

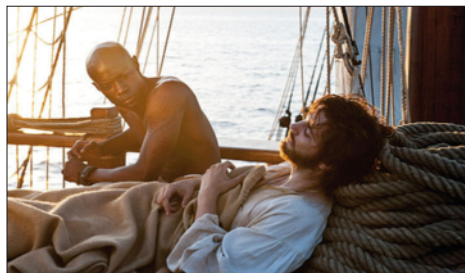
**SPOILER  
ALERT!**

# The beginner's guide to *Cloud Atlas*

Saving the world: Meronym  
(Halle Berry) and Zachry  
(Tom Hanks) on a mission.

A multi-stranded tale based on an 'unfilmable' book from the directors of *The Matrix*... Buzz attempts to unravel the year's most labyrinthine movie.

➤ Based on David Mitchell's Booker Prize-nominated novel, *Cloud Atlas* is an astonishingly ambitious tale that many thought couldn't be filmed. With six stories mashed up across different eras and genres, featuring actors who switch age, race and gender from tale to tale and are all linked together by karmic connectivity and/or comet-shaped birthmarks, it really is one giant mind-fuck. So, allow *Buzz* to guide you through Tom Tykwer and the Wachowskis' epic reincarnation sextet with our handy, er, atlas.



## THE PACIFIC JOURNAL OF ADAM EWING, 1849

**Who's in it?** Jim Sturgess and a buck-toothed Tom Hanks, mostly.

**What's it about?** Young notary Adam Ewing (Sturgess) is crossing the Pacific with Hanks' nefarious-minded doctor and a stowaway slave who helps set Ewing on the path to...

**Everything is connected** ... enlightenment. Sturgess' 'soul' will eventually transmogrify

into that of a 22nd-Century freedom fighter dedicated to ending slavery in dystopian Neo-Seoul. Hanks' evolutionary journey starts with the murky morality of Dr. Goose...  
**Different from the book?** It's the story that sticks closest to its origins.



## LETTERS FROM ZEDELGHEM, 1936

**Who's in it?** Ben Whishaw, Jim Broadbent, James D'Arcy, Halle Berry.

**What's it about?** Bisexual musician Robert Frobisher (Whishaw) inveigles himself into the household of past-it composer Vyvyan Ayrs (Broadbent), bedding his white Jewish trophy wife (Berry) and writing the 'Cloud Atlas Sextet'.

**Everything is connected** Frobisher is hooked on Ewing's Pacific Journal and writes letters to his true love Sixsmith (D'Arcy) which are later read by Luisa Rey (Berry, see below).

**Different from the book?** The sexually carnivorous composer also falls in love with his mentor's precocious daughter, but her role has been lopped off for the film. Zedelghem, Belgium has also been changed to Scotland.



### HALF-LIVES: THE FIRST LUISA REY MYSTERY, 1973

**Who's in it?** Berry, Hanks, D'Arcy, Hugh Grant.

**What's it about?** With the aid of rogue employees (Hanks, D'Arcy), San Francisco journalist Luisa Rey uncovers a seismic scandal at a nuclear power plant owned by a crooked tycoon (Grant).

**Everything is connected** Rey tracks down a copy of the 'Cloud Atlas Sextet'. Future vanity-press publisher Timothy Cavendish (Broadbent, see below) receives a novel manuscript recounting the story of Luisa Rey.

**Different from the book?** David Mitchell's novel implies (via the Cavendish manuscript) that Luisa might, in fact, be fictional. A brain-twister too far, even for the Wachowskis.



### THE GHASTLY ORDEAL OF TIMOTHY CAVENDISH, 2012

**Who's in it?** Broadbent, Hanks, Grant, Hugo Weaving, Susan Sarandon

**What's it about?** When vanity press publisher Cavendish (Broadbent) needs to go into hiding from jailed scumbag author Dermot Hoggins' (Hanks) cronies, he's tricked into a nursing-home run by the petrifying Nurse Noakes (Weaving).

**Everything is connected** Cavendish's ghastly ordeal is later turned into a film starring Hanks, which ends up inspiring Sonmi-451 (Doona Bae, see below).

**Different from the book?** In the book, Cavendish has a stroke and needs to piece his mind back together before plotting his escape from Noakes' hellhole.



### AN ORISON OF SONMI-451, 2144

**Who's in it?** Donna Bae, Sturgess, D'Arcy.

**What's it about?** Sonmi-451 (Bae) is a genetically engineered worker drone who ends up igniting a revolution when she falls in with (and in love with) Hae-Joo Chang (Sturgess).

**Everything is connected** Sonmi-451 is revered as a goddess by a simple tribe of goatherders in post-apocalyptic Hawaii (see below).

**Different from the book?** Sturgess' dashing freedom fighter is an amalgamation of two characters, while the book suggests that Sonmi's rebel rise is staged by the totalitarian regime.



### SLOOSHA'S CROSSIN' AN' EV'RYTHIN' AFTER, 2321

**Who's in it?** Hanks, Berry, Weaving, Susan Sarandon.

**What's it about?** After a tattooed cannibal (Grant) slaughters his brother-in-law (Sturgess) in post-apocalyptic Hawaii, gutless goatherd Zachry (Hanks) helps visiting out-of-towner Meronym (Berry) in her efforts to save the last vestiges of advanced civilisation.

**Everything is connected** Zachry is haunted by a green demon (Weaving) who hisses lines at him previously uttered by Dr. Goose, coaxing him to reawaken the killer inside.

**Different from the book?** Hanks' shepherd is a teenager in Mitchell's novel and there's no romance with Meronym or leap to other planets. **MM**

**Cloud Atlas opens on 22 February.**

## Multiple man

Tom Hanks talks *Cloud Atlas*' time-hopping high jinks.



**Was it an immediate yes when the Wachowskis approached you?**

I was trying to get through *Moby Dick* at the time. As soon as I mentioned that, Lana [Wachowski, co-writer/director/producer] exploded: "That's what we want to do! We want to take everything that *Moby Dick* was when it came out and match it to that." And she pointed to a poster of *2001: A Space Odyssey* hanging on my wall. I said, "Man oh man, I'm in."

**Was it odd playing both good guys and bad guys in *Cloud Atlas*?**

I actually said, "I'm playing [homicidal author] Dermot Hoggins? Really?" Lana said, "Yes, because if you don't play Dermot Hoggins, that means you don't get to evolve into who you are by the time you get to play Isaac Sachs. It's the same brand of self-loathing that you're going to have to carry 1,000 years into the future."

**'If this is the sum of the knowledge I've earned, I must have been a cow in my past life!'**

**Were you destined to be an actor?**

It's a lovely accident. I have ADD, I can't concentrate on anything, and I've turned it into a career. I don't have the concentration or the intellect to do anything else.

**Do you believe in reincarnation?**

I think it's baloney. As a layman who studies history, I am firm in my belief that the human condition throughout history does not evolve until someone does the right thing, which is a version of karma.

**But you don't believe anything gets passed on from previous lives?**

If this is the sum total of the knowledge that I've earned, then I must have been a cow in my past life!