

The Bookshelf: Hopscotch

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Oliveira and his friends, a group of Bohemian writers and artists who call themselves the Serpent Club, discuss philosophy and the meaning of truth, life and love as well as literature and art. La Maga, the woman he falls in and out of love with is not well versed in any of these subjects but seems to espouse all the virtues that Oliveira and the Serpent Club believe make a perfect human being. While they are too busy discussing and thinking about why one should live in the moment, she merely does.

Much like *Pulp Fiction* did to the way stories in film can be told, *Hopscotch* revolutionized the way a book can be written and read. The novel is stream-of-consciousness and plays with the subjective mind of the reader. Unlike many books it actually challenges the reader to become involved in the story. The title *Hopscotch* comes from the way the book is read; one must "hopscotch" through the chapters. It is divided into two books. The first fifty-six chapters, Book I, are to be read as in any other book. In Book II the reader must follow a map left by Cortázar to read the last ninety-nine chapters in a specific order that leaves the reader in an infinite loop between chapters fifty-eight and 131 at the end. Because of this aspect of the book it allows the reader to choose whichever ending suits his or her preference.

I will not lie to you and tell you that reading *Hopscotch* is not a challenge. Frankly, if you do not crave a challenge when you read then you might as well pick up the vomit-on-a-page that is *Twilight*. I realize some of you may do this. To those of you who do not, pick up *Hopscotch* and stick with it, when you close the novel you will feel as if you have undergone an epiphany. This book, as old as it is, is still revolutionary and quite simply one of the most valuable pieces of literature ever composed.