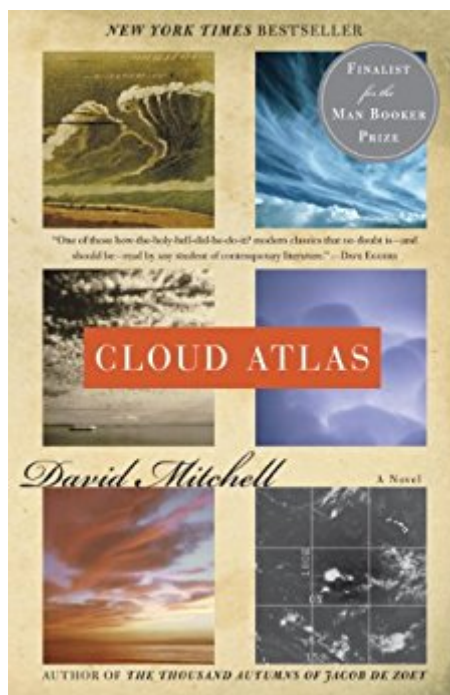


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Cloud Atlas: A Novel



Synopsis

By the New York Times bestselling author of *The Bone Clocks* | Shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize | Includes a new Afterword by David Mitchell

A postmodern visionary and one of the leading voices in twenty-first-century fiction, David Mitchell combines flat-out adventure, a Nabokovian love of puzzles, a keen eye for character, and a taste for mind-bending, philosophical and scientific speculation in the tradition of Umberto Eco, Haruki Murakami, and Philip K. Dick. The result is brilliantly original fiction as profound as it is playful. In this groundbreaking novel, an influential favorite among a new generation of writers, Mitchell explores with daring artistry fundamental questions of reality and identity.

Cloud Atlas begins in 1850 with Adam Ewing, an American notary voyaging from the Chatham Isles to his home in California. Along the way, Ewing is befriended by a physician, Dr. Goose, who begins to treat him for a rare species of brain parasite. . . . Abruptly, the action jumps to Belgium in 1931, where Robert Frobisher, a disinherited bisexual composer, contrives his way into the household of an infirm maestro who has a beguiling wife and a nubile daughter. . . . From there we jump to the West Coast in the 1970s and a troubled reporter named Luisa Rey, who stumbles upon a web of corporate greed and murder that threatens to claim her life. . . . And onward, with dazzling virtuosity, to an inglorious present-day England; to a Korean superstate of the near future where neocapitalism has run amok; and, finally, to a postapocalyptic Iron Age Hawaii in the last days of history. But the story doesn't end even there. The narrative then boomerangs back through centuries and space, returning by the same route, in reverse, to its starting point. Along the way, Mitchell reveals how his disparate characters connect, how their fates intertwine, and how their souls drift across time like clouds across the sky. As wild as a videogame, as mysterious as a Zen koan, *Cloud Atlas* is an unforgettable tour de force that, like its incomparable author, has transcended its cult classic status to become a worldwide phenomenon.

Praise for *Cloud Atlas*

“[David] Mitchell is, clearly, a genius. He writes as though at the helm of some perpetual dream machine, can evidently do anything, and his ambition is written in magma across this novel’s every page.”

• The New York Times Book Review

“One of those how-the-holy-hell-did-he-do-it? modern classics that no doubt is—and should be—read by any student of contemporary literature.”

• Dave Eggers

“Wildly entertaining . . . a head rush, both action-packed and chillingly ruminative.”

• People

“The novel as series of nested dolls or Chinese boxes, a puzzle-book, and yet—not just dazzling, amusing, or clever but heartbreaking and passionate, too. I’ve never read anything quite like it, and I’m grateful to have lived, for a while, in all its many worlds.”

• Michael

Chabon's "Cloud Atlas" ought to make [Mitchell] famous on both sides of the Atlantic as a writer whose fearlessness is matched by his talent. •The Washington Post Book World "Thrilling . . . One of the biggest joys in Cloud Atlas is watching Mitchell sashay from genre to genre without a hitch in his dance step. •Boston Sunday Globe "Grand and elaborate . . . [Mitchell] creates a world and language at once foreign and strange, yet strikingly familiar and intimate. •Los Angeles Times

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

The book's description had me hooked and, to be honest, I was let down when I first started reading it. The first chapter moved so slowly and I almost gave up on the book entirely. In the hopes that it was just a slow start that would pick up pace, I forced myself through it and am so glad that I did. Mitchell has written a wonderfully complicated book, the kind that I kept thinking about long after I finished reading it. Each chapter is interrupted, some of them mid-sentence. The following chapter weaves the previous one into its own story, so that there is some context for why that chapter was included (although the full meanings aren't always clear until closer to the end of the book). As the

first chapters progress, the stories move into the future. Mitchell then moves backwards after the center story/chapter, picking up each previously interrupted chapter and finishing each individual narrative while subtly weaving each narrative together. It's truly impressive how Mitchell has managed to seamlessly weave six individual tales into one cohesive novel. He has some obvious messages in his writing, although I appreciated the subtle ones much more. While I felt that some sections of the book were a bit of a stretch, I still love the book as a whole. Mitchell's style of writing is certainly not for everyone, but I look forward to reading more of his novels in the future.

This book was amazing. I read the book before I saw the movie. It's not an easy read as you have to shift gears between vastly different storylines, but it is an unforgettable, original, and beautiful piece of fiction. It also, for me, started off slowly and it took awhile for me to get into the storyline. The most compelling chapters were the ones on Somni and the most off-putting storyline had to do with Zachary, only because it was written in the island dialect. I want to read other books by this author.

Just finished reading - or rather devouring - Cloud Atlas. Cloud Atlas consists of 6 interlinking stories, told from the viewpoint of 6 different individuals at 6 different points in time. The first story consists of the letters of Adam Ewing, during a fateful trip on a ship in the Pacific in the mid 1850's. (think "Master and Commander") From there we go to the second story, which takes place in the 1930's and is told from the viewpoint of Robert Frobisher, a talented disinherited musical composer who visits wealthy maestro and his family in an attempt to get work and advantage. His story is told through his letters to a scientist friend/lover named Rufus Sixsmith. (Think "Downton Abbey") The next story takes place in the 1970's, and has to do with reporter Luisa Rey, and her exposure of corporate malfeasance that could result in disaster. Sixsmith is a scientist there, and plays an important part of the story. (Think any spy thriller you have ever enjoyed) Next, is the story of Timothy Cavendish, in present day England, and the tale of his (mis) adventures as a book publisher. Utterly hilarious and poignant. (Think Monty Python) The second to last story becomes a sci-fi read of future corporate controlled Korea, complete with cloned humans. (Think "Brave New World") And the final story is one that takes place in post apocalyptic Hawaii. (Think "Myst" - the early computer game) And then we go back to each story, in opposite order, and put the pieces together and complete the cliffhanger endings from the first half. (Think - I have never read anything like this before in my life) It is at times a challenging read, in the sense that each story is told in a completely different style from the others. As soon as you become comfortable with a story, it ends and you have to adjust to a different voice. But it is fantastically rewarding. From a writing standpoint

- a complete tour de force.

The movie is one of my favorite films and I had to read the book. I really enjoyed the different writing styles that each of the characters' tales are told with- from antiquated american english to a hyper modern sort of pidgin. The story is a little bleak (sometimes horrible s*** just happens you know?) but the ending left me turning it over in my head for days afterwards

I fell in love with the movie and the spiritual themes that it explores. I was really surprised when reading the book at how small changes in the plot between the movie and the book led to exceedingly emotional twists when I least expected them. The spiritual elements of the movie were all pulled from the book has a focus more on the ideas of slavery in society throughout history and that it's forms are the rule not the exception. This book helped me to see the world more clearly and to redefine my definition of freedom. I recommend this book to anyone who wants to gain a deeper perspective on their place in the world.

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