

Blu-ray Review: Ambitious ‘Cloud Atlas’ Falls Just Short of Heights to Which it Reaches

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 16, 2013 - 9:36pm

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CHICAGO – There’s a large part of me that wants to wholeheartedly recommend and embrace “Cloud Atlas” for two reasons. One, it’s based on arguably the best book of the millennium so far, David Mitchell’s stunning masterpiece. And if more people see the movie, more are likely to read a book that everyone should experience. Two, I do agree with those who love the film that Hollywood doesn’t take risks like this often enough, and if we don’t encourage risks, we won’t get rewards. However, “Cloud Atlas” still frustrates me more than it thrills me. Maybe the book was simply un-adaptable as so many have theorized. But I think mistakes were made on top of the inherent difficulty in Mitchell’s novel.



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

I stand by what I said in my theatrical review, *“It comes down to this — “Cloud Atlas” is a book that possibly never could have worked as a film. So should we give the Wachowskis and Tykwer credit for trying at all? I do believe they made some smart choices but they also could have done a number of things differently. So, while they undeniably swung for the fences, to use a critical cliché about works this ambitious, they also undeniably didn’t hit a home run. As much as I hope they take another ambitious swing in the near future, I can’t help but be disappointed by their inability to connect here.”*

However, watching the film again in a glorious HD transfer and with a perfect sound mix, I do realize how much I dismissed the technical accomplishments of the film the first time. The fact that “Cloud Atlas” wasn’t nominated for either Best Score or Best Editing by the Academy is a crime. Especially the music, which really shines on Blu-ray. And the film plays well overall on repeat viewing, perhaps due to the immense expectations I had for it in theaters. Give it a chance. You may love it more than I do and I wouldn’t blame you in the slightest.

As for special features, the featurettes on “Cloud Atlas” are frustratingly arranged in 7-8 minute mini-featurettes. It’s a structure I hate. Just give me a 40-minute making-of instead. Also, Mitchell, the Wachowskis, and Tykwer prove to be such interesting interview subjects, enlightening viewers on many of the complex aspects of the film, that one wishes they did a commentary track. I believe “Cloud Atlas” will find a loyal, devoted audience. Maybe they’ll do an audio track for an inevitable Special Edition.



"Cloud Atlas" available NOW on Blu-ray Combo pack, DVD and Digital Download

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

Synopsis: Six stories spanning centuries. One soul. Tom Hanks and Halle Berry lead an all-star cast in interwoven tales as time shifts between past, present and future. As characters reunite from one life to the next, their actions generate consequences: A killer evolves into a hero. An act of kindness inspires a revolution. Cloud Atlas combines science fiction, drama, mystery, action and romance into a film that's "utterly, wonderfully epic" (Solvej Schou, EW.com).

Special Features:

- o A Film Like No Other: See How Three Visionary Directors Come Together, Divided Their Tasks and Created a Cohesive Masterpiece
- o Everything Is Connected: The Cast And Filmmakers Delve Deeper Into The Connections That Tie The Story Together
- o Spaceships, Slaves & Sextets: Unravel the Mysteries, Themes and Subtext Of Cloud Atlas With The Cast, Filmmakers, Author And Producers
- o The Bold Science Fiction Of Cloud Atlas: Explore The Film's Cutting Edge Future With Tales Of Cloning And Extraterrestrial Exploration

"Cloud Atlas" stars Tom Hanks, Halle Berry, Jim Broadbent, Hugo Weaving, Jim Sturgess, Doona Bae, Ben Whishaw, Keith David, and James D'Arcy. It was written & directed by Tom Tykwer, Andy & Lana Wachowski. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on May 14, 2013.



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