

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*Hugh Fiedler .....21, a Hollywood location scout with a love of musicals*  
*Charlotte.....20, the smartest girl in her family, who doesn't suffer fools gladly*  
*Billy.....16, a teenager with a passion for rock & roll*  
*Archie Bradley..... early 40s, a lovable innkeeper who lives in the past*  
*Ginny Bradley.....early 40s, Archie's star-struck wife*  
*Mr. Green\*..... late 30s, a cocky, successful local realtor*  
*Mr. Goldnick\*.....50, Fiedler's gruff Hollywood studio boss*

*(\*Mr. Green and Mr. Goldnick are played by the same actor.)*

### TIME

April, 1954

### PLACE

The Rocking Chair Inn in Fish Creek, Wisconsin

PROLOGUE

(FIEDLER enters from the audience, cheerfully taking in his surroundings. **1.** "Prologue".)

FIEDLER

Oh what a beautiful morning! Oh, what a beautiful day!  
OH, DOOR COUNTY HASN'T CHANGED ONE BIT.  
IT'S JUST AS I REMEMBER IT.  
THE CHERRY TREES, THE SMOG-FREE AIR.  
I LOVE IT HERE. THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE IT ANYWHERE.  
NOW I'M BACK, TO MY SURPRISE.  
COULD IT BE FISH CREEK IS WHERE MY FUTURE LIES?

(MR. GREEN enters wearing a green blazer advertising "Green Realty". HE is bemused by Fiedler's singing.)

MR. GREEN

Do you always go around singing in public?

FIEDLER

I'm afraid I do. My life is a musical. I sing when I'm happy, I sing when I'm sad. You see, I'm from Hollywood, and -

MR. GREEN

That explains it.

FIEDLER

No, I'm a Hollywood location scout; I'm singing because I'm so excited to bring a big movie musical to film in Door County. The cast and crew will stay right here in Fish Creek!

MR. GREEN

You don't say.

(hands him a business card)

Bob Green; top-selling realtor of 1954. Let me recommend a newly renovated hotel I just sold; the Kansas City Inn. It's ultra-modern. Everything's up-to-date in Kansas City.

FIEDLER

Thanks, but I have my heart set on the Rocking Chair Inn.

MR. GREEN

Archie Bradley hasn't done a thing to that tired old Rocking Chair in years. But at the Kansas City - they've gone about as far as they can go!

FIEDLER

I stayed at the Rocking Chair Inn when I was a kid, and I never forgot the place. It's so charming; the same family still owns it. I can't imagine booking anyplace else.

(increasingly excited)

When I think how lucky I am, it makes me so happy that I could just -

MR. GREEN

(cutting him off)

Are you going sing again?

FIEDLER

I think I am.

MR. GREEN

I'm out.

(MR. GREEN exits. FIEDLER happily steps up to the front porch of the Rocking Chair Inn.)

FIEDLER

STARTING NOW, MY STAR WILL RISE!

COULD IT BE FISH CREEK IS WHERE MY FUTURE LIES?

(with excited determination)

YES, FISH CREEK IS WHERE MY FUTURE LIES!

Scene 1

The parlor of the Rocking Chair Inn. There is an upright piano in the room, a front desk area, and the eponymous old rocking chair. Downstage Right is the front porch. The door to an offstage kitchen is at Stage Left, and a door to a coat closet is Upstage Center. The Inn itself has seen better days. While charming, it could use an update.

(FIEDLER, steps inside the Inn to find expectantly enthusiastic innkeepers ARCHIE and GINNY BRADLEY, and their daughter, CHARLOTTE. **2. "Oklahoma in Wisconsin".**)

ARCHIE

(excited, chomping at the bit)  
Have you made your decision, Fiedler?

GINNY

Are movie stars coming to stay here?

FIEDLER

GET READY!

GINNY/ARCHIE/CHARLOTTE

GET READY!

FIEDLER

IT'S COMING!

GINNY/ARCHIE/CHARLOTTE

IT'S COMING!

CHARLOTTE

I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW LUCKY WE ARE.

ARCHIE

WONDERFUL NEWS!

GINNY

CAN'T WAIT TO SCHMOOZE.  
ME AND A MOVIE STAR!

ARCHIE  
IT'S THRILLING!

GINNY/CHARLOTTE  
SO THRILLING!

ARCHIE  
EXCITING!

GINNY/CHARLOTTE  
EXCITING!

FIEDLER  
AN ADVENTURE'S ABOUT TO BEGIN.

ARCHIE/GINNY/CHARLOTTE  
WE'LL SEE THAT EACH GUEST  
LEAVES HERE IMPRESSED  
WITH THE BEST OF THE ROCKING CHAIR INN!

FIEDLER  
Mr. Bradley, I'm booking every room here at the Rocking Chair  
Inn for the entire summer.

ARCHIE  
Oh boy!

FIEDLER  
HOLLYWOOD IS COMING TO WISCONSIN  
WITH RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN IN TOW.

CHARLOTTE  
IT'S FUNNY IN AN ODD WAY

GINNY  
WE'LL HOST THE TOAST OF BROADWAY.

FIEDLER  
AS THEY FILM THE FILM OF THEIR MOST FAMOUS SHOW.

ARCHIE  
This movie ought to put Wisconsin on the map! What's it called?

FIEDLER

"Oklahoma!"

ALL

"OKLAHOMA" IS COMING TO WISCONSIN!

CHARLOTTE

I WONDER IF THEY'RE SHOOTING IN 3-D?

GINNY

LISTEN TO YOUR MAMA  
I BET IT'S CINERAMA.

FIEDLER

IT WON'T BE LONG UNTIL YOU GET TO SEE!

ALL

WHEN HOLLYWOOD BRINGS "OKLAHOMA" TO WISCONSIN!

CHARLOTTE

Mr. Fiedler, why would you want to make the movie here instead of in, say, Oklahoma?

FIEDLER

Well, Miss Bradley-

CHARLOTTE

(warmly, to Fiedler)  
Call me Charlotte.

FIEDLER

(a nervous spark of attraction)  
Charlotte. Oklahoma has too many oil wells dotting the landscape. Wisconsin doesn't.

ARCHIE

I guess we look more like Oklahoma than Oklahoma!

GINNY

And we've got "corn as high as an elephant's eye" right here in Door County.

ARCHIE

Amen!

(THE FAMILY huddles in excitement as FIEDLER steps forward, happily lost in a memory.)

FIEDLER

OH, IT FEELS LIKE WHEN I SUMMERED HERE.  
THERES'S MUSIC IN THE ATMOSPHERE.  
THIS FAMILY LIVES IN HARMONY  
OH, THAT'S THE WAY I'D LIKE MY LIFE TO BE.

(GINNY interrupts Fiedler, WHO snaps back into the present.)

GINNY

(excited at the thought)  
Mr. Fiedler, which movie actors will be staying with us?

FIEDLER

That's confidential.  
(whispering)  
But it'll be some pretty big stars.

GINNY

Oh, my!

ALL

(loud)

BIG STARS ARE COMING TO WISCONSIN!

GINNY

OH GOD, HOW I PRAY IT'S DORIS DAY!  
IMAGINE DARLING DORIS  
BELTING OUT A CHORUS  
AT THE PARLOR PIANO WHILE I PLAY!

(BILLY, 16, enters, playfully hitting the front desk bell on his way in.)

GINNY

(excited)  
Maybe that's Doris now!

FIEDLER

The movie won't start filming until next month, Mrs. Bradley.

GINNY

(embarrassed, covering for it)  
I knew that.

(BILLY walks into the parlor.)

BILLY

Hey Mom. Hey Pops. Hey Sis.

(BILLY notices that THEY are all expectantly smiling at him.)

BILLY

What's with the eyeballs?

ARCHIE

We got great news today, kiddo!

CHARLOTTE

Mr. Fiedler says they're gonna make a movie musical here.

BILLY

Coolio! Which one?

GINNY

"Oklahoma!" Isn't it wonderful, Billy?

BILLY

(shrugging, unimpressed)

Eh.

ALL (EXCEPT BILLY)

BUT BIG STARS ARE COMING TO WISCONSIN!

BILLY

IT'S NOT LIKE ELVIS PRESLEY'S ON HIS WAY.

I'D BE A BIT MORE JOLLY

IF IT WAS BUDDY HOLLY

OR A FAR-OUT ROCK & ROLLER ANY DAY.

ARCHIE

Hey! I don't want any talk of "rock and/or roll" in this house.

BILLY

Sorry, Pops. But don't expect me to have a cow over a bunch of Hollywood squares.

CHARLOTTE

It's gonna be great for the Inn, Billy.

GINNY

I'll say!

ARCHIE

Business will boom again, like it did in the old days.

BILLY

I just wish something cool would happen around here.

ARCHIE

Are you kidding?!

HOLLYWOOD IS COMING TO WISCONSIN  
EVEN THOUGH IT MAY NOT BE YOUR DREAM.

GINNY

(encouraging him)

ANY STORM WE'LL WEATHER  
IF WE STICK TOGETHER.

ARCHIE/GINNY/CHARLOTTE

CAN'T WE BE A FAMILY AND A TEAM?  
FOR HOLLYWOOD  
IS GONNA FILM IN OUR HOME TOWN.

ALL

SO "OKLAHOMA" IS COMING TO WISCONSIN!

BILLY

(still unenthused, but on board for the family's sake)

I PROMISE I WILL TREAT THEM WITH REGARD.

GINNY

ATTA BOY, I KNEW IT!

ARCHIE

THAT'S THE WAY WE DO IT WHEN

ARCHIE/GINNY

HOLLYWOOD

CHARLOTTE/BILLY/FIEDLER

HOLLYWOOD

ARCHIE/GINNY

BRINGS "OKLAHOMA"

CHARLOTTE/BILLY/FIEDLER  
"OKLAHOMA"

ARCHIE/GINNY  
TO WISCONSIN.

CHARLOTTE/BILLY/FIEDLER  
TO WISCONSIN.

ALL  
HERE IN OUR OWN BACKYARD!

SCENE 2

Immediately following. Everyone is filled with excitement.

ARCHIE

I wonder if Rodgers & Hammerstein like to fish? I'd better buy some extra fishing gear, just in case.

GINNY

And I'd love to impress our Hollywood guests with some plush new wall-to-wall carpeting!

BILLY

I vote we score a hi-fi for the parlor. Our old Victrola is positively from the Stone Age.

FIEDLER

That's the spirit; go to town!

CHARLOTTE

Hold it, everyone. We don't have the money for any of that just yet.

(nicely, to Fiedler)

Obviously, we are very excited about this, Mr. Fiedler. When will we get a deposit to hold the rooms?

FIEDLER

If you'll point me to a telephone, I'll get my boss on the line right away.

CHARLOTTE

Wonderful! You can use the phone on my desk.

(CHARLOTTE leads him to her desk and picks up the phone handset.)

FIEDLER

Do you have something I can write with?

CHARLOTTE

Of course; there's a pen around here somewhere. Here, hold this.

(SHE hands him the handset. While looking for a pen and paper THEY unwittingly become tangled face-to-face in the phone cord.)

FIEDLER  
 Oops, careful!  
 The cord.  
 That's okay.  
 Here, let me help.

CHARLOTTE  
 Oh, dear, I seem to have got a  
 little tangled.  
 How clumsy of me!  
 I think I've got it.

(THEY clumsily untangle themselves and laugh awkwardly.)

CHARLOTTE  
 I'm terribly sorry.

FIEDLER  
 Not at all. It - it was my fault.

CHARLOTTE  
 (to her family, trying to cover for her embarrassment)  
 Come on, everyone; let's give Mr. Fiedler some privacy so he can  
 place his call.

BILLY  
 Didn't I see that telephone bit on "I Love Lucy" last week?

(BILLY, CHARLOTTE, ARCHIE and GINNY exit.  
 FIEDLER dials his call. LIGHTS UP on MR.  
 GOLDNICK in Hollywood, on a speakerphone.)

GOLDNICK  
 Goldnick, here. Talk to me. Make it worth my while.

FIEDLER  
 (yelling loudly into the phone)  
 Mr. Goldnick, it's Hugh Fiedler. I've found the perfect location  
 to film "Oklahoma": Wisconsin!

GOLDNICK  
 Quiet down, kid. You don't need to project your voice all the  
 way to California. It feels like you're right next to me.

FIEDLER  
 Sorry. I really want to thank you for this opportunity, sir!

GOLDNICK  
 Hold it, baby; I haven't decided where we'll be filming  
 "Oklahoma" yet. I've got a dozen other guys scouting in Ohio,  
 Missouri and Arizona.

FIEDLER

(taken aback)

But I thought I was the location scout for this picture?

GOLDNICK

This is a big-budget musical, Sweetie. I can't trust that one ex-mailroom boy can find the perfect location all by himself; you know what I mean?

FIEDLER

But Wisconsin has everything "Oklahoma" needs: Bright golden meadows! Waving wheat! Corn!

GOLDNICK

Does it have live entertainment?

FIEDLER

Live ent-? I - I didn't see that on my list.

GOLDNICK

Actors are like babies; they need to be entertained when they're not on set, or they whine and complain and drive me nuts.

(mimicking whiny actors)

"I won't work with live rattlesnakes." Waa waa waa.

FIEDLER

I'll find live entertainment.

GOLDNICK

What about lodging? Does Wisconsin have modern accommodations?

FIEDLER

Modern? There's this quaint hotel here in Fish Creek, the Rocking Chair Inn!

GOLDNICK

Rocking Chair, huh? Sounds old. Rodgers & Hammerstein need modern conveniences. They may have written "Oklahoma", but that doesn't mean they want to sleep in Aunt Eller's farmhouse; you know what I mean?

FIEDLER

Sure, but -

GOLDNICK

You got a big yard where we can feed the crew?

FIEDLER

Gee, I think they use their backyard for storage.

GOLDNICK

Sounds like your Rocking Chair isn't gonna work.

FIEDLER

I really believe in this place, Mr. Goldnick. And I've already promised the Bradley family that Hollywood is coming!

GOLDNICK

Maybe you don't have what it takes for this job. I told Cherry she was crazy for asking me to promote you out of the mailroom.

FIEDLER

Your daughter? Why would she care if I'm promoted?

GOLDNICK

She's boffo for you.

FIEDLER

"Boffo"?

GOLDNICK

She has a crush; she's got the hots.

FIEDLER

But we only met that one time at the studio party. All I did was lift her from the floor when she fell off the table.

GOLDNICK

Well, she wants you. And Baby gets what she wants. But I will not have her seen around town with some lowly mailroom boy; you know what I mean?

FIEDLER

I think so. I'm flattered, Mr. Goldnick. But, but, but-

GOLDNICK

I don't want to hear any butts. You lifted Cherry off her butt, so she lifted your butt out of the mailroom. That's how this town works.

FIEDLER

Okay, well, if you'll just wire me a small budget -

GOLDNICK

Sweetie, baby; only you can make it happen. Not me. And not on my dime.

FIEDLER

But how am I supposed to-?

GOLDNICK

Do you want this promotion, kid?

FIEDLER

More than anything, Mr. Goldnick!

(GOLDNICK smiles knowingly. **3. "Goldnick's Rap".**)

GOLDNICK

THE RAW AMBITION IN YOUR VOICE IS SO FAMIL-YA.  
SHOWBIZ CAN THRILL YA.  
THAT'S IF IT DOESN'T KILL YA!  
I'VE ELUDED MANY KNIVES  
FROM RIVALS AND A FEW EX-WIVES.  
SO BUBBY, A WORD OF ADVICE.

FIEDLER

I'm all ears, sir.

GOLDNICK

YOU GOTTA GRAB THE BULL BY THE HORNS  
BUT I DON'T REALLY MEAN THE HORNS.  
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

FIEDLER

(unsuccessfully trying to get a word in)  
Yeah, I -

GOLDNICK

YOU GOTTA SHOW SOME GUTS AND KICK SOME BUTTS  
DON'T TAKE ANY LIP.  
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

FIEDLER

Sure, but -

GOLDNICK  
 YOU GOTTA FIND A PEON TO SCREW  
 BEFORE HE DOES IT TO YOU.  
 WANNA SURVIVE?  
 YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO:

FIEDLER

What?

GOLDNICK  
 WHATEVER IT TAKES!

Now, if you play your cards right, you could climb all the way up to becoming my Vice President in Charge of Creative Development.

FIEDLER

(tempted)  
 Vice President?! Wow! It's always been my dream to produce musicals, sir-

GOLDNICK  
 Then do your job, kid. Make it work. Get everything I need within two weeks, and "Oklahoma" gets filmed in your Fish Pond.

FIEDLER

Fish Creek, sir.

GOLDNICK

Now repeat it back to me.

FIEDLER

(bumbling)  
 Umm, what?

GOLDNICK

My advice, my advice! I thought you were all ears?

YOU GOTTA GRAB THE BULL BY THE HORNS  
 BUT I DON'T REALLY MEAN THE HORNS.  
 YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

YOU GOTTA SHOW SOME GUTS AND KICK SOME BUTTS  
 DON'T TAKE ANY LIP.  
 YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

YOU GOTTA FIND A PEON TO SCREW

BEFORE HE DOES IT TO YOU.  
TAKE IT FROM ME  
THE HIGHER YOU CLIMB.

FIEDLER  
THE HIGHER I CLIMB.

GOLDNICK  
THE HIGHER THE STAKES.

FIEDLER  
THE HIGHER THE STAKES.

GOLDNICK  
YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?  
(egging him on, quickly)  
W-w-what?

FIEDLER  
(finally getting it)  
Oh, yeah.

GOLDNICK/FIEDLER  
WHATEVER IT TAKES!

(LIGHTS OUT on GOLDNICK, who hangs up the  
phone; though FIEDLER doesn't know it yet.)

FIEDLER

Don't you worry, sir! I'll get everything you need; and I'll do it all on my own like you said, Mr. Goldnick. Mr. Goldnick?

(FIEDLER hangs up the phone. CHARLOTTE enters.)

CHARLOTTE

Did everything work out alright with your boss?

FIEDLER

(about to tell her the truth)

Um, yes, but - I have something to confess, Charlotte. I spoke too soon when I said-

CHARLOTTE

(interrupting him)

I have something to confess, too. I've never seen my family so excited about anything as "Oklahoma".

FIEDLER

I'm glad. But the truth is -

CHARLOTTE

The truth is I don't usually share my personal feelings with our guests; but it means the world to me to see my family happy. Thank you for making that happen, Mr. Fiedler. You're our hero.

(beat)

But I've gone on gushing long enough. What did you want to confess?

FIEDLER

(can't possibly disappoint her now)

I - I want to confess that - the deposit for "Oklahoma" is on its way!

CHARLOTTE

Wonderful. Goodnight, Mr. Fiedler.

FIEDLER

(yelling to her as she exits)

'night, Charlotte! Don't you worry, everything is under control!

(CHARLOTTE smiles at him and exits. **4.**  
**"Whatever it Takes".**)

FIEDLER

(beat, in a panic)

Now what am I gonna do?!

I GOTTA GRAB THE HORN OFF A BULL  
BUT I DON'T REALLY MEAN A BULL.  
WHATEVER HE SAID.

I GOTTA SHOW SOME GUTS AND KISS SOME BUTTS  
AND DON'T USE MY LIPS.  
IS THAT WHAT HE SAID?

No, that's not right.

DO I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES  
TO MAKE MY DREAM COME TRUE?  
I'M NOT THE KIND OF GUY  
WHO'S SLY ENOUGH TO LIE.  
I AM A SMALL-TIME MAILROOM SCHMO.  
SO JUST HOW GOLDNICK CAN I GO?  
EITHER I FIND MY INNER CHUTZPAH  
OR KISS MY DREAM GOODBYE.

A DREAM THAT I'VE HAD SINCE CHILDHOOD  
WHEN I SAW MY FIRST PLAY.  
MUSICALS WERE LIKE MAGIC.  
HOW I'D LOVE TO MAKE MY OWN SOMEDAY.  
SOME WAY.

WHATEVER IT TAKES  
I'VE GOTTA MAKE THIS WORK.  
THIS IS MY SHOT  
I'VE NOT A LOT OF TIME TO SPARE.  
I'VE GOT TO MAKE IT ON MY OWN.  
IT'S UP TO ME, AND ME ALONE.  
NO TIME FOR MISTAKES.  
SO I'M GONNA PROVE  
I GOT WHAT IT TAKES.  
WHATEVER IT TAKES!

(LIGHTS OUT on Fiedler.)