

The Adventures of Hopscotch Cassidy is an audience participation play that deals with issues of honesty and appropriate behavior. As an audience participation play, there are times when actors will need to improvise a line to cover a response from a participant which does not provide (or otherwise derails) the intended interaction. This is common and necessary. However, this does not give the actors the ability to improvise their way through the script. Improvised material should only be used as a last resort to enable the performance to move forward as intended.

The run-time of *The Adventures of Hopscotch Cassidy* is approximately 60 minutes.

Characters:

The Balladeer (male)
Lemonade, the owner of the Grumpy Gulch Root Beer Saloon (female)
Sheriff Lawman (male)
Hopscotch Cassidy, a world-class hopper (female)

Location:

Grumpy Gulch—somewhere in the West

Time:

Summertime

Lights come up on Grumpy Gulch. The BALLADEER enters, preferably through the audience. The BALLADEER crosses onto the stage and then sees the audience.

BALLADEER: Well, howdy! I've never seen near so many people here in Grumpy Gulch. Not in all my days—of course, I only got here two days ago myself. But that's the life of a...*(as though magical)* wandering balladeer. You know, *(explaining)* singer. Saw the “ad-vert-iz-munt” for the Hopscotch Tourney and though I might be able to peddle my wares—er, sing my songs—to all those folks at the competition...if it is a competition. Word around the campfire is that Hopscotch Cassidy is planning on entering the tourney this year. And they say if Hopscotch Cassidy enters it won't be much of a contest. They say that Hopscotch Cassidy has never lost a match. Now, I don't know who “they” are, but I reckon “they” should know. After all, you don't get a name like Hopscotch by being good at checkers. *(laughs at own joke)* Why they've even written a song about Hopscotch Cassidy! Oh, but you probably already know that one, don'tcha? You don't? Well then, I can fix that faster than a jackalope can twitch its nose!

The BALLADEER gets himself ready with a terrible vocal warm-up—the worse it is, the better the audience reaction. “The Ballad of Hopscotch Cassidy” is sung to the tune of the folk song “Old Dan Tucker.” The twangier, the better.

BALLADEER:

*Hopscotch Cassidy was the best hopper,
Tossed the stone and never drop't 'er.
Hopped on one and then the two,
Even with the hole in the sole of a shoe.*

*Hop your way from one to ten
Then hop your way back down again
Skip the one with the stone in the square
Hopscotch rules are the same everywhere.*

*Hopscotch Cassidy's favorite is Six,
Sometimes hops backwards just for kicks.
Hops on the left and the right
Breakin' the rules means a fight.*

*Hop your way from one to ten
Then hop your way back down again
Skip the one with the stone in the square
Hopscotch rules are the same everywhere.*

When Hopscotch Cassidy—

Well, gee. Why don't I teach you the chorus so that you can sing it along with me after the last verse. Whaddya think? *(selecting 2 children from the audience)* Okay! I need you and you to help me.

The BALLADEER places the children one on each side of center then gets two posters with the chorus written on them from somewhere on the set. The BALLADEER hands each child a poster, kneels between them, and pulls out a collapsible pointer from his pocket.

BALLADEER: *(pointing out the words as goes)* “Hop your way from one to ten.” It goes like this. *(sings the line slowly)* Let's try it together. *(sings with audience)* Great! The next line is “Then hop your way back down again.” It sounds like—*(sings line slowly)* Let's try that one. *(sings with audience)* Fantastic. Now we have “Skip the one with the stone in the

square.” See how you can go up at the end? So it goes like this. (*sings line*) Ready? (*singing with audience again*) All right, great so far. The last line is “Hopscotch rules are the same everywhere.” (*sings immediately*) Let’s do that one. (*sings last line with audience*) Well, then. Let’s try the whole thing. (*sings through the whole chorus, a little slowly and pointing out the words throughout*) Got it? Let’s be sure—one more time. (*sings through one more time*) That was wonderful. Sounds like you’ve got it. So here, I will sing the last verse and y’all get ready for the chorus.

***When Hopscotch Cassidy comes to town,
All the others just put their stones down.
No one wants to take on the best,
But Hopscotch Cassidy’s just looking for a test.***

Here we go—

***Hop your way from one to ten
Then hop your way back down again
Skip the one with the stone in the square
Hopscotch rules are the same everywhere.***

One more time!

***Hop your way from one to ten
Then hop your way back down again
Skip the one with the stone in the square***

And now for the big finish! (*slowing down the end of the last line of the song*)

Hopscotch rules are the same everywhere.

Great job, y’all!

The BALLADEER takes the posters and sends the children back to their seats, leading the applause. LEMONADE enters as finishes.

LEMONADE: Well, ain’t that a pretty ditty!

BALLADEER: Thank you kindly, little lady.

LEMONADE: My pleasure. We don’t get much fancy art and culture all the way out here in Grumpy Gulch.

BALLADEER: Aw, shucks, I’m just a singer.

LEMONADE: Well, nice to meet you, Just. My name is Lemonade.

BALLADEER: Oh no, my name’s not “just.”

LEMONADE: Oh! Sorry about that. Hi, Not Just.

BALLADEER: Never mind. Your name is Lemonade?

LEMONADE: That’s what I said, didn’t I!?!?

BALLADEER: Yes, ma’am, but—it’s just a rather odd name, isn’t it?

LEMONADE: No more than “Not Just.”

BALLADEER: I only mean that.How did you get a name like Lemonade?

LEMONADE: Same way most folks get their names, I guess. My mama gave it to me. Said she just knew that I was gonna be a little bit sweet and a little bit sour. You got a problem with that?

BALLADEER: *(surrendering)* No problem, whatsoever!

SHERIFF LAWMAN enters from the jail, carrying a rolled-up wanted poster.

LEMONADE: Whatcha doin' there, Sheriff Lawman?

LAWMAN: Got a new wanted poster in the Snail Express this morning.

LEMONADE: Ooooooh. Who's it for?

LAWMAN: Rattlesnake Jones.

BALLADEER: Rattlesnake Jones!

LEMONADE: Rattlesnake Jones?

LAWMAN: Rattlesnake Jones. A known rustler.

BALLADEER: They say Rattlesnake Jones has rustled in every state in the Union.

LAWMAN: And some that aren't.

BALLADEER: They say Rattlesnake Jones has rustled more than any living person.

LAWMAN: Or dead one, for that matter.

BALLADEER: They say Rattlesnake Jones has rustled anything that could be rustled.

LAWMAN: And some things that can't.

LEMONADE: Well, I just have one question. Who is "they"?

BALLADEER/LAWMAN: Beats me.

LEMONADE: Oh, that's not very nice at all. Beating people up. If I ever—

LAWMAN: Gotta put this up, so everyone knows who we need to look out for.

SHERIFF LAWMAN puts up the wanted poster where everyone can see it.

LEMONADE: That's a rough-looking character.

BALLADEER: You can say that again.

LEMONADE: That's a rough-looking character.

LAWMAN: Now everyone has to keep an eye out for Rattlesnake Jones. You never know when that rustler might come to Grumpy Gulch.

HOPSCOTCH CASSIDY enters.

HOPSCOTCH: Howdy, Grumpy Gulch!

LEMONADE: Howdy to you, stranger!

LAWMAN: That's no stranger! That's Hopscotch Cassidy.

BALLADEER: Hopscotch Cassidy!

LEMONADE: Hopscotch Cassidy?

HOPSCOTCH: Hopscotch Cassidy. That's me.

LEMONADE: Well, bless my peels and sugar cubes! I thought you'd be taller.

BALLADEER: *(disagreeing)* Shorter.

LEMONADE: I definitely thought that you'd be thinner.

BALLADEER: *(disagreeing again)* Fatter.

LEMONADE: And I most definitely thought that you'd be younger.