing, just this crazy nothing. It's nothing at all. Well okay, get this: some rich guy is wasting all his dough on some homeless shelter downtown. The amount he paid for it, you'd think he could spare a little for a working Joe like me.

**Wally**

You don't make sense often, Rube, but when you do, you really do.

**Rube**

(Chuckling.) I know! (Continues reading, then raises newspaper again.)

**Wally**

Well? Who's the rich guy? Maybe I know him.

**Gerry**

It's too late. He's back in his paper again. I bet I have the same story in mine. (Flips through paper.)

**Archie**

Found it already! It's Barth...(drags out pronunciation of name)...Bartholemew...

**Wally**

Pendleton? I should have known. He can barely keep a dime in his bank accounts because he's always giving it all away. What's the point of being rich if you're always broke?

**Archie**

What's the point of being rich if you're always broken?

**Wally**

(Unenthusiastic.) Oh, touché. Suddenly you're a wordsmith. (Looks out window.) So what are we going to do about this bum?

**Gerry**

Well, we could call the cops.

**Archie**

What good would that do?

**Wally**

Archie's right, they didn't do squat when we had those protesters across the street.

**Archie**

Protesters? I wasn't here for that. What were they protesting?

**Gerry**

They were animal rights activists protesting Bill's leather shop.

**Wally**

Yeah, animal lovers...emphasis on the *lovers*. The cops didn't do anything then and they won't do anything now.

**Rube**

(From behind newspaper.) You could make her want to leave.

**Wally**

(Snaps fingers or claps hands and jumps out of seat.) That's it! Say it again, Rube.

**Rube**

(Lowers newspaper.) You could make her want to leave.

**Wally**

Rube, you're a genius!

**Rube**

I am? I didn't know that.

**Archie**

Make her want to leave?

**Wally**

Exactly. This is what we'll do. (Sits in the empty waiting chair and starts talking to the others quietly.)

**Fade lights. End of scene.**

## **Act I**

### **Scene II**

**Opening:** the barbers are in the shop, Gerry sweeping, Rube dusting with a feather duster, Wally wiping counters, and Archie carrying a full trash bag out stage left.

**Archie**

(Enters stage left after taking out trash.) Trash is out.

**Wally**

Counters are wiped. (Drops rag on one of the barber stations.)

**Gerry**

Floors are swept. (Stands broom against one of the walls.)

**Rube**

(Humming while dusting. The other barbers stare at him while he puts a finishing touch on something, humming along with his dusting. Realizes he's being stared at and looks at the others.) Stuff is dusted.  
(Drops duster on a chair.)

**All**

(Each barber sings the phrase "The shop is closed", sustaining the last note while the next barber sings it and joins with a harmonic note in a classic barbershop quartet introduction. All of them take off aprons, hang them on hooks, and go through the door. Wally turns to lock it behind him.)

**Wally**

(Finishes locking door.) Okay, ready to do this?

**Archie**

I'm not so sure.

**Wally**

It's for her own good. She's better off at a shelter or something, like that new one Pendleton is building.

**Gerry**

Well let's just get it over with, shall we? Then maybe we can put it all behind us.

**Rube**

Let's go for it.

**Wally**

Everyone remember what to do? Just follow my lead.

**All**

(Cross the "street" and approach Bo.)

**Bo**

Hi, fellas. Can you spare a dime?

**Wally**

Can I spare a dime?

**Bo**

Yes, sir. I'm just a little down on my luck, and anything would be a big help right now.

**Wally**

Well, fellas? Can I spare a dime?

**Rube**

Oh my, look at the time.

**Gerry**

Rube, that's a rhyme.

**Archie**

Come on, guys, she's not committing a crime.

**Wally**

(To Archie.) Oh, we know that. We all know that. (To Bo.) In fact, we have a nice Christmas carol just for you.

**All**

(Pull out carol books.)

**Song "Need a Dime"**

**Bo**

(In unison with the last line of the chorus.) Whoa whoa whoa whoa! I get it! You don't want me here. Fine. I'll leave in the morning, but at least let me get a good night's rest, would you?

**Archie**

(Before Wally can speak.) Of course we can. Get some rest and just be gone in the morning. It's Christmas in a few days. Surely you have somewhere else you can be.

**Bo**

No, this is pretty much it. I'll get out of your hair, though.

**Gerry**

(Laughing speech.) Get out of our hair? She's a regular comedian.

**Rube**

I love comedians!

**Gerry**

Rube, I never know when you're joking.

**Rube**

(To Wally.) You know, this wasn't exactly making her *want* to leave, this was more like just *asking* her to leave.

**Wally**

(To Rube.) It worked, didn't it? (To Bo.) If you'd just get a job and become a productive member of society, you wouldn't have this problem. People like you are so useless. (Starts to walk away.)

**Bo**

Well, are you hiring?

**Wally**

(Stops and turns.) No we're not. See that sign? The shop is called The Quartet. It wouldn't make sense to have five barbers, now would it?

**Archie**

Oh I don't know. The Quintet sounds good to me.

**Wally**

Watch it, Archie, or you'll end up just like this lady.

**Archie**

What do you mean?

**Wally**

If you start sympathizing with them, you start thinking like them, and then you end up like them. Mark my words. (To Bo.) I better not see you here in the morning. (Exits stage right.)

**Rube**

My Christmas spirit is exhausted. I'm going home. (Exits stage right.)

**Gerry**

I'm heading home myself. (Exits stage right.)

**Archie**

(Backs away from Bo slowly toward stage right exit. Sighs.) I have to go home, too. (Exits stage right.)

**Bo**

(Hangs head and lets out a huge sigh.) Home.

**Fade lights. End of scene. End of act.**



## Act II

### Scene I

**Opening:** spotlight on Bo, still sitting in the same place from Scene II.

#### Bo

(Stands and slowly crosses to the center wall.) God, why are you letting this happen to me? Haven't I suffered enough? It's not enough that you let the world take away my job, my house, my stuff, and my family, but now you're letting these people bully me, too? It's too much! I can't take it! I can't go on. I...(Turns around in complete circle.)...what was that? What did I just hear? Did I just hear someone talk to me? (Looks around.) There it is again! It sounds like you, God—or at least what I imagine you sound like. You're telling me to "love them". Love them? Love *them*? No, God. No, that's too much. After all that's happened to me, I have no love left to give. These people are too evil to love. Did you hear them? Did you hear what they called me? "Useless"? "Waste of space"? "Zero"? Why do people like that deserve my love? They deserve my vengeance! They...what? There you go again, talking to me. "Vengeance is mine, says the Lord"? No! I want some vengeance for a change! I do! Me! I deserve that! (Looks around.) Stop it! Stop talking back to me! I'm the one with the problem here! I'm the one who's been cheated out of everything! I'm the one who's starving here! I'm the one who's been shunned by humanity and left to die, not you! Not you! Not— (Sudden silence and realization; lost in thought; briefly paces; gets down on knees.) Oh, God, I didn't even think. What am I doing? What I've been through pales in comparison to what you went through on the cross—what I did to you with my sin. And yet you love me. You're right. You're absolutely right. I should love my enemies. I should show love to those bullies. I'm sorry, God. I'm so sorry. I'll try. I'll show them love. (Crosses to box at stage right and sits.) Thank you, God. Amen. (Bows head.)

#### Mysterious Stranger

(Slowly enters stage right and crosses to Bo. Places hand on Bo's head and stands silently for a few seconds. Steps in front of Bo, grab's Bo's shoulders, guides over to "streetside" of center wall, then guides down to sit against wall. Gives Bo a loving pat on the head and slowly exits stage right.)

#### Bo

(Raises head briefly.) Wha...? (Looks around.) How...? So...tired. (Falls asleep against wall.)

**Cut spotlight. End of scene.**

## **Act II**

### **Scene II**

**Opening:** Bo is still slouched against the wall, asleep. The barbers enter stage right.

**Rube**

Oh look, a real live homeless person.

**Gerry**

Fine plan, Wally. Not only did it not work, but it backfired!

**Archie**

That's weird. I wonder why she isn't sleeping in her box.

**Wally**

(Silently marches over to Bo and kicks foot.) Hey! Bum! Get up!

**Bo**

(Startles awake and looks at the barbers, then looks around.) Oh! How did I get over here?

**Wally**

I don't know, but not only are you not gone, now you're in front of our shop scaring away customers!

**Archie**

Come on, Wally, it's not like she has an alarm clock or anything.

**Bo**

(Stands.) I'm sorry about that, but, guys, I'm so glad to see you!

**Wally**

Glad? Are you slow?

**Gerry**

How can you be glad to see us?

**Bo**

Last night, I talked to God, and He told me how much He loves you. If He loves you, how can I do any differently?

**Wally**

(Crosses to shop door and unlocks and opens it. The other barbers remain silent for a few seconds, just staring at Bo.) Okay, guys, it's time to open up shop.

**Rube**

Ah, look, it's a door. (Enters shop.)

**Gerry**

Indeed it is. (Enters shop.)

**Archie**

(Still staring.) God told you? How?

**Wally**

Archie! It's time to open up shop!

**Archie**

And so it is! (Enters shop.)

**Wally**

Scram. (Enters shop and shuts door.)

**All**

(All barbers put on aprons; Gerry and Rube sit in waiting chairs, Wally sits in a barber chair, and Archie stands at window. Bo crosses "street" and starts picking up belongings very slowly.)

**Wally**

So what was that all about?

**Gerry**

I don't know, but I'm sure she doesn't want to leave now.

**Archie**

She's picking up her stuff.

**Wally**

Finally! People want to look nice for Christmas, so they come in here for a last-minute trim, and they don't want to be bothered or made to feel guilty by a bunch of bums!

**Gerry**

Riff-raff, I say!

**Rube**

Hobos!

**Archie**

(With sympathy.) Homeless.

**Wally**

They come in here and want to take over!

**Gerry**

They are the undesirable elements of society that illuminate the growing division between socioeconomic classes!

**Rube**

(Waits a beat.) They stink!

**Archie**

They just need a little help.

**Gerry**

A little help? If we give them a little help, it turns into a bum rush!

**Song "Bum's Rush"**

**All**

(By the end of the song, the barbers end up back in their original positions; Wally, Gerry, and Rube raise their newspapers in unison.)

**Archie**

Well, I have something to take care of in the back room anyway. (Exits stage left.)

**Gerry**

(After Archie exits, lowers newspaper.) What could he possibly need in the back room? There's nothing back there.

**Rube**

(Lowers newspaper.) Maybe he needs some bobby pins.

**Gerry**

We don't have bobby pins.

**Rube**

Well then what could he possibly need in the back room? There's nothing back there.

**Gerry**

That's exactly what I just said.

**Rube**

No it isn't.

**Gerry**

(Sigh.) Then what exactly did I say?

**Rube**

You said, "What could he possibly need in the back room? There's nothing back there."

**Gerry**

(Glances away as if in brief thought, and then glances back.) Then what did you say?

**Rube**

I said, "*Well then* what could he possibly need in the back room? There's nothing back there."

**Gerry**

You're impossible.

**Rube**

I'm sitting right here. You can see me. Therefore, I am not impossible.

**Gerry**

You know what I meant.

**Rube**

You mean I'm a mind reader? I didn't know that. (Waits a beat.) What am I thinking now?

**Wally**

(Lowers newspaper, stands, and crosses to Gerry and Rube.) Will you two knock it off? You're wearing me out already and we just started.

**Rube**

Hey, where's Archie?

**Gerry**

Are you deaf and blind? He went to the back room.

**Rube**

Ha! What could he possibly need in the back room? There's nothing back there. (Shakes head and raises newspaper.)

**Gerry and Wally**

Ugh! (Throw hands up; Wally walks back to chair.)

**Gerry**

(To Wally.) He's doing it on purpose, you know.

**Wally**

I know. Just ignore him. Maybe he'll go away. (Raises newspaper.)

**Gerry**

Don't get your hopes up. (Raises newspaper.)

**Fade lights. End of scene. End of act.**

## **Act III**

### **Scene I**

**Opening:** Wally, Gerry, and Rube are still in their positions in the shop, and Bo is sitting, packing stuff into the backpack.

**Archie**

(Enters stage right.) Psst. Hey.

**Bo**

(Looks around.) Huh? Who? (Notices Archie approaching and stands up.) Oh, hello. I'm gathering my stuff like you asked. How'd you get over there?

**Archie**

I used the back door of the shop and walked around. Can I ask you something?

**Bo**

Sure.

**Archie**

What did you mean when you said God told you? Did you see him? Do you really believe he's there?

**Bo**

I didn't see Him, but I definitely believe He's there. He talked to me through His Holy Spirit, who lives in me. He told me that He loves you and me deeply.

**Archie**

But you're homeless. That just doesn't seem like something a loving god would allow to happen. If he's there and he loves us, why are there homeless people at all? Why is there pain and strife?

**Bo**

Whoa, those are big questions, Archie. Probably the biggest. I'm Bo, by the way. (Shake hands.) I'd love to discuss this with you in greater detail, but I can start by saying that God tells me this world is temporary. The wealth people accumulate, the ancient artifacts they collect, the air they breathe, the very lives they have, it's all temporary. And I won't lie, I was mad at God for taking some of those away from me.

**Archie**

You were mad at god?

**Bo**

Sure, but He reminded me that I have what's most important: a relationship with Him, the knowledge that He has plans to prosper me, and the assurance of an eternity with Him. I also have my free will, which gives me the freedom to decide whether or not I believe in Him or even love Him. It's also part of the reason He allows strife to exist. Challenge, strife, pain—these things help us grow more than anything else—it's just how we're built.

**Archie**

But if god built us and loves us and he wants our love that much, why didn't he just make it so we'd *have* to love him?

**Bo**

What, build us already programmed? Like a robot? A robot programmed to love doesn't have the choice not to love, so is it really love? I don't pretend to know what God is thinking, but I do know we would have no chance to exercise free will if we didn't have an alternative path. If we have the opportunity to hate or ignore God because He allows pain, strife, and death to exist, or doesn't shelter and pamper us like we want, but we still love Him anyway, that love is borne of free will. The good news is that pain and strife are temporary, and death is not all there is. I was mad about my situation, but I believe God has me where I am for a reason.

**Archie**

You sound like a preacher. Is that what you used to be?

**Bo**

No, I've just studied a lot. (Motions to backpack and gear.) I've had plenty of time to do so.

**Archie**

This is a lot to take in. Can we talk more later?

**Bo**

Uh, sure. As soon as I pack up, I'll probably head over to...

**Archie**

No. No. Tomorrow's Christmas Eve, and no one should spend it alone. I have the next two days off. Come spend Christmas with me.

**Bo**

(Taken aback, emotional.) Oh wow. Wow. I don't...I don't know what to say.

**Archie**

(Looks at shop.) You don't have to say anything. (Looks back.) Just gather your stuff and meet me down the block after work.

**Bo**

(Nods.)

**Archie**

Okay, see you later. (Exits stage right.)

**Fade lights. End of scene.**

## **Act III**

### **Scene II**

**Opening:** all four barbers are seated with their newspapers in front of them. Bo is offstage.

**Gerry**

(Lowers newspaper rapidly.) Well this is pointless. We haven't had a customer all day.

**Wally**

(Lowers newspaper and looks at watch.) Good thing it's nearly closing time. Let's close a little early.

**Rube**

(Lowers newspaper.) Early? Closing early? (Turns to Archie.) Hey. (Archie doesn't respond.) Hey you.  
(Pulls Archie's newspaper down.) Hey! Archie!

**Archie**

What?

**Rube**

We're closing early. Don't get locked in.

**Archie**

Oh good.

**All**

(All four barbers start trying to clean.)

**Gerry**

(Makes big sweeps and keeps examining the floor.) Well there's no dirt or hair in here.

**Archie**

There's no trash to take out.

**Wally**

There's nothing to clean.

**Rube**

I found something! (The other three look at him as he carefully touches the feather duster to a spot.)  
Okay, got it. All clean.

**Wally**

Okay, let's get out of here.

**All**

(Everyone takes off their aprons and hangs them on hooks as they go through the shop door. Wally turns and locks it behind him.)



**Gerry**

Merry Christmas, fellas.

**Rube**

Merry Christmas, fellas!

**Wally**

Merry Christmas!

**Archie**

Merry Christmas, guys!

**Gerry and Rube**

(Start to head toward stage right exit. Just as they reach it, Bo enters stage right and starts walking downstage.)

**Rube**

Hey, look, a real live homeless person.

**Gerry**

What are you doing here, riff-raff? I guess that explains why we didn't have any business today: you've been hanging around.

**Wally**

Okay, bum, this is the last straw. If you're not going to scram on your own, we're gonna have to make you scram. (Wally starts pushing up his sleeves and getting closer to Bo.)

**Archie**

(Steps between Bo and the other barbers.) No! That's enough.

**All**

(Wally takes a few steps back. Archie steps forward and Bo heads back upstage.)

**Wally**

Archie, what are you doing? We've got to get this bum out of here!

**Archie**

I don't know what you were about to do, but leave her alone. You've been downright horrible!

**Gerry**

We've been horrible? She's the reason we were dead today!

**Archie**

You don't know that.

**Rube**

It doesn't matter what we know! I don't know anything, but she's still gotta go!

**Gerry**

Rube, you're such a rube!

**Archie**

She's here right now because I asked her to meet me.

**Rube**

Are you going on a date?

**Archie**

She's spending Christmas with me because she has nowhere else to go.

**Wally**

Archie, you've never been a Good Samaritan before. Why now? We're not a charity. When this bum's friends find out you're helping, they're all going to come around looking for handouts and scaring away even more customers. It's bad for business!

**Rube**

She has friends?

**Gerry**

Yes, and they're very bad for business.

**Song "Bum Friends are Bad for Business" (quartet battle)**

**Wally**

Well it's a shame we're going to have to find a new fourth barber now.

**Archie**

You're firing me? Just like that? For what? For sticking up for a fellow human being? It's Christmas! You're being such bullies!

**Gerry**

You're just being whiny.

**Archie**

But at least I'm being human! And you can't fire me.

**Rube**

We can't? Why?

**Archie**

Because I quit.

**Rube**

I've always wanted to use that line.

**Bo**

Archie! I can't let you do this. (To Wally.) I'll leave for good, just don't fire him.

**Archie**

No. It's my choice. I didn't realize I worked with such heartless bigots.

**Wally**

Well, I never! (Exit stage right, followed by Gerry and Rube.)

**Bo**

Archie, I didn't mean to get you fired.

**Archie**

It's not your fault, Bo. Don't even begin to think that. It was my choice and mine alone. Let's just go have the best Christmas anyone's ever had. (Exit stage right with Bo.)

**Fade lights. End of scene. End of act.**

## Act IV

### Scene I

**Opening:** this scene has no words. Play a Christmas song on the loud speakers as it goes. Open with spotlight on Archie and Bo sitting at a small table playing cards. Bo is cleaned up and looks nice. After about 10 seconds, spotlight pans to Wally sitting with his wife and kids. After 10 seconds, pan to Gerry sitting with his arm around his wife. After 10 seconds, pan to Rube doing something unexpected, like driving a go-kart or hitting a piñata with his kids. After 10 seconds, pan back to Archie and Bo just talking instead of playing cards. The spotlight keeps panning at irregular intervals, prompted by the events in each scene, but pans back to Archie and Bo after each prompt.

Each scene progresses differently throughout, changing each time the spotlight pans over:

Archie and Bo get progressively better: perhaps they enjoy a nice ham roast or give each other white elephant gifts, but mostly they just sit and talk at the table, obviously enjoying it.

Wally and his family get progressively worse: they start by letting the kids open just one gift for Christmas Eve, then Wally taps his wristwatch to indicate the kids need to go to bed. The kids start acting up, jumping and running all over the place, and Wally drops his head into his hands. His wife looks like she yells at him to help with the kids, and eventually, he throws some wrapping paper into the air and walks out of the spotlight.

Gerry and his wife get progressively worse: they start by watching TV or a movie. Gerry tries to change the channel or pause it with the remote, but can't get it to respond, so he checks the batteries and finds they're dead. He gets up to look for more batteries, but can't find any, so has to change the channel or pause the movie manually. When he sits back down, he puts his arm around his wife and tries to cuddle, but she pushes him away and points to the TV. He acts frustrated and gets up to change the channel or hit play manually. When he sits back down, his wife is holding the car keys, as if to tell him to go get more batteries. He snatches the keys from her and leaves the spotlight.

Rube and his kids get progressively worse: they start off having lots of fun, but Rube gets tired eventually and sits down. His kids try to get him to get up and play, but he's too tired, so they start hitting him with foam sticks or rubber bats instead. He just sits with his chin in his hands the rest of the time, being pummeled or climbed on by his kids.

By the end of the scene and the song, Wally, Gerry, and Rube are in complete disarray, and Archie and Bo are still talking, obviously fascinated by the topic of conversation. Spotlight ends on Archie and Bo.

**Cut spotlight. End of scene.**

## **Act IV**

### **Scene II**

**Opening:** the barbershop, empty.

**Wally**

(Enters stage right and unlocks the shop door. Enters shop. Puts on apron, sits in barber chair, and sighs. Puts head in hands.) Wow. What a Christmas.

**Gerry**

(Enters stage right, enters shop. Puts hand up in stopping motion to tell Wally not to say anything. Puts on apron, sits in barber chair next to Wally, and sighs. Puts head in hands.) Wow. What a Christmas.

**Rube**

(Enters stage right hurriedly, enters shop. Puts hand up in stopping motion to tell Wally and Gerry not to say anything. Hurriedly tries to put on apron, but gets frustrated with it. Throws apron on floor, sits in barber chair next to Gerry, and lets out long, relaxing sigh. Slowly puts head in hands.) Wow. What a Christmas.

**All**

(The three barbers look at the door as if expecting something, then look at the empty barber seat.)

**Rube**

(Slightly sad.) He's not coming in, is he?

**Gerry**

Nope. We fired him.

**Rube**

Well why'd we go and do a thing like that?

**Wally**

Because!

**Gerry**

Yeah! Because!

**Rube**

Oh. Well I guess we need to find a new one, then, huh?

**Wally**

Yep. I'll take out an ad first thing in the morning.

**Rube**

Too bad. (Gerry and Wally give him a sharp look.) Too bad that he had to go and get himself fired.

**All**

(All three pick up newspapers and put them in front of their faces to read.)

**Rube**

(Lowers newspaper.) You know, I've been thinking.

**Gerry**

(Lowers newspaper. Sarcastic.) That's amazing! Tell me more.

**Rube**

Okay, well, while I was having the worst Christmas celebration ever...

**Gerry**

(Interrupting.) I wasn't actually asking.

**Rube**

I know! I'm telling you anyway! While I was having the worst Christmas celebration ever...

**Wally**

(Interrupting. Lowers newspaper.) You think your Christmas was bad? I spent mine being deafened by yelling children and a screaming wife!

**Rube**

I'm trying to tell a story!

**Gerry**

(To Wally.) That's it? That's nothing. My wife and I were trying to find Christmas specials to watch, but the batteries in the remote were dead. She made me go out in a blizzard to get new ones, and I got so stuck, I had to get three tow trucks to pull me out!

**Wally**

We didn't have a blizzard.

**Gerry**

I had one in my house!

**Rube**

Guys!

**Gerry**

What?

**Rube**

I'm trying to tell you my story! Yours were walks in the park compared to mine! I spent all Christmas suffering physical abuse at the hands of merciless hooligans!

**Gerry**

You mean your kids?

**Rube**

Yes! And while I was being tortured, I thought long and hard about how we treated Archie and his little homeless friend.

**Wally**

Wait, you're on the bum's side now?

**Rube**

I just don't think we should have treated any human being that way. I knew it was wrong, but I didn't say anything, so I'm saying it now.

**Wally**

Thinking isn't your strong suit, Rube. That bum is better off joining polite society or avoiding it entirely.

**Rube**

You're one to talk about polite after the way you treated Archie!

**Gerry**

Well yeah, but you're just as guilty! You treated him the same way!

**Rube**

(Sits back in chair and looks down, dejected.) I know, and I feel awful about it.

**All**

(Raise newspapers again.)

**Archie and Bo**

(Enter stage right. Bo is cleaned up and in nice clothes. Archie stares at shop for a few seconds.) Okay, stay here. I'll just be a minute. (Crosses "street" and enters shop.)

**Wally**

(Slowly lowers newspaper.) Well look what the cat coughed up. Gerry, look who's here.

**Gerry**

(Quickly lowers newspaper.) Oh, it's you. (Elbows Rube.) Rube, look who's here. (Points at Archie.)

**Rube**

(Lowers newspaper. Angrily looks at Gerry.) Hey! Watch it, wise guy! (Follows Gerry's pointing arm.) Look who it is! (Leans toward empty chair without looking at it.) Hey—(Looks at empty chair.)—oh, that's right. (Points to Archie.) You're over there.

**Wally**

What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be at home with your new friend?

**Archie**

No, I should be out finding a new job, but something told me I should be here instead. I've been talking to Bo recently.

**Rube**  
Who's Bo?

**Archie**  
The homeless lady. She told me about the true meaning of Christmas, and about God and Jesus and all sorts of amazing, exciting stuff, and she makes a lot of sense! I also found out she actually used to cut hair, so...are you guys hiring?

**Rube**  
Yes, actually, we were just...

**Wally**  
(Interrupting.) No, we're not hiring right now. She'll just have to look elsewhere.

**Archie**  
I figured as much. Well, I guess all I have left to say is that I forgive you for firing me.

**Rube**  
You...forgive us?

**Wally**  
What? We don't need your forgiveness. Right, Gerry?

**Gerry**  
(Silent, staring at Archie.)

**Archie**  
More importantly, God forgives you, and He forgave me, and I'm beginning to see what Bo meant when she told us God loves us. It's just...beautiful, and I hope you fellas get to see that beauty someday. Goodbye. (Exits shop and crosses "street" to join Bo.)

**Wally**  
Can you believe him? How pompous! How arrogant! A couple of days with some hobo and now he thinks he's better than us! All that bum wants to talk about is god!

**Rube**  
(With a dismissive tone, a la "It's only a harmless thing".) All she wants to talk about is God.

**Gerry**  
(Inquisitive.) All she wants to talk about is God?

**Song "All She Wants to Talk About is God"**

(All end up outside of shop by the end of the song.)

**Rube**  
Well, fellas, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.



**Gerry**

I agree! I'm sorry we treated you so poorly.

**Bo**

It's okay, guys. I forgive you.

**Gerry**

I think we should give Archie his old job back immediately, and I think it's time to sign on a new barber.

**Rube**

Yeah! Whaddaya say, Bo? Want to be a barber?

**Bo**

Oh wow! Wow! Sure! If it's okay with everyone, I guess.

**Archie**

How about it, Wally? Is it okay?

**Wally**

(Silence for a few seconds, then speaks to Bo.) I treated you like dirt. I trashed you behind your back and to your face. And yet you showed me nothing but love in return. I didn't know how to react to that. I thought you were just too dumb to comprehend. I didn't understand then, but I understand now: despite your situation, you knew you were loved, and it gave you joy in the face of despair—it helped you endure. I want to learn more about that, so you have to teach me, and that means you have to stick around. (Smiles, puts arm around Bo.) Welcome to the club, Bo!

(Everyone rejoices.)

**Mysterious Stranger**

(Enters stage right. Walks up to rejoicing crowd.) Hey. Are you the barbers?

**All**

(Look at each other, look back at person. In unison.) Yes we are! (Enter shop.)

**Fade lights. End of scene. End of act.**

## **Epilogue**

**Opening:** the barbershop, a year later, the day before Christmas Eve. The sign now reads “The Quintet”. The five barbers are cleaning, reprising their earlier cleaning roles, but Bo is also wiping the window.

### **Archie**

(Carries full trash bag to stage left. Exits stage left. Enters stage left a few seconds later.) Trash is out.

### **Wally**

Counters are wiped. (Drops rag on one of the barber stations.)

### **Gerry**

Floors are swept. (Stands broom against one of the walls.)

### **Bo**

Windows are squeaky. (Sets rag and spray bottle down on a barber station.)

### **Rube**

(Humming while dusting. The other barbers stare at him while he puts a finishing touch on something, humming along with his dusting. Realizes he’s being stared at and looks at the others.) Stuff is dusted.  
(Drops duster on a chair.)

### **All**

(Each barber sings the phrase “The shop is closed”, reprising the earlier harmony, but as a quintet. All of them take off aprons, hang them on hooks, and go through the door. Wally turns to lock it behind him.)

### **Wally**

You know, Bo, it’s been almost a year since you joined our team.

### **Bo**

And it’s been a great year!

### **Wally**

Instead of just going to our homes tonight, let’s celebrate as a group.

### **Archie**

That’s a great idea! How about some cards?

### **Gerry**

Let’s watch a movie!

### **Rube**

Or perhaps some bowling?

### **Wally**

I have an even better idea. (Faces audience.) The biggest enemy of compassion isn’t hatred, it’s apathy, and we can no longer sit idly by and watch God’s children suffer. Somewhere in this city is a human

being in need of a little help; someone whose life didn't turn out quite as expected; someone who needs a home. Let's go find that person and let's be that help.

**Song "Be"**

**All**

(The other barbers pat Wally on the back or shoulder, and all exit stage right.)

**Mysterious Stranger**

(Enters stage left, from the "back room" of the shop. Walks up to window and looks out, as if watching the barbers walk away. Walks toward audience, then smiles, takes a slight bow, and exits stage left.)

**Fade lights. End of play.**