**Oklahoma!** By Rodgers and Hammerstein

**Show Synopsis**

- **Act One** -

It is a radiant summer morning. Aunt Eller sits out on her farm in Indian Territory, looking over the horizon while churning butter. Curly, a local ranch hand, comes to call with a serenade: Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'. El ler’s niece, Laurey, and Curly are smitten with one another, but both are too proud and stubborn to admit it. When Curly grandly offers to take Laurey to the Box Social that evening, she doubts that he can escort her in proper style (The Surrey with the Fringe on Top.) Jud Fry, the hired hand, lets it be known that he intends to ask Laurey to the Social and she, intimidated by Jud, is too frightened to turn him down. Curly, hurt by Laurey’s apparent ambivalence, invites Aunt Eller to ride to the Box Social with him.

At the train station in Claremore, Will Parker receives a hero’s welcome upon his return from Kansas City. While there he won enough prize money at the rodeo -- $50! -- to earn the hand of Ado Annie, whose strict Pa, Andrew Carnes, wasn't going to let Will marry his daughter without cash up front. But Will has a new problem he doesn’t even know about yet: in his absence Annie has taken up with the exotic Persian peddler man, Ali Hakim. Annie confides to Laurey that she can’t choose between Will and Ali. (I Cain’t Say No.)

As folks begin to gather at Aunt Eller’s on their way to the Social, Curly is set upon by a shrieking flirt, Gertie Cummings. The other girls gather around Laurey, buzzing with the news, but she airily tosses their concerns away. (Many a New Day)

Meanwhile, even if Ado Annie can’t choose between Will and Ali Hakim, her father sees no such dilemma; as far as he’s concerned, Ali’s sweet talk to his daughter amounts to nothing less than a proposal of marriage. In case Ali doesn’t get the message, Carnes delivers it with his shotgun. Ali is trapped. (It’s a Scandal! It’s a Outrage!)

Laurey and Curly are still tentative with each other, but they admit that folks are beginning to talk. (People Will Say We’re in Love.) Curly questions Laurey about her plans to go with Jud to the Social but can’t seem to change her mind. Stung, Curly decides to visit Jud down at the Smokehouse where the hired hand lives.

Curly tries a novel approach with the unpopular Jud: people may not like you while you’re alive, he reasons, but think of how much they’ll weep for you when you’re dead! (Pore Jud is Daid) But the real purpose behind Curly’s visit is soon obvious: Laurey. Both men want her, and both men are ready to fight for her. After Curly departs, Jud thinks it through-- Laurey is even worth killing for. Jud is desperate for a woman, desperate to escape his Lonely Room.

Earlier, Laurey had let the Peddler Man sell her a vial of smelling salts that he claimed was nothing less than the "Elixir of Egypt," a potion to help clarify her thoughts. Now, fraught by her feelings for Curly and her fear of Jud, Laurey gives the Elixir a try. (Out of My Dreams.) In a swirl of dream images, Laurey sees herself marrying Curly when Jud invades the wedding; he carries her off, thwarts Curly’s attempts to rescue her, and, after a horrific struggle, kills Curly. Laurey awakes from her nightmare with a start...and finds Jud offering his arm, ready to escort her to the Box Social.

- **Act Two** -

Despite plenty of division between farmers and cowmen, the community has come together to raise money for a new schoolhouse. High-spirited and competitive, the different factions meet that night at the Box Social where they manage to dance a little -- and fight a lot. (The Farmer and The Cowman.). Funding for the schoolhouse is earned by bids placed on each of the picnic hampers prepared by the farm girls. As the auction begins, under the stern eye and sturdy gavel of Aunt Eller, Ali Hakim has a transaction of his own to see through. In order to maneuver his way out of marrying Ado Annie, Ali contrives to pay $50 for all the gifts Will bought in Kansas City. With cash in hand, Will can once again claim Ado Annie for himself.
The crowd is ready to bid on the final two hampers -- Ado Annie's, and Laurey's. Will trumps everyone by bidding his $50 on Annie's hamper; Carnes mocks him because, with the money now going towards the schoolhouse, Will is broke once more. Ali, who really wants to stay a bachelor, swallows hard and outbids Will by $1. Ali gets Annie's hamper, but Will gets Annie. Now Will and Ado are in a position to talk about their future together (All or Nothin').

One picnic basket is left: Laurey's. Curly and Jud outlast the other bidders and now they are clearly determined to outlast each other as their bids climb higher and higher. It's a showdown, and it isn't about Laurey's hamper anymore; it's about Laurey herself. Determined to be the winner, Curly sells everything he owns and gets the box for the exorbitant price of $42.31.

Three weeks later, the marriage of Curly and Laurey takes place. Jud, drunk, breaks into the festivities and threatens Curly with a knife. In the ensuing brawl Jud falls on the blade and dies. A makeshift trial is hurriedly improvised by Judge Carnes so as not to delay the young couple. Curly is acquitted of murder, and is free to go off with his bride on their honeymoon (Oklahoma!).

Source(s):
http://www.allmusicals.com/