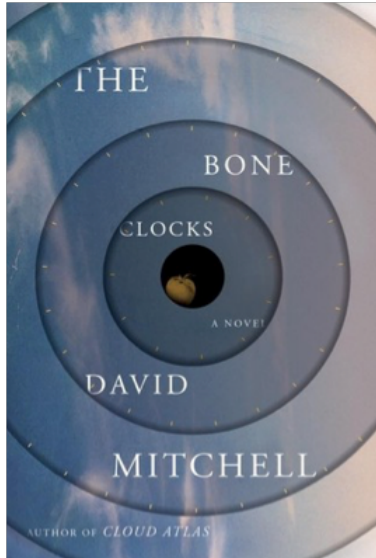

Something Old, Something New

The Bone Clocks by David Mitchell



The Bone Clocks is David Mitchell's sixth novel. Mitchell's thought provoking and unique style will not disappoint many loving readers. In fact, *The Bone Clocks* is quite probably his best book to date.

“Adverbs are cholesterol in the veins of prose. Halve your adverbs and your prose pumps twice as well.”

-Mitchell, *The Bone Clocks*

Preceded by *Cloud Atlas*, *The Bone Clocks* utilizes some of the themes and layout of Mitchell's earlier work. *Cloud Atlas* was set up using six short stories, each connecting to the others in beautifully abstract ways like a birth mark or object, in one case a classical song. The layout complimented the idea of the sextet within the novel, by breaking the stories in the order, 1 2 3 4 5 6 5 4 3 2 1. Mitchell stopped all but one short story in the middle (one in the middle of a sentence in fact) and finished them later on, which caused the stories to weave together and emphasized common themes.

Like *Cloud Atlas*, *The Bone Clocks* is separated into six different parts. This time the story follows one character, Holly Sykes, and the sections depict Holly at six different decades in her life.

When we first meet Holly, she is a young punker rebelling against her parents and learning what heartbreak really is. We meet her as a mysterious bar tender in Switzerland from the perspective of a charismatic fellow, with a shady secret life. Next she is the lover of an award winning war journalist and mother of his child, the story told from his point of view and including all the troubles of having a family and being addicted to the adrenaline of combat. Later she is a new and on the rise author; this story told through the eyes of a disgustingly egotistical man, who has seen fame as a writer and lost it. Mitchell then rockets us into the future and brings light to the mystery of the “the radio people,” (characters Holly has been having visions of periodically), by using their perspective. Finally we see Holly as a grandmother and we are back in the mind of our heroine as she faces a nearing environmental apocalypse.

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Great story, great words, all good.

-Stephen King

Mitchell’s writing takes the views of many of the people in Holly's life, a bit different from *Cloud Atlas*, which depicted six completely different characters with

seemingly no crossovers except for those in the subtext. Each shift in *The Bone Clocks* from character to character adds to the strange supernatural mystery that Mitchell has created with such elegance. He shifts character and voice with what seems to be ease. It is something to be envied as it's brilliant and seamless.

“ I put my hand on the altar rail. 'What if ... what if Heaven is real, but only in moments? Like a glass of water on a hot day when you're dying of thirst, or when someone's nice to you for no reason, or ...' Mam's pancakes with Toblerone sauce; Dad dashing up from the bar just to tell me, 'Sleep tight, don't let the bedbugs bite'; or Jacko and Sharon singing 'For She's A Squishy Marshmallow' instead of 'For She's A Jolly Good Fellow' every single birthday and wetting themselves even though it's not at all funny; and Brendan giving his old record player to me instead of one of his mates. 'S'pose Heaven's not like a painting that's just hanging there for ever, but more like ... Like the best song anyone ever wrote, but a song you only catch in snatches, while you're alive, from passing cars, or ... upstairs windows when you're lost ... ”

-David Mitchell, *The Bone Clocks*

The use of the supernatural in this book is new to Mitchell's writing. He said in this [Interview](#), that was hard to pull off. Mitchell's attempt at the supernatural wasn't awful, it was captivating.

Mitchell has written science fiction, drama and romance and somehow managed to make them all work in this one novel. Now he has graced us with a story containing

supernatural elements at its core and has pulled it off with flying colors! The man is pretty much unstoppable.

Like most of his other work Mitchell hits on the more complex and paradoxical themes a person ruins into throughout their life: death, rebellion, love, infatuation, parenthood, war and so many more. His ability to depict these struggles and gritty hard parts of life without losing his scenes in abstractions and explication is quite refreshing. His writing is real and not necessarily nice in that he doesn't sugar coat what needs to be said.



If you are looking for a read that will pull on your heart strings and leave you thinking, *The Bone Clocks* is a great place to start. Don't be intimidated by its size. It's an intellectual masterpiece, a surprisingly a fast read, captivating and well worth the time you will put into it.

The Bone Clocks

By David Mitchell

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[Buy it here](#)



McKayla Temple is a sophomore working toward a B.A. in Creative Writing at SUNY Oswego. She has one published poem and has won two awards through the college, one for best formal poem and the other, best short fiction. She likes cold coffee, hot tea and long trips to the zoo; where she stand for hours by the elephant and red panda enclosures.