

Cloud Atlas Study Guide

Cloud Atlas by David Mitchell (author)

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Plot Summary

Cloud Atlas by David Mitchell is a set of six interconnected tales that span generations and continents to illustrate the basic human condition. The novel begins and returns at the end to the mid-nineteenth century, giving the reader a warning glimpse at the future of our society along the journey.

The first tale, "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing," takes place in the mid-1800s in the South Pacific. Adam Ewing, a notary from California, is traveling back home from Australia after seeking the beneficiary of a will. He meets and befriends an English doctor, Henry Goose, while marooned briefly on the Chatham Islands during ship repairs. Goose ends up continuing the journey with Ewing and the ship.

When the ship sails, Ewing finds that an island native, Autua, has stowed away in his cabin. Autua presents himself to the captain, who reluctantly takes him on as part of the crew in exchange for his passage. Dr. Goose is persuaded to tend to the Captain, who has an undisclosed malady, as well as Ewing, who has been suffering from something he calls his "Ailment." In attempting to "cure" Ewing, Goose reveals himself to be a fraud and a con man and almost kills Ewing.

The second tale is one of a ne'er-do-well young, English music student, Robert Frobisher. Frobisher has been disowned by his aristocratic family, kicked out of the university, and pursued by creditors. He devises a plan to hide in Belgium as the musical aide to a venerable and ailing composer, Vyvyan Ayrs, at Ayrs' Chateau Zedelghem. His proposal is accepted, and he spends several months with Ayrs, his wife Jocasta, and their daughter Eva. He relates his experiences to his friend, Sixsmith, in a series of letters.

"Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery" is structured as a pulp mystery novel. It tells the tale of a young magazine reporter, who happens on a corporate deception of huge - and dangerous - proportion. This deception is being exposed by Rufus Sixsmith, Frobisher's friend from the previous chapter, now a renowned physicist.

"The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish" brings the reader to present-day London. There, an elderly, vanity publisher lucks into a bestselling novel. However, when the royalties start coming in, he is visited by the author's rough relatives, demanding their share of the profits. Cavendish escapes to a "hotel" north of London, which turns out to be a "no escape" asylum for the elderly. After several weeks, Cavendish barely gets away and pens a screenplay of his adventures, the basis of this chapter.

"An Orison of Sonmi-451" transports the reader to a futuristic world, run by large corporations. It's a world where clones (fabricants) are made to perform a wide range of service positions. One such fabricant, Sonmi-451, "ascends." That is, she is able to learn and to retain knowledge. She is used by various groups for their own ends, to Sonmi's ultimate detriment.



The final story in *Cloud Atlas* takes place in a post-apocolypsal world, where mankind has reverted to small tribes, eking out a basic survival. In this society, knowledge and language are limited; lifespans are short and babies are often born dead or deformed. The hero of this story, Zachry, escapes the chaos and death on his island with the help of his friend from a distant land, Meronym.



Chapter 1, "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing"

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Cloud Atlas by David Mitchell is a set of six interconnected tales that span generations and continents to illustrate the basic human condition. The novel begins and returns at the end to the mid-nineteenth century, giving the reader a warning glimpse at the future of modern society along the journey.

The first chapter begins as Adam Ewing is writing in his journal about his stay on the Chatham Islands. He is a San Francisco-based attorney chasing down a beneficiary of a will in the South Pacific. He finds himself on the remote Polynesian Islands while his ship, "The Prophetess" makes repairs. It is here that he meets an English doctor, Dr. Henry Goose, on the island beach, sifting the sand for human teeth discarded by the resident cannibals. Dr. Goose has concocted a scheme to discredit his ex-wife by having new dentures crafted of the teeth.

Although Ewing's first impression of Goose is that he is crazy, or at least odd, they quickly find they have much in common and forge a friendship. The two are staying at a barely-reputable boarding house. The morning after they met, they decide to take a walk around the small island where they encounter a clearing where a group of "natives" are involved in a public flogging. The whipping is brutal, but when they turn to leave, the accused lifts his head to smile knowingly at Ewing.

On Sunday, Ewing and Dr. Goose seek out the local congregation, rather than take part in the rather carnal Sabbath observances at the boarding house. The congregation has long since lost its pastor, but the group takes turn reciting scripture and singing hymns. One of the prominent members of the church is a Mr. D'Arnoq, who invites the pair to dine with members of the congregation.

Around the table, the talk turns to the history of the island. Mr. D'Arnoq relates a narrative about the origin of the island inhabitants. According to D'Arnoq, the first "natives," the Moriori were a peace-loving people, who banished any of their tribe for even the slightest violent act. As the story goes, the Moriori were an easy mark for the wandering Maori (from New Zealand) as well as the increasing number of White settlers, merchants, and whalers. Today, the few Moriori who have not succumbed to the White man's illness and the Maori's brutality are slaves of the New Zealanders.

In about a week's time, the "Prophetess" is ready to sail, and Captain Molyneux is all about town securing provisions for the ship. He requests a moment alone with Dr. Goose, which worries Ewing due to the Captain's poor reputation, but it seems that the Captain suffers a medical complaint and would like Dr. Goose to travel with him at least



as far as Hawaii. Henry says that he will consider it and Ewing hopes that he decides to join the passengers on the "Prophetess."

While Henry is away treating an injured local woman, Ewing goes exploring and stumbles into a hidden cave. Fortunately, the cave is carpeted with a dense moss and he escapes with minor bruises. More difficult is finding his way out of the steep cave, but after a few false starts, including one where he finds what seem to be human remains, he emerges. Later, as Henry is tending to Ewing's bruises, Ewing confides his "Ailment," an undisclosed malady which causes him much anxiety.

The next day, the Prophetess sails, with Dr. Henry Goose among the passengers, much to Ewing's delight and relief. It seems that Henry has agreed to attempt to diagnose and treat Ewing's "Ailment" while they are at sea.

Shortly after the Prophetess sets sail, Ewing is approached by a small group of sailors, including Torgny the Swede. It seems that the group means to jump ship in San Francisco and search for gold. They appeal to Ewing to draw a map of the gold fields for a share of the take. Ewing knows nothing about where the gold is located since he's been at sea for months, but agrees to draw the rumored "hot spots." As he is completing the map, the Captain walks in and seizes the map. Although Ewing gives a lame explanation, it is plain that the Captain is not pleased.

That night, Ewing is awakened by a presence in his cabin (which he calls his "coffin"). Autua, the native Ewing witnessed being flogged back on the Chathams has stowed away in his cabin with the assistance of Mr. D'Arnoq of the church congregation. Autua introduces himself and says that he's an able seaman and happy to work for his passage. Ewing tells him the decision is the Captain's and worries that the Captain, who is none too fond of Ewing, might consider him complicit in the hiding of the stowaway. He suggests they go immediately to the Captain.

The Captain is ready to throw Autua off the ship, when Ewing suggests they give him a try. The Captain, seeing the advantage of a sailor he doesn't have to pay, agrees. They give him a terrible assignment atop the mast, one designed for several men and all but guaranteed to land Autua in the ocean. However, the Moriori completes the task to everyone's amazement. He is accepted, albeit reluctantly, as part of the crew.

Meanwhile, Henry has diagnosed Ewing's "ailment" as a particularly nasty type of parasite, *gusano coco*, which is fatal if left untreated. Fortunately, Henry just happens to have the necessary powders to kill the worm. He warns Ewing that the cure may be rough and dangerous. Just as the doctor suggested, Ewing begins to hallucinate, and his eyes have a yellow aspect.

The chapter ends abruptly, and without explanation, in the middle of a sentence, as if the last pages have been torn out of the journal.



Chapter 1, "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing" Analysis

The seeds are sown for future chapters in "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing." The Moriori tradition of non-violence finds its way into the sixth chapter, "Sloosh'a's Crossin'." Ewing is also mentioned in "Letters from Zedelghem," when Frobisher finds Ewing's journal in the Chateau Zedelghem library and in "Luisa Rey," where one of the California suburbs is named after Ewing and where the "Prophetess" has been preserved as an historic site.

That Dr. Goose is not all that he seems to be is hinted at when the reader first encounters him. Why would a prominent doctor be involved in a scheme to make dentures from discarded cannibal teeth? That the ending may not be bright for Ewing is foretold by his calling his cabin "his coffin." Deception is a theme that carries through all of the six *Cloud Atlas* stories.



Chapter 2, "The Letters from Zedelgheim"

Chapter 2, "The Letters from Zedelgheim" Summary

The first portion of "Letters from Zedelgheim" is told in a series of nine letters written in 1931, by Robert Frobisher to his friend, Sixsmith. In his first letter, Frobisher is in London skipping out of a hotel in the middle of the night because he is too broke to pay his bill. Although he is the son of a British nobleman, he has been disinherited and has run through his credit, luck, and the goodwill of his friends.

Frobisher is a music student, who has been kicked out of school. With the few pounds he has left, he takes the ferry from Dover to *Ostend* (Belgium) with the idea of arriving at the doorstep of aging and wealthy composer, Vyvyan Ayrs, at his Chateau outside of Bruges. The plan is that the ailing Ayrs take on Frobisher as his musical aide, allowing Frobisher to hide, and Ayrs an Indian summer to his career.

Frobisher borrows a bicycle from the local constabulary and makes his way to Chateau Zedelgheim. There, he presents himself to Ayrs and makes his proposition. Ayrs likes him well enough to suggest he stay the night, and Ayrs will test Frobisher's musical ability the following morning. However, Ayrs does not appear at dinner. It seems that he has a recurring migraine. Frobisher acquaints himself with the household, including getting to know Ayrs' wife, Jocasta, and his seventeen-year-old daughter, Eva.

The second letter, dated two weeks later, describes the ups and downs of Frobisher's audition. After he finishes playing for Ayrs, the master asks that he stroll the Chateau's grounds while Ayrs decides his fate. Grumbling under his breath, Frobisher agrees and wanders outside. There, he encounters Ayrs' daughter, Eva, who speaks only in French (although she has studied English). The meeting leaves Frobisher with a mediocre impression of the heiress.

Frobisher becomes more and more acquainted with the household and with Ayrs' wife, with whom he often dines alone, owing to Ayrs' illness and feeble appetite. The morning after his audition, Ayrs' summons Frobisher to write down a melody Ayrs has had running through his head. Presumably, he has been hired as the assistant. He ends his second letter with a post script, imploring Sixsmith for a loan.

The following day, Ayrs' formally offers him a position and even mentions a salary, much to Frobisher's relief. The pair settles into a daily work schedule, starting each morning and ending by one in the afternoon. Frobisher begins to enjoy the food, wine, frequent guests, and the routine of Zedelgheim. Although Eva Ayrs is still rather cold to him, Frobisher can't help admiring her intelligence and poise.



At the end of the third letter, Frobisher tells of his explorations through the Chateau's extensive library. He's found and is reading a partial journal by a nineteenth-century notary named Adam Ewing (the hero from the previous chapter). He asks Sixsmith to find a complete copy for him. He also includes an inventory of the oldest of the Chateau's volumes and asks for prices. It seems that he is planning to sell off some of the Ayrs' library for profit.

Frobisher's fourth letter to Sixsmith begins with the announcement that he and Ayrs have just completed their first collaboration - a tone poem. He also tells Sixsmith that he has become the Chateau's "golden boy" and even Eva, who is soon bound for school in Switzerland, is forced to put up with him. He goes on to write that the mistress of the Chateau, Jocasta, has begun to subtly flirt with him. He is flattered, but doesn't know quite what to make of it. She is giving him presents, so far an elegant jacket that belonged to a much younger Ayrs. Ayrs, on his part, gives Frobisher a gun, a Luger that was left behind when the Prussians occupied the Chateau during World War I. Frobisher ends the short letter by thanking Sixsmith for his work finding a buyer for the purloined library volumes and adding that he has begun to compose his own music again.

The next letter tells the tale of Frobisher's affair with Mme. Ayrs. She has been visiting him every three or four nights for weeks now. Frobisher doesn't think that Ayrs knows, but is rather sure that the butler is aware of what is going on. He is wary, however, of Eva and worried that she senses that something is awry between her father and him.

Frobisher makes plans via Sixsmith to meet the book dealer, Jansch, in Bruges and hand over the books stolen from the Ayrs' library. He promises to send Sixsmith's share of the profit to him as soon as the transaction is completed.

Frobisher's sixth letter congratulates Sixsmith on his cunning in crafting a fake letter from Frobisher's father's solicitor so that he might have an excuse to visit Bruges for the day alone. En route, he returns the bicycle he borrowed from the constabulary his first day in town. He then meets Jansch in a shady bar where he won't be recognized and sells him the books from the Chateau. He also accepts Jansch's offer to make more money by performing a sexual favor.

Leaving Jansch, he shops in town and settles in a park to await Hendrick, the butler, who will drive him back to the Chateau. He encounters Eva, who is with a seemingly much older man. He thinks he has something "on" her, but when he confronts her, she tells him that the man is the father of the family with whom she stays in town during the week. Frobisher (rather insincerely) apologizes.

The seventh letter finds Frobisher extremely vexed. Jocasta has become demanding and the affair is more troublesome than enjoyable. However, he is in somewhat of a rough situation, since he is a guest at the Chateau. He tells Sixsmith of the events of the previous evening, when Jocasta hid in the bed covers while Ayrs and Frobisher worked on a bit of music in Frobisher's room. Quelle farce!



Frobisher's eighth letter relates the details of a visit to the Chateau by Sir Edward Elgar, a composer friend of Ayrs, of about the same age and health. Ayrs compliments Frobisher to Elgar, saying he is a valuable "aide de camp," which secretly pleases Frobisher. Three days later, Ayrs asks him to stay an additional six months with an increase in pay. Frobisher, although inwardly ecstatic, agrees to give him an answer in several days. He doesn't want to appear too eager.

The last letter of the chapter finds Frobisher lamenting ever getting involved with Jocasta. In passing, he mentions a birthmark the shape of a comet in the hollow of his shoulder, a connection to the previous chapter. He has agreed to stay on at the Chateau for another six months.

Chapter 2, "The Letters from Zedelgheim" Analysis

In "Letters from Zedelgheim," the story continues its theme of persons not being entirely what they seem. Frobisher, although he presents himself as an upstanding university music student, has actually been disowned by his family, expelled from the university, and is hounded by creditors. He also has his designs on selling off the Ayres library for his own profit.

This chapter is tied lightly to the previous one ("Adam Ewing") by Frobisher finding the first half of Ewing's journal in the Zedelgheim library.

The reader begins to suspect all is not well with this story from Frobisher's deceit as well as his conflicted relationships with both the mistress and the daughter of the house. Too much is being hidden for the tale to have a happy ending. The book's theme of deceit and duplicity is found in the Zedelgheim chapter in Frobisher's two-faced actions in coming to the Chateau and in his seducing the mistress of the house, right under his mentor's nose.



Chapter 3, "Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery"

Chapter 3, "Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery" Summary

In "Luisa Rey" the reader meets Sixsmith again, the same man to whom Robert Forbischer corresponded in the previous chapter. Now, however, Rufus Sixsmith is at the end of his life and has had an illustrious career as a physicist. As the story begins, he is on a balcony having a mental duel with himself. He is obviously conflicted about something, but the reader doesn't yet know what about. He spies a young woman in an adjacent balcony. She, too, seems conflicted.

By chance, Sixsmith and the young woman, Luisa Rey, arrive at the elevator at the same time. A random meeting becomes more personal when the elevator is stopped for forty minutes due to a power outage. As they wait for the elevator to begin again, Luisa tells Sixsmith about her famous father, a former police officer and renowned Vietnam reporter, who had recently died. Luisa is a reporter for a gossip magazine, *Spyglass*.

Sixsmith shows her a picture of his niece, Megan; he alludes to his ethical dilemma, and is on the brink of telling her the problem that is consuming him when the elevator begins again.

In the offices of *Spyglass* the next morning, amidst the usual magazine room chaos, Luisa suggests to her boss, Don Grelsch, that she do an expose on Seabrook's HYDRA project. She tells him of her meeting Sixsmith and what she believed he was about to tell him. Grelsch reluctantly agrees to the project, but gives her only a few days.

Luisa drives out that day to Swannekke Island, the site of the HYDRA project, in hopes of meeting Sixsmith again. At the entrance of the facility, she meets a group of protestors as well as the company's PR liaison, Fay Li. Luisa tells Fay Li that she's there to do an article on the Swannekke Island facility.

Joe Napier, the Seaboard head of security, watches his many security cameras and marvels at the facility's getting eleven out of twelve scientists to go along with the unsound and potentially dangerous HYDRA project. Sixsmith, of course, is the twelfth.

Meanwhile Alberto Grimaldi, the CEO of Seaboard Corporation, is addressing a press conference and extolling the virtues and safety of the HYDRA project. In the middle of his address, Luisa Rey sneaks off to find Sixsmith. Bluffing her way into his office, she finds instead of Sixsmith, an engineer named Isaac Sachs going through the scientist's office drawers. She identifies herself as Sixsmith's niece and is on the verge of learning what has happened to the scientist when Fay Li arrives and escorts her out of the office wing.



Sixsmith is holed up in a small hotel. He is watching T.V. and sees Grimaldi lying about the project's safety. "When the hydrogen buildup blows the roof off the containment chamber?" Then what? He asks the television. His telephone rings with an anonymous warning that "they" have found him, and that Sixsmith should leave the country immediately.

At the airport, Sixsmith mails the key to his expose to Luisa Rey, unbeknownst to her. He finds that his plane has been delayed until the next morning, and there are no other flights leaving before then. He gets a room at the airport hotel and nervously awaits the next day. He takes out a sheaf of letters written to him in the 1930s by his friend (and love) Robert Frobisher (the letters from Zedelghem). Before going to the hotel restaurant, he stows the nine letters he's already read in the hotel's Bible and takes the rest to dinner with him.

While Sixsmith is at dinner, the "fixer," Bill Smoke, lets himself into the room and waits. When Sixsmith returns, Smoke shoots Sixsmith once in the temple and stages it to appear a suicide. Luisa learns of Sixsmith's death from the paper the next day and in addition to being shocked, she doubts it is truly a suicide.

Luisa visits the scene of the crime, claiming again to be Sixsmith's niece. She is given the nine Frobisher letters, which housekeeping had found in the Bible. Back at the magazine office, her editor is less than enthusiastic that she is spending so much time on the Sixsmith story, but agrees to a few more days. Reading about Frobisher's "Cloud Atlas Sextet" in his letters to Sixsmith, she enlists the aid of a local record dealer in obtaining a copy.

The next day Luisa visits the Swannekke plant again, saying she is still working on an article about the plant. On her way in, she meets with the head of the anti-nuclear protesters who are camped out in the lawn of the facility. The woman, Hester van Zandt expresses her skepticism about Sixsmith's suicide and tells Luisa another story about the elderly woman who refused to sell the land adjacent to the plant and who was recently beaten into a coma by unknown parties. Hester suspects that Seaboard was behind the assault.

While Luisa is talking to Hester, the Seaboard group - Joe Napier, Fay Li, Mr. Grimaldi, and Bill Smoke, are discussing Luisa and whether she poses a threat to them. Fay tells the group that she's invited Luisa to visit the plant, stay the night at their on-site hotel and attend the banquet that night. That way they will be able to keep an eye on her.

Meanwhile, Isaac Sachs, the young man Luisa found in Sixsmith's office on her first visit to Swannekke Island, is struggling with his conscience. He, too, knows the dangers inherent with the HYDRA project and is debating whether he should say something to Luisa.

At the banquet, Luisa is playing the "ditz" reporter, hoping to get a chance to talk candidly with other dissident Seaboard employees. She meets Sachs at the banquet and joins him later in the hotel bar. Gradually, Sachs steers the conversation around to



Sixsmith's HYDRA report. He hints that he knows of this report but stops short of telling her where to find a copy. They agree to meet for breakfast. The next morning Sachs sends his apologies via Joe Napier. It seems that he has been called away on the company jet on Seaboard business. Later that evening, Luisa is still at the Seaboard facility when she receives a call from Sachs, telling her in code that he has left a copy of Sixsmith's report in her car. Although it's very late, Luisa decides to get out of the Seaboard compound right away.

She is followed out of the plant by Bill Smoke, who has overheard her telephone conversation. As Luisa goes over the bridge leading out of Swanekke Island, Smoke rams his car into Luisa's Volkswagen and sends her careening into the water. The chapter ends with Smoke leaning over the guardrail, admiring his work.

Chapter 3, "Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery" Analysis

"Luisa Rey" begins immediately by identifying with the past. Sixsmith, whom Luisa meets in an elevator in the beginning of the chapter, is the same man with whom Frobisher corresponded in "Letters from Zedelghem." One learns that Sixsmith, now an old man, still keeps the well-read letters with him always. After he dies, Luisa finds half of the letters and eventually obtains the rest of them from Sixsmith's niece.

This chapter also contains subtle ties to the first chapter ("Adam Ewing"). "Luisa Rey" is set in California and occasional mentions are made of a nearby town called Ewingville, where Luisa's mother lives.

That several of the characters in the Luisa Rey chapters are not whom they appear to be is alluded to in this first of the "Luisa" chapters. The reader has reason to question Bill Smoke's actions (he tries to kill Luisa), but equally suspect at the end of this chapter are Joe Napier and Isaac Sachs. This doubt further reinforced Mitchell's theme that people are often not what they seem - no matter what the time or culture.



Chapter 4, "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish"

Chapter 4, "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish" Summary

The first "Timothy Cavendish" chapter starts with Mr. Cavendish relating an incident that occurred six years prior to the telling. It seems he challenged three, rough teenage girls for littering on the streets of London and was knocked down and robbed of his watch for his efforts. He didn't report the crime, since he'd have to admit that he was bested by three teenage girls.

Mr. Cavendish is the owner of a small, and largely unprofitable, vanity press. He continues his tale with the story of Dermot "Duster" Hoggins, the author of "Knuckle Sandwich" and one of Cavendish's authors. It is the night of an awards presentation, and the restaurant is filled with authors, editors, and book critics. Towards the end of the evening, Hoggins finds Cavendish, nursing his drunkenness on the restaurant's rooftop patio. Hoggins is upset that one of the critics there, Mr. Felix Finch, panned his book, which was Hoggins' only review.

Hoggins begins making a scene, egging on the crowd to congratulate Finch. When the hapless critic inquires as to the prize (critics all love freebies), Hoggins tells him it's a free flight and proceeds to fling him off of the twelfth floor balcony.

After that incident, Hoggins' books sell off the shelves and make Cavendish quite a bit of money - at least until his creditors are paid. Soon, he is visited by the incarcerated author's thuggish nephews, looking for their share of the revenues. Hoggins, in his original contract, signed away all rights to the book, but the two nephews are not inclined to accept the fact. They give Cavendish one day to come up with their "share" of the book royalties.

Cavendish is desperate. He doesn't have the money to give them, even if he wanted to. After he has paid his bills and indulged himself a little, there isn't any money left. He's also "tapped out" at the bank. As a last resort, he visits his brother, Denholme, in hopes of borrowing the money. Denholme is exasperated with Cavendish, having lent him money on more than one occasion. He, does, however, offer him a "place who owes him [Denholme] a favor," where Cavendish can lie low for awhile.

The destination is north of London in England's Lake District, and Cavendish has an awful time getting there. His trains are delayed and misconnect and he is robbed of his money somewhere en route. To occupy himself while traveling, he takes a manuscript, "Half Lives: the First Luisa Rey Mystery," which has been sent him on speculation and begins to read it. The next day, he finally makes it to "Aurora House" late in the evening.



Exhausted, he signs the papers thrust at him and is shown his room. Cavendish is too exhausted to do anything but sleep.

The following morning, Cavendish begins to investigate his surroundings. There is no phone, no sharp edges, and all of the other guests are at least seventy years old. Aurora House is a nursing home for the elderly. Annoyed with his brother's idea of a joke, Cavendish attempts to leave the facility. It seems, however, that the papers he signed the previous night were admission papers and he will not be allowed to leave.

He breaks the lock on his room door and strides out onto the grounds in hopes of making his escape. In moments, however, he is tackled by the ogre-like groundskeeper, Mr. Withers. What's worse: once inside, he is caned by the stoic and cheerless head nurse, Nurse Noakes.

Cavendish is visited by a few of the other residents who try to tell him Aurora House is not so bad, but he is determined to get out of there. He plots his next strategy, but over dinner, his fork falls from his hand in an apparent stroke.

Chapter 4, "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish"

Analysis

The first "Timothy Cavendish" chapter contains allusions to the previous three chapters. Most notably, Cavendish is sent the first portion of the "Luisa Rey" story for his approval and has it with him when he arrives at Aurora House. At the end of his story, he finds the author and requests the second installment with the intention of publishing the pulp mystery.

The theme of deception is also carried through in "Timothy Cavendish." Cavendish's brother plays an awful trick on him, and, of course, Aurora House is not what it at first seemed. Far from being a welcoming refuge, it is a "no-escape" asylum for the elderly. Greed, too, makes an appearance. Cavendish, for his part, is greedy to take advantage of the unanticipated bounty from Hoggins' book "Knuckle Sandwich" and the Hoggins nephews are greedy to reap the benefits of their uncle's misfortune.



Chapter 5, "An Orison of Sonmi-451"

Chapter 5, "An Orison of Sonmi-451" Summary

An "Orison of Sonmi-451" is told as an interview. It is set in the future, in a world where corporations rule at the expense of individuals. Clones (fabricants) are created to perform service functions. One such fabricant is Sonmi-451, a former dinery server. She begins her interview by telling of her life as a fabricant. She worked in a Papa Song's, a kind of futuristic McDonald's, where the clones take orders, clean up the dining room, and serve the food. They are housed at the restaurant; work nineteen hour days; and never see natural sunlight.

The population of this corporate society is divided into "pure-bloods" (naturally born individuals) and "fabricants" (clones). Sonmi explains that fabricants are widely believed not to have a personality, but that is a myth perpetuated by the pure-bloods.

Sonmi continues her story and tells of her friend, Yoona-939, a fellow dinery server, who began to be aware of her surroundings, develop curiosity, and to question her lot in the world. This awareness in fabricants is referred to in the novel as "ascending." Yoona shows Sonmi how to rise before the rest of the fabricants and shows Sonmi her secret stash of objects she's found in the dinery that were left by guests. Since fabricants never see the outside world, all of this is new and exciting to both girls.

Finally, Yoona decides to try to escape the dinery, and one New Year's Eve she flees to the outside elevator, dragging a pure-blood little boy with her as a hostage. Shortly, however, the elevator returns with the boy unharmed but with Yoona's body riddled with bullet holes.

After Yoona's attempted escape, the rules at the dinery where Sonmi lived and worked increased substantially. The incident was blamed on "Union," a revolutionary group supposedly working to overthrow the current order of things. It was indicated that Yoona must have been a Union recruit, although Sonmi says that this is unlikely, since how what a Unionman contact her and if he did, what use would a fabricant be?

Sonmi, too, begins to become aware of her surroundings. She has independent thoughts; she can remember things, and she grows dissatisfied with life at Papa Song's. Some months later, Sonmi wakes to a noise in the middle of the "curfew," only to find the dinery supervisor (seer) dead at his desk.

Sonmi doesn't know what to do. To call for help would be to give away her "ascended" state. Since the man is obviously dead already, she does nothing and returns to the dorm room. The next morning, however, the rest of the fabricants are not awakened as usual by the stimulin customarily pumped through the air ducts. Sonmi is the only one awake - or so she thinks. Rather, she is met by a dark-suited man, who calls himself Chang.



Chang calls himself a chauffeur and has a message for Sonmi that he is to escort her out of the dinery to avoid her being implicated in the seer's death. He takes her up the elevator into the world of signs, highways, buildings, sights, and smells and into a waiting vehicle. Overwhelmed, she doesn't ask any questions, but goes along peacefully. Their destination is Taemosan University, where she is to be a test subject for Boom-Sook Kim, a post-grad student.

Kim turns out to be the lazy son of a corporate exec. He is absent when Sonmi is dropped off, and his lab is filthy and bug-ridden, something else foreign to Sonmi. Kim pops in the lab, says he is leaving for three days, and bids Sonmi "wait right there" for his return.

On Sonmi's second day in the lab, she is visited by another kind of fabricant, named Wing-027, who brings her clothes and helps her get oriented. Wing is a "diasterman," that is, he is designed to operate in lands contaminated with radioactive or biological waste, the, so called, deadlands. He gives her a sony, which is a hand-held computer, capable of displaying an encyclopedia of knowledge and literature. Sonmi begins to work her way through school, independently, beginning with elementary school. In six months, she has completed secondary school.

At the lab, Sonmi meets Hae-Joo Im, another post-grad student, when he enters one day to tell Kim of Wing-027's destruction, a result of Wing's grad student's carelessness. Kim laughs, but Sonmi is distraught at losing her only friend at Taemosan. She is to meet Hae-Joo again before her story is finished.

Life at the lab continues, with long stretches of leisure time, which Sonmi uses to study in silence, punctuated by periods of riotous drinking and debauchery by Kim and his buddies. On one such night, the revelry takes a more sinister turn when "boys" decide to test their skill with a bow and arrow by shooting fruit from the top of Sonmi's head. They start with a melon and have progressed to a plum when Professor Mephi bursts into the room and rescues her.

Professor Mephi is a Boardman, a Unanimity Professor, and one of the most respected persons at the university. After thoroughly chastising Kim, he escorts Sonmi to new quarters. She is glad to be rid of Kim and his cruel friends, but regrets having to leave her sony behind. He informs her that she has been reassigned to the Unanimity faculty.

The professor attempts to answer the questions that the scared Sonmi has yet to ask. She has come to his attention from the eclectic choices of files that she downloaded to her sony. Rather than being harsh about her brazen quest for knowledge, he congratulates her and tells her he intends to enroll her in the University as a full student. Sonmi even attends some classes, but the commotion and ridicule associated with her being the only fabricant among pure-bloods, causes them to restructure her courses as individual study.

At the University, Sonmi is invited to join Hae-Joo Im on weekend nights for excursions outside of the campus. He tells her that it is part of her training and that the Professor



has encouraged these outings. They visit the parks, the gallerias (shopping malls), and restaurants (even though fabricants can't eat "pure-blood" food). They even visit the Papa Song's dinery, the same dinery where Sonmi once lived and worked.

Sonmi is disturbed by their visit there. She has come far, and it is difficult to see and hear the automatic responses and the life of the servers there. Hae-Joo Im tells her that her feelings are just a sign of her becoming human.

On another outing, Hae-Joo, a film buff, obtains an old disney (movie), "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish" (the film made from the previous chapter's story) for them to watch. They are about half-way through the screening when an aide of Hae-Joo's comes in to tell them that Professor Mephi has been captured and that Chang is waiting for them in the basement with a car. Before they flee, Hae-Joo tells Sonmi that he is not quite who he has said he is.

Chapter 5, "An Orison of Sonmi-451" Analysis

An "Orison of Sonmi-451" carries hints from the previous chapters. Chief among these is Sonmi's birthmark, a red comet-shaped mark between her shoulder blade and breastbone, similar to those that Frobisher and Luisa Rey have discussed. It's interesting that a fabricant should have such a mark, since clones are made, rather than born of man, but this point is never explained. There is also the obvious tie to the "Timothy Cavendish" story. The movie that has been made of Cavendish's tale is the movie that Sonmi and Hae-Joo are watching when they learn of the Professor's capture and their peril.

There is a feeling throughout this chapter that all is not quite what it seems, as has been the case in the previous stories. The scenario of Sonmi's ascension, her assignment to the University, and her "rescue" first by Professor Mephi and then by Hae-Joo Im are somehow too convenient. For instance, how was she the only one to ascend? How did a lost sony just happen to be available and find its way to her?

As with the previous three stories, the first half of "Sonmi" ends with a "cliff-hanger," with Sonmi and Hae-Joo Im presumably running for their lives.



Chapter 6, "Sloosh'a's Crossin' an' Everythin' After"

Chapter 6, "Sloosh'a's Crossin' an' Everythin' After" Summary

"Sloosh'a's Crossin'" is set in the distant future, in a world following a nuclear holocaust. The cities destroyed, humans now live in small tribes, including Zachry's Valleymen tribe on the island of Ha-why (Hawaii). The chapter is a narrative, told by Zachry, a young goat herder. The story begins with Zachry witnessing his father's murder and his brother's abduction by the fierce rival tribe, the Konas. He was just nine years old at the time, but he still is haunted by his inability to save them.

Zachry tells of his first love, his mutated baby born without a nose or mouth, and life with his mother, younger brothers and sisters. He tells of the Valleymen god, Sonmi, who lives among the people as a benevolent god. Her evil counterpart is called "Old Georgie," the Valleymen version of the devil.

The Valleymen are a simple people. They live off the land, grow most of their food and make their clothes. Once a year they travel to the eastern shore to trade with the Prescients, an advanced tribe that come from the northeast (presumably the Aleutian Islands of Alaska). One year, when Zachry is sixteen, the Prescients propose that one of their people, a woman named Meronym, stay behind and live with the Valleymen for a year in order to study their customs and ways.

The Abbess of the Valleymen agrees and it is decided that Meronym will stay with Zachry and his family. Most of the tribe is intrigued with the Prescient woman, her strange clothes, and her fanciful gifts. Zachry, however, is mistrustful and fears that she has been sent to infiltrate the Valleymen tribe so that the Prescients might overthrow them. He vows to find her secret.

After the initial flurry of excitement, Meronym blends into the Valleymen society and is accepted, and even liked, for her pleasant ways and her generosity by all except for Zachry. He takes his suspicions to the Abbess, the tribe leader, but is told that if he is to make such accusations, he needs to have proof. Zachry leaves the Abbess determined to expose the Prescient woman as a spy.

One day, Zachry finds Meronym at the Abbess' house, a holy place to the Valleymen where they keep icons of their ancestors. He confronts Meronym and blurts out his suspicions that she is not quite whom she appears to be. She swears on her ancestors that she means no harm and takes her leave of a confused Zachry.

Meronym has left her pack behind and Zachry goes through her things with the intention of finding proof of her duplicity. He finds an egg, an orison, and it comes to life with a



hologram of a girl, and she speaks. Zachry is dumbfounded, but before he can absorb what he has found, a Prescient man appears on the orison and scolds Zachry for rifling Meronym's belongings. He tells Zachry to replace the egg and to keep silent about what he has found.

Not long after, Zachry's sister, Catkin, becomes gravely ill. The tribe medicine man and the herbalist can do nothing for her. In despair, Zachry goes to find Meronym, hoping she can use some of her "Smart" (her knowledge) to help his sister. Meronym resists, saying it is forbidden for her to interfere, but eventually is persuaded to give Zachry a pill to sneak in Catkin's mouth. The girl is saved, and Zachry begins to warm to Meronym.

So kindly does Zachry feel towards Meronym that when she announces her intention of climbing to the top of Mauna Kea, a feared spot the Valleymen believed to be the home of "Old Georgie." Zachry agrees to accompany her. The trek is not an easy one. They encounter cold, storms and dangerous and slippery inclines.

On the six-day excursion, Meronym and Zachry grow to be almost friends and share confidences. At the peak, they find a series of abandoned observatory buildings. As they are examining one of the stations, Zachry asks Meronym about the orison that he found in her pack. Meronym tells him that it is the tale of Sonmi, a fabricant from Nea So Copros, which Meronym had been studying to get a better understanding for the Valleymen.

Meronym tells Zachry that Sonmi is not a god, but a martyr, and relates her story to him. Zachry is angry and confused at having his lifelong beliefs shattered. His suspicions of Meronym return and he hallucinates that his ancestors ask him to kill Meronym. Zachry is torn between his past and his future and after a few tense moments throws his spear away rather than use it on Meronym.

The trip back to the village is almost as grueling as the ascent, and neither Zachry nor Meronym are quite the same when they return; both have learned much and have faced demons they'd rather have left undisturbed.

Soon it is time for the Honokaa Barter, the island's annual harvest festival and the largest gathering on the island. The Valleymen community busy themselves making goods to trade at the fair, and soon, Meronym, Zachry, and others set off to the coast, laden with meat, cheese, herbs, wool, and other products. The fair is active, and they trade for rice, raisins, coffee, and other things that the Valleymen are unable to produce.

On the second day of the festivities, the entire campground, including Zachry are awakened by a Kona attack. Dead and dying lay all around, and Zachry is bound and carted off to become a Kona slave. Many of the other captives die en route. When they stop for the night, the captives are forced to shiver in the cold, while the Kona warriors warm themselves by the fire and eat and drink their fill.

All of a sudden, the Kona warriors drop stone dead. It is Meronym, riding to the rescue, disguised as a Kona. She has recognized Zachry by the Prescient boots that she had given him. The pair releases the other captives and rides off to safety.



Safety, however, is not easily found. It is a full-scale Kona attack. When they stop for the night, Meronym speaks to her orison, while Zachry rests. Meronym eventually calls Zachry over and re-introduces him to Duophysite, the Prescient man who had scolded him when he was rummaging through Meronym's belongings.

Duophysite tells the pair that the Prescient mother ship is lost and that a plague has descended over the Prescient homeland, wiping out ninety-eight percent of the population. He tells them that there are five Presicents on Ha-Why, one on each island and that he is sending a kayak to the northwest side of the Big Island the next day to pick up Meronym and take her out of danger. Zachry agrees to get her to the rendezvous spot safely.

First Zachry wants to go by his village and check on his family. When they arrive, they find that the Konas have been there first. His family is gone, killed or enslaved. Zachry is wracked by guilt once again. Meronym invites him to join her in escaping the island. Reluctantly, he agrees. Barely two steps in front of the Kona raiders, Zachry and Meronym make their way over the mountains to the coast, to the waiting kayak, to safety, and to a new life.

The chapter ends with a coda from Zachry's son, saying that his pa always believed Meronym to be Sonmi, because of the comet-shaped birthmark on her shoulder. In his gear, after Zachry's death, the son finds the orison with the story of Sonmi.

Chapter 6, "Sloosh'a's Crossin' an' Everythin' After" Analysis

"Sloosh'a's Crossin'" is the only chapter that isn't broken into two parts. It represents the apex of the story, the point to which the previous chapters build and from which the last chapters descend. The tale is tied to the earlier chapter with references to Sonmi. The Valley-men of Ha-Why worship Sonmi, having found her orison and believe her hologram to be a god.

The name of the visiting tribe, the Prescients, is a play on the commonly-used adjective, meaning to foresee. The Prescients, it turns out, are the hope of the future, their emissaries having been strategically placed around the globe to perpetuate their tribe.

The Prescients are a dark-skinned race, and the author subtly reintroduces the theme of mistrust towards people that are different, just as the "pure-bloods" mistrust the fabricants in the "Sonmi" chapters.

The comet-shaped birthmark, which Frobisher, Luisa Rey, Sonmi, and Timothy Cavendish all mention, reoccurs in "Sloosh'a's Crossin'." Meronym, too, is marked with the distinctive birthmark, hinting that all of the characters are reincarnations of each other.



Chapter 7, "An Orison of Sonmi-451"

Chapter 7, "An Orison of Sonmi-451" Summary

In "Sloosh'a's Crossin'," the previous chapter, the reader learns what he has suspected from the first portion of the Sonmi story — that Sonmi is ultimately killed by the pure-bloods of Nea So Copros. Her orison, the interview detailed in the "Sonmi" chapters, is really an account of her last words. These words, however, live long after her demise and the demise of Nea So Copros to become an inspiration to future societies, such as the Valley-men of Sloosh'a's Crossin'.

The conclusion of the "Sonmi-451" story opens with Hae-Joo Im's revelation that he is part of the Union revolutionary group. As they flee the university, Hae-Joo's aide is hit by a Unanimity dart with a poison that causes him to scream in agony, thus giving away their position. Hae-Joo calmly puts him out of his misery by shooting him in the head. Sonmi's quiet and peaceful university life is over for good.

The pair escapes to a slum, called Huamdonggil, where Nea So Copros "dumps" its undesirables - those too ill, too poor, or too old to contribute to society. Hae-Joo takes Sonmi to a presumed safe house, where he is greeted by the madam, a serpent-like creature. In a parlor, Sonmi is addressed by a hologram of a carp, the leader of the Union movement in disguise. He thanks Sonmi for her cooperation and tells her that with her help, Union will change the world's corporate structure out of existence. Then, as suddenly as he appeared, he is gone.

While in Huamdonggil, the two of them get new "souls," the microchips implanted in all "pure-blood" fingers to allow passage from one area to another and to allow the Corporation to keep track of its citizens. Sonmi also visits a facescaper, a plastic surgeon, who changes Sonmi's look (although the reader learns she has been changed back during her trial).

They hurry out of the city, stopping for the night at a fabricant nursery, ironically called Hydra. Here fabricants are created, much like hot-house plants. The next morning, Sonmi asks the obvious question: Why would Union go to such trouble to save one experimental fabricant? As they drive out further into the countryside, Hae-Joo attempts to answer her.

He tells her that Union desires revolution because the present corporate society is destroying itself, that each year more and more of the planet becomes uninhabitable due to disease, toxic waste, and global warming. Union proposes to create an army of six million "ascended" fabricants, and Sonmi is to be their first soldier.

The second night the duo stops at an abandoned abbey, where a handful of dispossessed pure-bloods, called colonists, live off of the land. In exchange for solar panels and other necessities, the colonists provide a safe house for the Union network.



At this stop, Sonmi meets the Abbess of the colony. They discuss the future of civilization and the crime of enslaving Sonmi's "tribe," the fabricants.

Leaving the colony, Sonmi and Hae-Joo stop for a rest break atop a bridge. While they are there, another car comes and stops. The man in the car gets out and takes a carrier from the trunk, leaving his wife and daughter in the car. Inside the carrier is a small, terrified fabricant living doll. Before Hae-Joo or Sonmi can react, the man flings the doll from the bridge, murmuring "good riddance."

The doll, the latest "must-have" toy, was their daughter's, but she has outlived her "newness" and is no longer desired. Instead of paying to turn the doll in, the family seeks simply to get rid of it by drowning it in the freezing river. Sonmi is too stunned to speak.

That evening they reach Pusan, their destination. They make their way to a rooming house, near the port, where Hae-Joo keeps a room. Hae-Joo makes contact with the Union leader again, who congratulates Sonmi and Hae-Joo on their successful journey. He tells her that they have a "formative experience" for her, not a pleasant one, but a necessary one. She agrees.

Hae-Joo takes her to Papa Song's Golden Ark, a huge vessel moored at the port. Sonmi recognizes it as the promised destination for Papa Song dinery servers, such as she was, when they "graduate" after their twelve stars of service. They enter the vessel, claiming to be technical workers and Hae-Joo leads Sonmi through a suspended ventilation shaft, from which she can see the action below.

In the first room, some two hundred, twelve-star fabricants await to be called so that their trip to Hawaii, their reward, can begin. In the second room, an excited fabricant had been led, eager for her journey. A helmet is lowered onto her head, but instead of being transported to Hawaii, she is killed and her body taken on a conveyor to the next chamber.

Sonmi and Hae-Joo crawl along further to witness the activities in the third room. Here, the cadavers of the fabricants are stripped, skinned, and cut apart, providing material for the fabricant wombanks, making food for the fabricants, and for use in the Papa Song food products.

Sonmi's outrage is predictable. She tells Hae-Joo that all of these slaughterships must be destroyed and the killing of fabricants stopped. She says that the ascended fabricants need a Bill of Rights and that she is the one to write it. Hae-Joo agrees and says that they need Sonmi's help.

Sonmi writes "Declarations" over a three-week period in an isolated villa, outside of Pusan. Within hours of her handing her document over to Hae-Joo, the Unanimity forces come to arrest her. She is expecting them. She has come to realize that the whole journey, from Papa Song's dinery to the writing of "Declarations," has been produced by Unanimity so that they could put Sonmi on trial and discredit any possible fabricant uprising.



As the story ends, Sonmi is resigned to her fate, her death. Her last request is to see the final portion of the movie she and Hae-Joo had begun a long time ago - "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish."

Chapter 7, "An Orison of Sonmi-451" Analysis

The second portion of the "Sonmi" story is more fast-paced than the first. Now that the reader knows for certain that Sonmi is not going to survive her ordeal, the story takes a more somber tone. Clues to her demise become apparent now that one knows the ending. For instance, how is she the only fabricant to ascend? What about Wing-027? How did they just happen to come across the couple discarding the living doll on the bridge? Isn't that just too pat a coincidence?

The second chapter of the Sonmi story contains ties to previous stories as well. In addition to the "coincidental" comet-shaped birthmark, there is the fabricant nursery named "Hydra," recalling the "Luisa Rey" story. That Sonmi meets and is impressed by the Abbess of the colonists retells the Valleymen society, depicted in "Sloosh'a's Crossin'," which is led by an Abbess.

The theme of deception and duplicity is the strongest theme in the Sonmi story. Few characters in this tale are who they purport to be. Hae-Joo Im, Professor Mephi, and the Union leader are all, in reality, corporate spies.



Chapter 8, "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish"

Chapter 8, "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish" Summary

The final portion of the "Timothy Cavendish" story starts with Cavendish gradually recovering his strength, his speech, and his motor skills following his apparent stroke. In the month that follows, he struggles to regain his memory and his other faculties. When his memory returns, he realizes anew that his is a captive at Aurora House.

While Cavendish awaits the return of his strength and tries to figure out how to escape, he rereads "Half Lives: the First Luisa Rey Mystery," deciding it might make a good thriller after all. He longs for the second half of the mystery, but has left the cover letter and contact information in his office in London.

Cavendish befriends a couple of the other residents of Aurora House - Ernie Blacksmith and Veronica Costello. They invite him to their hideout in the boiler room, where they share purloined whiskey and stories each afternoon. They also share the ins and outs of Aurora House with Cavendish and discuss, in broad terms, the possibility of escape.

One night, Cavendish sneaks out of his room and finds a telephone in an unlocked office. He manages to dial his brother's house and gets his sister-in-law and one time lover, Georgette. His brother, Denholme, has drowned in his fish pond, and Georgette seems to have lost her mind. Before he can learn any more, he is found by Withers, the Aurora House maintenance man, and is returned unceremoniously to his room.

Back in the boiler room, Ernie scolds Cavendish, saying that he uses the phone regularly to check sports scores and now it will be locked up. What's more: he warns Cavendish to be careful or they will put something in his food, like they did the last time when he had the stroke.

At Christmas, Cavendish tries to get the pastor to post a letter for him, to his former secretary, requesting his rescue. Cavendish dreams of the day very soon that he will be free of Aurora House. The next day, however, he finds his letter, torn to bits inside a festive Christmas stocking, hung in his room by the sadistic Nurse Noakes.

For days, Cavendish is too depressed to meet his friends in the boiler room. Finally, when he joins them, he tells of his desperation to escape Aurora House. Ernie and Veronica agree to help him if he takes them with him. They form an outlandish plan, one that just might work.

On the day of their escape, the group lures the rich son of a patient to Aurora House (on a stolen cell phone) with the story that his mother has regained her senses and wants to



tell him where she has hidden her money. The greedy soon agrees hurries to Aurora House. To get Nurse Noakes out of the way, they tell her that Cavendish has died in his room. When she goes to check, they lock her in the room.

To complete the farce, the group hurries the arriving son to his mother's room and takes off in his car. They are chased from the grounds, but make a clean getaway, with much rejoicing and giggling. Safely away from Aurora House, they stop at a pub and are enjoying a drink when Cavendish realizes that he has left their escape route map on his bed with Nurse Noakes. He advises the group that they better leave quickly.

On cue, Withers bursts through the door, intent on escorting the inmates back to captivity. Before they can, however, one of the group jumps on the bar and implores the working class bar patrons to help them keep their freedom. The rowdy bar crowd goes after Withers and his bunch and eventually they reluctantly leave. Thus ends "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish."

Cavendish decides to stay out of hectic London and moves into a boarding house in Edinburgh. He contacts Mrs. Latham, his secretary, who has managed to appease the Hoggins nephews. "Knuckle Sandwich" has sold to a movie studio and there is enough money for everyone. He contacts the author of "Luisa Rey," reads the second portion, and is preparing to have the story published.

Chapter 8, "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish" Analysis

The final chapter of the "Timothy Cavendish" story includes mention of the "Luisa Rey" story from the previous chapters. Cavendish ends up finding the author, getting the final portion of the story, and offering to publish the tale. In addition, the reader learns that Cavendish has the tell-tale comet-shaped birthmark, just like Luisa Rey, Frobisher, and Meronym. The farce-like escape mirrors somewhat the antics at Chateau Zedelghem with Frobisher and Mrs. Ayrs.

The theme of first and second-class citizens, such as the Moriori and the White settlers in "Adam Ewing" and the fabricants and the Pure-bloods in "Sonmi" continues in the "Timothy Cavendish" chapters. Here, it is the older (read less useful) citizens that are undesirable. As with the previous two examples, the residents of Aurora House (the older citizens) eventually prove their worth.



Chapter 9, "Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery"

Chapter 9, "Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery" Summary

The reader is relieved to learn in the first few lines of the second "Luisa Rey" chapter that Luisa survives her car plunging into the water. She pulls herself from the wreckage of the underwater car, but returns to the car to look for the Sixsmith report. Gasping air from an air bubble inside the car, she tries in vain to retrieve the report. She fears that she's waited too long and will drown while looking for the document.

Meanwhile, Isaac Sachs is flying back from his meeting in Philadelphia and is pleased (and relieved) about his decision to give Luisa the report. Flying with him are the company president, Alberto Grimaldi, and nine others. Suddenly, a suitcase bomb stowed in the baggage compartment explodes, and the plane is consumed in flames. Lloyd Hooks gets the message during a speech from Bill Smokes that Luisa, Sachs, and Grimaldi are all dead.

Luisa makes it to the surface, helped by the protestor, Hester Van Zandt. Luisa decides to let the Seaboard people think that she is dead and plans to stay with her mother for a few days. Hester's friend, however, betrays her to Joe Napier at Seaboard. When Luisa stops by her apartment to pack a few things, Napier is there waiting for her.

Napier tells Luisa that he's there to warn her, that her father, Lester, saved his life and he owes him enough to protect his daughter. Luisa doesn't know who to believe, but she listens. Meanwhile, in Luisa's mother's house, Bill Smokes is charming the lady of the house and pretending to be a junior partner in a local law firm. Luisa has never met him face-to-face, so she is not alarmed to see him at her mother's fund raiser luncheon. She does, however, notice his intense stare. It is here that Luisa learns of the plane crash that killed Sachs and Grimaldi.

The next day, in the *Spyglass* newsroom, the buzz is that the magazine is being sold. Grelsch, their boss, arrives and confirms the rumor. Luisa is too stunned by the events of the past few days to much care.

Napier learns the news of the plane crash and is understandably stunned. He is called into the office of the Vice CEO and offered a generous early retirement package. In the span of a day, he has gone from insider to liability. He decides to take the offer and be done with the goings on at Seaboard.

Luisa, meanwhile, has tracked down a copy of Frobisher's "Cloud Atlas Sextet." When she goes to pick it up, it is playing on the record shop sound system. She swears that



she has heard the recording before, although it's nearly impossible that she could have. Returning to the office, Luisa learns that he's been fired, orders of the new owners.

Napier heads out of town to his cabin, set on enjoying his retirement, but he's haunted by the happenings at Seaboard; the murders of Grimaldi, Sachs, and Sixsmith and the attempted murder of Luisa. After only one night, he packs up his gear and heads back into town to help Luisa.

Seaboard announces that Lloyd Hooks, the energy guru and political enemy of Grimaldi's, will replace him as head of Seaboard. Luisa learns that Hooks and Seaboard's vice CEO are also principals of Trans Vision, the new owner of *Spyglass*. It becomes clearer to her why she was fired. As she is cleaning out her desk, a folder is delivered for her. Inside is a note from Sixsmith with a key to a safety deposit box containing a copy of the Seaboard expose'.

As she reaches the bank to retrieve the report, Fay Li (the Seaboard PR director) is watching her from across the street. Fay Li, accompanied by two Chinese assistants, gets to the bank vault ahead of Luisa. Fay has sold out to a rival company and is dreaming of how she will spend the five million that the report will earn her. Luisa is startled to find Fay in the vault and Fay uses Luisa's confusion to get the key from her. Fay opens the strongbox, but as soon as she removes the report, the box explodes, presumably rigged by Bill Smoke.

Luisa is thrown free by the explosion and, regaining her bearings, heads towards the lobby and away from the bank. A rescuer takes her hand and helps her from the building, but Luisa is wary. How did this person get to the scene so quickly? All of a sudden she is being forced into a car. At the last moment, her abductor is shot dead in front of her by Joe Napier.

Luisa runs off with Napier, but the two are followed by Bill Smoke. After a chase all over downtown Buenas Yervas, they escape. Napier tells her that he had to come back to help her because of her father. He tells her that he's arranged for her to meet Megan Sixsmith, Rufus' niece, at a local museum and that maybe she can lead them to another copy of the report. Megan tells her that there is likely to be another copy in Sixsmith's yacht, *Starfish*, which is moored at the local marina.

At the yacht, Napier and Luisa easily find the report. As they are preparing to leave, a shadow fills the doorway and two shots ring out. Napier falls to the floor, bleeding copiously. Bill Smoke walks into the light. As he is preparing to kill Luisa, Napier rallies all of his last energy and shoots Smoke. In a moment, both men lay dead on the floor of the yacht.

Luisa and Hester van Zandt make the Sixsmith report public. Hooks and many of the other Seaboard executives are indicted. Hooks skips bail, but is eventually re-arrested. Luisa writes to Megan and requests the rest of Sixsmith's letters from Frobisher.



Chapter 9, "Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery" Analysis

The second "Luisa Rey" chapter uncloaks the greed and deception of the Seaboard Corporation and its many players. The story is one of deception within deception. Grimaldi is set on destroying anyone who threatens the HYDRA project. He, in turn, is destroyed by Lloyd Hooks, who has designs on taking over the company. Fay Li, the company PR person, sells out to a rival company and attempts to sell the damning Sixsmith report to them before she, too, is destroyed. One positive deception is Joe Napier, the Seaboard head of security, who turns out to be an ally rather than a foe. Regrettably, he is killed for his efforts.

The ties to the previous chapters continue in the second part of "Luisa Rey." Luisa is still haunted by her half-remembrances of Zedelghem and a past life. She also is successful in her quest for a copy of Frobisher's "Cloud Atlas Sextet," which she claims to have heard before, however unlikely. She is also able to get the remaining Frobisher letters from Zedelghem from Sixsmith's niece, Megan.

In addition to the letters and the recording, the marina in Buenas Yervas, where Luisa and Joe Napier go to find the last copy of Sixsmith's expose contains the schooner, "Prophetess," the ship on which Adam Ewing sails from the South Pacific.



Chapter 10, "The Letters from Zedelgheim"

Chapter 10, "The Letters from Zedelgheim" Summary

In the second "Letters from Zedelgheim" chapter, Frobisher is well embedded into the Ayrs household. He is assisting the maestro regularly with his work, bedding Ayrs' wife, and systematically selling off the Chateau's library. At the beginning of the second set of letters, Ayrs has taken ill, and Frobisher has time to work on his own music.

In his free time, he arranges for his acquaintance, Morty Dhondt, to drive him to the nearby World War I allied cemetery. He is searching for his brother, Adrian's grave, but it isn't there. The outing leaves Frobisher discouraged and depressed. He discusses the inevitability of war with Dhondt.

When Ayrs is able to work again, he "borrows" a refrain from Frobisher's "Cloud Atlas." Frobisher is upset at the plagiarism, but Ayrs is haughty and insists that since the young man is in his employ, he has purchased all that Frobisher creates. The dispute causes a major rift between the two musicians, but it is lightly patched, and their work continues, but Frobisher resolves to guard his own work more carefully.

Eva, the Ayrses' daughter, returns from her schooling in Switzerland. Eva has acquired more grace and manners while away at school, and she is much more polite to Frobisher. He visits her occasionally in Bruges, at the home of her weekday host family, the van de Veldes. On one such visit, Frobisher and Eva visit one of the medieval towers in Bruges. The rest of the group balk at the tall, winding staircase, so only Eva and Frobisher climb to the top. There Eva tells him about her love for a "tall, dark, handsome, musical foreigner." Frobisher believes she is talking about him and allows himself to feel all of the emotions for her that he has been suppressing. He becomes increasingly smitten with Eva.

Inevitably, Ayrs and Frobisher part ways. The final blow is Ayrs' asking him to compose a short movement so that Ayrs can take it over and call it his own. Ayrs said that's what apprentices do. Frobisher strongly disagrees and moves out of the Chateau. The parting is not amicable, and Ayrs vows to ruin him so that no musician on the Continent will hire him.

In parting, Frobisher throws out that he has been sleeping with the master's wife. Ayrs laughs and says that he's known about it all along. He's even encouraged it. In packing his things, Frobisher "borrows" Ayrs antique Luger and leaves a note in Eva's room, bidding her to meet him at the tower in Bruges. He also finds the second half of the "Journal of Adam Ewing," holding up the bed post. He takes this with him also.



During the days, Frobisher works on his "Cloud Atlas" sextet and in the evening, he goes to the tower, hoping to see Eva. Night after night, she fails to appear. Desperate, and certain that his note and subsequent letters have been intercepted, Frobisher goes to visit Eva at the van de Veldt townhouse in Bruges. They are in the midst of a party and Frobisher is denied entrance.

At the front of the van de Veldt's house, Frobisher makes a scene and demands to see Eva. She finally appears and is appalled by his appearance. She says that she has received his embarrassing letters and introduces him to her fiancy, a "tall, dark, handsome, and musical" Swiss man! Frobisher proceeds to get into a fight with the man and is thrown unceremoniously off the property. The incident causes his hotelier to give him notice. Frobisher doubles his effort to finish "Cloud Atlas."

The final letter outlines his intention to shoot himself in the head with Ayr's Luger. He thanks Sixsmith for traveling to Bruges to find him and rescue him and apologizes for hiding from him. With this last letter, he sends the completed manuscript of "Cloud Atlas" and the two portions of "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing."

Chapter 10, "The Letters from Zedelgheim" Analysis

The last half of "Letters from Zedelgheim" is tied to the previous chapters in several ways. The reader learns that Frobisher has the repeating comet-shaped birthmark, also found on Luisa Rey, Meronym, Cavendish, and Sonmi. Frobisher also becomes interested in the "Journal of Adam Ewing," which he finds at the Chateau.

The theme of second class citizens is repeated here, when Ayr's and his daughter consider Frobisher, the struggling musician, to be less important and his work less worthy than their own.

That people are not always what they seem is carried through in Ayr's confession that he has known all along about Frobisher's affair with his wife and that he even encouraged it. Frobisher, too, deceives Sixsmith, who travels all the way to Belgium in hopes of saving his friend. For his efforts, Frobisher hides from him and rewards him with his suicide note.



Chapter 11, "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing"

Chapter 11, "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing" Summary

The final portion of the "Adam Ewing" story picks up mid-sentence, where it left off in the first half of the story. Ewing is still aboard the "Prophetess," crossing the Pacific. The ship makes land at Raiatea, one of the Society Islands. There, Ewing and Dr. Goose are asked by the captain to accompany him ashore. Ewing doubts the captain's intentions, but agrees to go with the group.

Ashore, they find a missionary village, run by a Nazarene couple, Reverend Horrox and his wife. It seems that the captain has brought Ewing and Goose along to convince the preacher that the "Prophetess" is a godly ship and thus make him agreeable to the captain's trade proposition, an arrangement to which the Reverend ultimately agrees.

While on the island, Ewing learns of the Horroxes unhappy marriage and the slave-like status of the natives in the village, in keeping with the nineteenth-century view of White "superiority" held by the Horroxes, a view upon which they expound at dinner.

That evening, Goose shares this cynical view of the world, that it is "Eat or be Eaten." The next day, the group returns to the ship, and Ewing finds that his "coffin" has been broken into. His papers and money are still intact since he carries the key to the chest around his neck.

Ewing is growing weaker and weaker and is plagued increasingly by hallucinations. He is barely able to leave his cabin. The climate at sea on the "Prophetess" continues to disintegrate as well. As the ship passes over the equator, the crew uses the occasion as an opportunity to abuse the newer seamen. The antics continue and later leads to one of the men hanging himself from the mast.

Ewing is aghast at the goings on, but is too weak to do much about it. Three days from Honolulu, Ewing fears that he won't live to see landfall again. Death seems to be just hours away. As he drifts in and out of consciousness, he is visited by Dr. Goose, who gives him an almond-tasting potion.

Goose sends away from Ewing's cabin all that come to call on him. The vehemence with which he sends away Autua, the Moriori who stowed away in Ewing's cabin, makes Ewing realize, belatedly, that Goose is not all that he seems. He has been slowly poisoning Ewing. Goose repeats his mantra of "Eat or be Eaten" as an explanation for his deeds as he takes the key from Ewing's neck. He bids Ewing farewell, telling him he will be dead within the hour, poisoned by arsenic.



Ewing's next recollection is of Autua holding him on deck and making him drink large quantities of rain water in an attempt to dilute the poison. Autua then carries him off of the ship to a Jesuit hospital near Diamond Head in Honolulu, where he gradually recovers. Henry Goose escapes into the sub-culture of Hawaii and is never apprehended.

Chapter 11, "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing" Analysis

The final chapter of the "Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing" (and the last chapter of "Cloud Atlas") repeats the theme of deception. The captain pretends to be a god-fearing man to the Horraxes on Raiatea in order to get them to agree to his trade arrangement. More serious, however, is the hoax perpetuated against Ewing. Goose, it is revealed, has been slowly poisoning him in hopes of robbing him of his money and jewelry.

The theme of second-class citizenship is blatantly expounded by Reverend Horrax, the captain, and Dr. Goose at dinner on the island. In the guise of science, the white men propose to keep the island natives in subservient roles, similar to those of the fabricants of Nea So Copros.



Characters

Adam Ewing

Adam Ewing is a nineteenth century California notary, sent to the South Pacific to find the legatee of a will, probated in California. He is keeping a daily journal of his travels, of which the reader is permitted to read parts in the two "Adam Ewing" chapters. Mr. Ewing, on his return voyage from Australia, is marooned on one of the Chatham Islands while his ship, the "Prophetess" makes repairs. On the island, he meets an English doctor, Henry Goose, who ends up sailing with them once the ship is ready. He also encounters a Moriori native, named Autua, briefly when he spies the native being flogged by other natives. Autua later turns up in Ewing's cabin as a stowaway.

Ewing and Goose become friends and Goose treats him for a mysterious "ailment." The treatment turns out to be poison and the friend not truly a friend. Ewing is rescued at the brink of death by the native, Autua.

Henry Goose

Henry Goose is an English doctor, featured in the two "Adam Ewing" chapters. Goose meets Ewing on a beach on one of the Chatham Islands in the South Pacific, where Ewing's ship is making repairs. Goose is persuaded by the ship's captain to accompany the vessel, at least to its next port, Hawaii. Dr. Goose agrees to treat the captain for an undisclosed ailment en route. Ewing also confesses to being ill, and Goose agrees to look at him and treat him if he can.

Dr. Goose turns out not to be a medical doctor and is rather a dangerous con man. Instead of treating Ewing, he has played on the notary's hypochondria and slowly poisons him with arsenic, in hopes of stealing his documents, jewelry, and money. He would have succeeded if not for the timely heroics of the Moriori, Autua. In the end, Dr. Goose escapes into the shady sub-culture of 1850s Honolulu.

Autua

Autua first appears in "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing." He is the native who Ewing sees being flogged on the Chatham Islands. The reader meets him again on the "Prophetess," where he has stowed away in Mr. Ewing's cabin. He begs the captain to allow him to work as a seaman and is granted his passage in exchange for his work.

Autua gets a chance to repay Ewing for his kindness in the second half of the "Adam Ewing" story. As Ewing is near death from arsenic poisoning administered by his "friend" Dr. Goose, Autua is astute enough to realize that something is amiss and rescues Ewing. He drags him to the deck and forces him to drink large quantities of water to dilute the poison, thus saving Ewing's life.



Robert Frobisher

Robert Frobisher, the author of the letters that comprise the two "Letters from Zedelghem" chapters, is a young Englishman in 1931. He has been disowned by his father, kicked out of the University, and has an army of creditors eager to find him. He "escapes" to Belgium and presents himself as a musical aide to an aging and ailing composer, Vyvyan Ayrs. Frobisher spends six months at Ayrs' home, Chateau Zedelghem, where he writes long letters to his friend, Rufus Sixsmith and where he becomes intimately acquainted with Ayrs' wife, Jocasta.

Frobisher falls secretly in love with the daughter of the estate, Eva, and mistakes her interest in him for love. He is distraught to find that his love is not returned. At the same time, Frobisher's many indiscretions come to the attention of Vyvyan Ayrs, and the young man is asked to leave the Chateau. In despair, he writes one final letter to Sixsmith before he fatally shoots himself with Ayrs' pistol.

Vyvyan Ayrs

The master of Chateau Zedelgheim, Ayrs is an aging and infirm composer, whose works have been played and praised throughout Europe. He lives there with his wife, Jocasta, and his daughter, Eva. Robert Frobisher, in "Letters from Zedelgheim," arrives at his door one summer and is taken on as a musical assistant. He accepts Frobisher into his household and together they compose a critically acclaimed concerto.

Ayrs is initially portrayed as a senile, old fool, but the reader realizes towards the end of the second portion of the story that Ayrs has been manipulating the situation with Frobisher from the very beginning. When Frobisher refuses to continue to play Ayrs' games, he is banished from the Chateau.

Jocasta van Outryve de Crommelynck

Jocasta Crommelynck Ayrs is the wife of composer, Vyvyan Ayrs, mother to Eva Crommelynck Ayrs, mistress of Chateau Zedelgheim, and casual lover of Robert Forbischer. The reader first meets her in "Letters from Zedelgheim" as Frobisher describes her in letters to his friend, Sixsmith.

Jocasta and Frobisher carry on a tempestuous affair, right under the nose of her husband, Vyvyan Ayrs. It turns out in the end that the whole situation has been orchestrated by Ayrs and his wife, as some kind of kinky amusement.

Eva van Outryve de Crommelynck Ayrs

Eva is the seventeen-year old daughter of Vyvyan Ayrs and Jocasta van Outryve de Crommelynck. At the beginning of the "Zedelghem Letters," she spends her weekdays



with a family in nearby Bruges while she is in school, returning to the Chateau on the weekends. She takes a dislike to Frobisher. The reader is left unsure whether it is jealousy or a secret attraction to the young man, but she treats him brusquely and rudely.

After Frobisher has been at the Chateau some months, Eva goes off to school in Switzerland, returning towards the end of his stay with the Ayres.

In the second half of the "Letters from Zedelghem" story, Eva makes a casual remark to Frobisher, which he interprets as a confession of love. He turns out to be tragically mistaken. It is, instead, a Swiss fellow student whom she loves.

Rufus Sixsmith

Sixsmith is first introduced as the correspondent, friend, accomplice, and perhaps lover of Robert Forbischer as a young man in the early 1930s, in "Letters from Zedelghem." The reader later meets him in "Half-Lives: the First Mystery of Luisa Rey" as an old man, in the 1970s. He is a prize-winning physicist, who has worked on the "Manhattan Project." His last project is Seaboard's HYDRA Project at Swanekke Island.

Realizing the dangers of a nuclear accident inherent in the HYDRA Project, Sixsmith pens an expose and plans to share his findings and shut down the HYDRA. Before he can act, he is murdered in his airport hotel room, where he is waiting for his flight out of the country. The murder is made to appear a suicide.

Sixsmith meets Luisa Rey in a chance encounter in an elevator. Learning that she is the daughter of renowned journalist, Lester Rey, on a whim he mails a safety deposit key to her, a key that will lead her to a copy of the HYDRA expose.

Luisa Rey

Luisa Rey is a gossip columnist for the *Spyglass*, a monthly magazine of *National Inquirer*-type reputation. She is also the daughter of the late Lester Rey, a renowned journalist, noted for his reporting of the Vietnam War. She encounters Rufus Sixsmith, briefly, prior to his death, and it is to her that Sixsmith mails the key to his damning report about the dangers posed by the Seaboard project.

Luisa's pursuit of the Sixsmith expose launches repeated attempts on her life. She is run off the road into a lake; almost blown to bits in an explosion at the bank vault where a copy of the Sixsmith report is hidden, and nearly shot in a gun battle between Joe Napier and Bill Smoke. She also loses her job at the magazine when the company is acquired by Lloyd Hooks' Trans Vision Corporation.

Luisa remains devoted to pursuing the truth about the HYDRA project and eventually is able to expose the company, leading to the indictment of Lloyd Hooks and several other Seaboard executives.



Dom Grelsch

Dom Grelsch is the crusty editor-in-chief of *Spyglass* magazine, and Luisa Rey's boss. He is also a former colleague of Luisa's father, Lester Rey. Grelsch initially supports Luisa Rey's investigation of the Seaboard HYDRA project but fires her after the magazine is acquired by Lloyd Hooks' Trans Vision Corporation. He is swayed from his loyalty to Luisa by promises of health care for his ailing wife and the continuation of his own job.

Alberto Grimaldi

In "Luisa Rey," Alberto Grimaldi is the head of Seaboard Corporation, the owners of Swanekke Island and the developers of the HYDRA project. He is the political enemy of Lloyd Hooks, the Energy Guru. Although Grimaldi believes that he is in control of Bill Smoke, in reality it is Hooks who is controlling the situation. Grimaldi, Isaac Sachs, and ten others are killed in a plane explosion, ordered by Hooks.

Joe Napier

Joe Napier, who the reader meets in "Luisa Rey," is the head of security for the Seaboard Corporation. He also served with Luisa's father in the Buenas Yervas Police Department, and Lester Rey saved his life and was severely injured in the process.

Napier is given "early retirement" after the death of Grimaldi and the take-over by Lloyd Hooks. Feeling an obligation to protect Lester Rey's daughter, Napier attempts to warn her of the danger from Bill Smoke and the Seaboard people. He rescues her when she is caught in a planned explosion at the bank where she is picking up a hidden copy of Sixsmith's expose, and the pair escape through the streets and warehouses of downtown Buenas Yervas.

He arranges a meeting between Luisa and Megan Sixsmith at the local museum. When he and Luisa follow Megan's hunch to search Sixsmith's yacht for another copy of the expose, Napier and Bill Smoke kill each other in a shoot out.

Isaac Sachs

Isaac Sachs is a Seaboard engineer in the "Luisa Rey" chapters, who Luisa Rey encounters first in Sixsmith's office and later meets off the Seaboard property. Sachs has found a copy of Sixsmith's expose and plants it in Luisa's car for her to find. He is killed shortly thereafter in the airplane explosion that also kills Alberto Grimaldi and nine others.



Bill Smoke

Bill Smoke is the hired "fixer" (assassin), who reports to Alberto Grimaldi, the head of Seabrook Corporation, and ultimately Lloyd Hooks. It is Smoke who kills Sixsmith and makes it look like a suicide and who attempts to kill Luisa Rey. In the second portion of the "Luisa Rey" story, Smoke relentlessly pursues those who are planning to expose the HYDRA project, killing Fay Li and Joe Napier in the process. Smoke is killed by Joe Napier in the shoot-out that kills Napier.

Lloyd Hooks

Lloyd Hooks, found in the "Luisa Rey" chapters is the US "Energy Guru," who becomes the head of Seaboard Corporation after the death of Alberto Grimaldi. It is implied that Hooks was responsible for ordering the explosion on the plane that kills Grimaldi, Isaac Sachs, and ten others.

Hooks takes over the Seaboard Corporation after Grimaldi's death, as was his plan. His holding corporation, Trans Vision, acquires *Spyglass* magazine where Luisa works and he orders her fired. In the end, the reader learns that it is Hooks, not Grimaldi, who ordered the murder of Sixsmith and the attempted murder of Luisa. He is exposed in the end and arrested. He skips bail, but is re-arrested two days later.

Timothy Cavendish

Timothy Cavendish, the protagonist in the "Timothy Cavendish" chapters, is a divorced vanity book publisher in his seventies, the owner of "Cavendish Publishing." He stumbles into success with his client's book, "Knuckle Sandwich," when the author suddenly pushes an unflattering critic over a twelfth story balcony. Escaping the author's thuggish relatives, he flees to a "hotel" recommended by his brother. The hotel, Aurora House, turns out to be a no-escape "rest home" for the elderly, instead of a hotel.

Cavendish is trapped at the hotel for several weeks, during which time he has a mild (induced?) stroke. He finally escapes the facility with the aid of several other inmates, re-establishes his publishing business; and gets to work on his tale, "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish," which he hopes to have made into a movie. Instead of returning to London, he settles in Edinburgh at a small inn where he can enjoy the relaxed countryside.

Sonmi-451

Sonmi-451, the subject of the two "Sonmi" chapters, is a fabricant, that is a clone, whom the reader meets as a dinery server. Later, Sonmi, unique to her kind, is able to "ascend," that is to acquire and retain knowledge. She becomes something of a novelty in the futuristic world of Neo So Copros and is taken to Taemosan University so that she



might be studied. Her post-grad student is a lush and a slackard, and she has much time to increase her knowledge by reading.

Sonmi-451 is "rescued" from her negligent, post-grad student by Professor Mephi and Hae-Joo Im, who encourage her learning and even enroll her in university classes. Hae-Joo Im takes to escorting her on weekends to meals (although fabricants don't eat as "pure-bloods" do) and even to a movie (ironically, "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish" from "Timothy Cavendish" chapters).

Sonmi-451 is whisk away from the university as the corporate "Judas" seize the professor. She and Hae-Joo Im race across the Neo So Copros countryside for weeks until she is persuaded to compose a fabricant "Bill of Rights." Within hours of handing over her document, she is seized by corporate operatives and imprisoned. She tells her story to an archivist (historian), who records in on an orison (a memory egg).

In the primitive world of the "Sloosh'a's Crossin'" chapter, Sonmi has become the society's god, the one to whom they pray for good crops, good fortune, and safety.

Hae-Joo Im

Hae-Joo Im becomes Sonmi-451's friend in the first "Sonmi" chapter. They first meet when he informs Sonmi's grad student, Kim, about the destruction of another student's fabricant, Wing-027, who happened to be Sonmi's friend. Later, when Sonmi has moved to the Unanimity Faculty, he begins escorting her on weekends to restaurants and the theater.

When the professor is captured and killed, Hae-Joo Im reveals himself to be Union, a counter-corporate group, hoping to overthrow the current regime and restore respect for human rights to the region. He leads Sonmi on a whirlwind escape throughout the Neo So Copros countryside; becomes her lover, and encourages her to write "Declarations," a fabricant "Bill of Rights." In the end, it turns out that he is just another corporate deceiver.

Zachry

Zachry is the narrator of the sixth chapter, "Sloosh'a's Crossin'." He witnesses the brutal murder of his father and the abduction of his brother by a rival tribe when he is just nine years old. He is a member of a tribe called the Valleyemen, who live simply, barter with nearby communities, and raise goats. When the Prescient woman, Meronym, arrives on his island of Ha-why (Hawaii), she stays with Zachry and his family. Slowly and somewhat grudgingly, Zachry and Meronym become friends, and it is with her that he escapes the brutal Konas, who ransack his village and slay his kinsmen.



Prescients

The Prescients are a dark-skinned tribe of people, who come to barter with the people of the "Big I" twice a year. They are described in the sixth chapter, "Sloosh'a's Crossin'." Their island, Prescient I, is located somewhere north and east of Hawaii, presumably the Aleutian islands of Alaska. The Prescients society is dying out from a plague and healthy envoys, such as Meronym, are sent to outposts, such as Ha-why in order to keep their species alive.

Meronym

Meronym is a fifty-year-old Prescient woman who comes to live with Zachry and his family on the "Big I" for a year in order to learn more about their society and way of living. She has strange skills (called "Smarts" by the Valley men), some of which she shares with the locals. She and Zachry become reluctant friends, and the pair explores the island together. She shows Zachry the Sonmi orison and explains the truth about Sonmi to him.

Meronym rescues Zachry when he is captured by the fierce Konas, and the pair escape the destruction on the "Big-I" together for Maui.



Objects/Places

Chatham Islands

The Chatham Islands are the Polynesian setting for the first "Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing" chapter. They are, presumably, located in the Pacific Ocean, near enough to New Zealand for the Maoris to arrive by wooden canoe-like crafts.

Chateau Zedelgheim

Located just outside of the town of Bruges in Belgium, Chateau Zedelgheim is the home of aging composer Vyvyan Ayr, his wife, Jocasta, and his teenage daughter, Eva. It is there that Robert Forbischer goes to escape his creditors and assist Mr. Ayr in "Letters from Chateau Zedelgheim." Forbischer stays at the Chateau for nearly a year, posting over a dozen letters from there to his friend in England, Rufus Sixsmith.

Buenas Yervas

Buenas Yervas is a town in California and the setting for "Half-Lives: the First Mystery of Luisa Rey." It is located just outside of the Swannekke Island nuclear plant and its HYDRA project. One of the suburbs of Buenas Yervas is Ewingville, named after the nineteenth-century hero of the first story, Adam Ewing.

Swannekke Island

Located an hour's drive outside of Buenas Yervas, in California, Swannekke Island is the site of three nuclear reactors, including the controversial HYDRA project of the "Luisa Rey" stories.

Seaboard Corporation

In the "Luisa Rey" stories, the Seaboard Corporation is the owner of the Swannekke Island facilities and the creator of the HYDRA project. The corporation employed Rufus Sixsmith as one of twelve scientists on the project and was responsible for his death when he prepared to speak out against HYDRA.

Other Seaboard employees include the CEO, Alberto Grimaldi; PR director Fay Li; safety director Joe Napier, and engineer Isaac Sachs.



Aurora House

Aurora House is the "hotel," recommended by his brother, to which Timothy Cavendish flees in "Timothy Cavendish." Rather than being a hotel, however, the facility turns out to be a "rest home" for the elderly, complete with locked doors, no windows, and an authoritative and sadistic head nurse.

"Knuckle Sandwich"

"Knuckle Sandwich" is the gangster-chic book by Dermot "Duster" Hoggins, published by Timothy Cavendish's vanity press. The book describes the author's rough and tumble escapades and those of his thug-like friends and family. "Knuckle Sandwich" becomes an overnight surprise success when the author suddenly flings book critic, Felix Finch, from a twelfth floor balcony.

Nea So Copros

Nea So Copros is the new corporate-run world, described in the "Sonmi-451" chapters. Here clones (fabricants) are created for specific tasks, such as serving food and cleaning up radioactive water. The country is set in what is today, South Korea.

Nea So Copros is a consumer-driven society gone amok. Each citizen has a spending quota; all-seeing Eyes watch from the street corners; and each citizen has a "soul" or a computer chip implanted in his finger, without which travel and other basic freedoms are impossible.

Much of the land in Nea So Copros is uninhabitable, rendered toxic by industrial waste and nuclear accidents.

The Big Island

The Big Island (also called the "Big I") refers to the island of Ha-Why (Hawaii) in the Hawaiian Islands, the scene of the sixth chapter, "Sloosh'a's Crossin'." After the "fall," presumably a nuclear holocaust, the island is one of several primitive enclaves of survivors, including Zachry's tribe, the Valleymen and the brutal Konas.

Orison

An orison, although introduced in the first "Sonmi" chapter is not fully explained until "Sloosh'a's Crossin'." An orison is an egg-shaped object that functions as a sort of tape recorder, as well as a communication device, by projecting a hologram image of the recording. In the "Sonmi" chapters, Sonmi-451's interview is being preserved as an



orison. It is also this device by which Meronym communicates with her fellow Prescients in "Sloosh'a's Crossin'."

Cloud Atlas

Cloud Atlas, in addition to being the name of the novel, is the name of the concerto that Robert Frobisher composes in the "Letters from Zedelghem" chapters. Luisa Rey, in the subsequent chapter, searches for a copy of the work after reading about it in Frobisher's letters to Sixsmith. When she locates one of the few recordings available, she is surprised to recognize it in a *deja-vu* moment.



Themes

Green and Duplicity of Mankind Transcends Time and Cultural Boundaries.

All of the six stories in *Cloud Atlas* contain at least one person who is acting in a duplicitous manner out of greed. In "Adam Ewing," it is Dr. Henry Goose, who is trying to poison Ewing in hopes of robbing him. In "Letters from Zedelghem," it is Frobisher, who pretends to be a musical helpmate, but is actually acting on his own agenda, while stealing books and seducing the women of the house.

"Luisa Rey," the third tale, is rife with deception, as the Seaboard Corporation tries to hide the dangerous nature of its new HYDRA energy project. The leaders of the company are willing to risk a nuclear accident, not to mention murder, because the potential profits associated with the project are so great.

Timothy Cavendish is deceived in his eponymous story by his brother, who for reasons of his own, tricks Cavendish into checking into an asylum for the elderly, with little chance for escape. The story of Sonmi-451 is built on deception as is the futuristic society in which the tale is set. Fabricants, such as Sonmi, are led to believe that they will be given a luxurious retirement in Hawaii after their years of service, when they are actually destroyed and "recycled."

Finally, in "Sloosh'a's Crossin'," Meronym pretends to be on Ha-Why to study the Valleyman culture, when actually she is there to escape the disease and destruction of her own society.

Things Are Not Always What They Seem.

In each of the *Cloud Atlas* chapters, there is at least one person who is not what he at first appears to be. In the "Adam Ewing" chapters, it is Dr. Henry Goose, who initially seems to be an amicable middle-class English doctor, but who turns out to be a murderous adventurer. He befriends Adam Ewing and exploits his hypochondria with the purpose of poisoning him with arsenic and stealing his money and belongings.

In "Letters from Zedelghem," it is Robert Frobisher who is not quite what he pretends to be. Yes, he comes from a well-to-do English family, but he has been disowned. Yes, he is attracted to Jocasta and other women, but he is also attracted to men and has a strong (undefined) bond with his correspondent, Sixsmith. He also is stealing and selling books from the Chateau Zedelghem library while a guest in the home.

The "Luisa Rey" chapters contain several characters that house hidden agendas. Chief among these is Lloyd Hooks, the seemingly up-front Energy Guru. In actuality, it is Hooks who is controlling the HYDRA project as well as the assassin Bill Smoke.



In "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish," Cavendish's brother purports to aid him by offering him a rural hotel stay. The "hotel," however, turns out to be an asylum for the elderly with locked doors and no means of escape.

The entire plot of "An Orison of Sonmi-451" is based on deception. The fabricants are told that they will be given retirement in Hawaii after twelve stars of service, when actually they are killed and "recycled." In addition, the ascension of Sonmi is portrayed as a Union revolutionary plot, when it is actually a scheme by the "Corporation" to keep fabricants in their place.

Finally, in "Sloosh'a's Crossin'," the Prescient visitor, Meronym, is not entirely honest about her reasons for visiting Ha-why. She tells the Valleyemen that she is there to study their society and while that is partly true, her real mission is to escape the plague that is rampant on Prescient I and to perpetuate their race.

The Continuity of Life and Reincarnation

The continuity and rebirth of life is a repeating theme throughout *Cloud Atlas*. All of the main characters - Adam Ewing, Robert Frobisher, Luisa Rey, Timothy Cavendish, Sonmi-451, and Zachry - have a comet-shaped birthmark between the shoulder blade and their collarbone. In addition, there are subtle references to reincarnation, such as Luisa's being familiar with Frobisher's "Cloud Atlas" concerto, even though it is highly unlikely that she has ever heard it before.

The structure of the novel also hints at the continuity and rebirth of life. Each chapter builds towards the next, and, even though the time and the place are different, the challenges and feelings of the characters are surprisingly similar. In addition, despite considerable odds, the story and/or work of all of the main characters survives in the end. Mankind, too, survives Mitchell's doomsday scenario, albeit in a much more primitive mode.

Finally, there are some literal discussions of reincarnation, such as in Frobisher's last letter to Sixsmith, where he muses on his rebirth and meeting Sixsmith again as a different being.



Style

Point of View

Each pair of chapters in *Cloud Atlas* is told from its own point of view. "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing" and "Letters from Zedelghem" are told in the first person, via journal entries and letters. "Luisa Rey" is structured as a pulp mystery novel and told in the third person as if seen by an omniscient observer. The fourth and eighth chapters, "Timothy Cavendish," are written as the basis for a screenplay and told as a first person narrative.

The "Sonmi-451" chapters (the fifth and seventh) are constructed as a question and answer style interview. The middle sixth chapter (Sloosh'a's Crossin') returns to a first-person narrative, told by the young man, Zachry.

Setting

The setting in *Cloud Atlas* changes with each chapter. The novel takes the reader from the South Sea Islands (in "Adam Ewing") to contemporary London (in "Timothy Cavendish") to post-apocalypse Hawaii (in "Sloosh'a's Crossin'") and back again. The time period progresses until "Sloosh'a's Crossin'" and then regresses in the same pattern, so that the novel begins in 1849, goes well into the future, and ends again in 1849.

Along this progression, the "Luisa Rey" chapters are set in 1980s California, the "Letters from Zedelghem" chapters are set in 1930s Belgium, and the "Sonmi" chapters are set in the not-so-distant future in what is now Korea.

Language and Meaning

Like the setting and point of view, the language changes from chapter to chapter to suit the period. In the "Adam Ewing" chapters, the language is the rather stilted prose of the nineteenth century. In the "Letters from Zedelghem" chapters, the language is that taught at Britain's elite public schools. In "Luisa Rey," the language switches to the swift, action-filled prose of a pulp mystery novel and in "Timothy Cavendish," one finds the language of modern-day London.

"Sonmi-451" takes the reader to the future and those chapters are filled with made up words and concepts, such as "fabricants" (clones) and "pure-bloods" (non-clones), "Seer" (guard) and "Archivist" (historian). In this new world, "ex-" words, such as except, exultation, and exactly, are written without the first "e", and the author seems to intentionally use these words to create the effect of language change in the future. In these chapters, ordinary items, such as cameras, televisions, and watches are no longer referred to by their generic name. Instead the manufacturer's name has become



the name of the product, such as nikon for camera, ford for car, and sony for television, much like kleenex has become synonymous with a tissue in our society.

In the sixth (middle) chapter, "Sloosh'a's Crossin'," the author uses a kind of pig-gin English to relate the primitiveness of the post-apocalypse society. He uses a lot of apostrophes to indicate truncated and casual speech as well as created words, such as babbitt for baby and smart for knowledge.

Structure

Cloud Atlas is divided into eleven chapters, with the first and last chapters completing one another and the others relating in a 1 2 3 4 5 6 5 4 3 2 1 pattern, with time going forward and then backwards in the same pattern. The effect on the reader is of the rise and fall of civilization, the metaphor that the author probably intended.

The length of each chapter is varied. The "Adam Ewing" chapters are divided into short daily journal entries; the "Letters from Zedelghem" chapters are divided into nine and eight letters, respectively; and the "Luisa Rey" chapters are divided into numbered scenes, like a screenplay. The second portions of the two-part stories are shorter than the first portions.

Each "first" chapter ends with a cliff-hanger scene, building suspense for the second half of the pair. In "Adam Ewing," the chapter ends abruptly as if pages have been torn from the journal. "Letters from Zedelghem" leaves many issues unresolved, and the first "Luisa Rey" chapter ends with Luisa's car being forced off of the road in the lake. The first "Timothy Cavendish" chapter ends with Mr. Cavendish trapped in the elderly asylum and having just had a stroke. In "Sonmi-451," Sonmi and Hae-Joo Im are in danger and run for their lives as the first chapter ends. This narrative technique creates tension and anticipation to read the second halves of the stories.



Quotes

"Glass and peace alike betray proof of fragility under repeated blows." Adam Ewing, "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing," page 12.

"We do not stay dead long." Robert Frobisher, "Letters from Zedelghem," page 471.

"People are complicated." Robert Frobisher, "Letters from Zedelghem," page 51.

"Like Grimaldi says, 'Every conscience has an off switch somewhere.'" "Half-Lives: the First Luisa Rey Mystery" page 102.

"So who's expired in an ending flat and inane quite beyond belief now?" Dermot Hoggins to the dumbstruck crowd, seconds after flinging Felix Finch over the 12th story balcony. "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish" page 150.

"Truth is singular. It's 'versions' are mistruths." Sonmi-451 to the archivist. "An Orison of Sonmi-451" page 185

"Sonmi- 451, I am not xactly who I said I am." Hae-Joo Im to Sonmi-451. "An Orison of Sonmi-451" page 236.

"Once tyranny becomes accepted as ordinary, its victory is assured." Veronica Costello to Timothy Cavendish, "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish," page 363.

"Courage grows anywhere...like weeds." Megan Sixsmith, "Half Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery," page 429.

"The law of survival is Eat of be Eaten. That's it." Dr. Henry Goose to Adam Ewing. "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing," page 489

"My worry is the next war will be so big, nowhere with a decent restaurant will be left untouched." Morty Dhondt to Robert Frobisher in "Letters from Zedelghem," page 444.

"The superior shall relegate the overpopulous savages to their natural numbers...A Glorious order shall follow, when all races shall know and aye, embrace, their place in God's ladder of civilization." Reverend Horrox to the Prophetess captain, Ewing, and Dr. Goose. "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing," page 488.



Topics for Discussion

How does the unique structure of the novel (its pairs of chapters that go forward and then backwards in time) add (or detract) from the telling of the story? Is the structure merely a clever literary device or does it add something to the novel?

Several subtle threads tie all of the chapters and time periods together. Describe two of these, such as the "comet-shaped" birthmark, and give examples from each pair of chapters.

How does the author use literary devices to create a unique mood for each pair of chapters? Give examples of these and where they are used in the novel.

In each pair of chapters, there is one character that is not quite what he, at first, would appear to be. Identify these characters as well as the hints given that might lead the reader to their true identity.

War and conflict are portrayed as an inevitability of any society in *Cloud Atlas*. Is this premise truly valid? Does it have parallels in today's current events?

How does David Mitchell use language to evoke moods? Give examples of how he uses place and object names to foreshadow coming events.

What is the author trying to say about the human condition? Is his message one of despair, one of hope, or one of resignation? Give examples.