The Life of Chuck (2025)

This is a film that is presented out of order. It is, however, unlike Christopher Nolan's *Memento* which unfolds in short sequences beginning at the end and ending at the beginning of the narrative. The structure of The Life of Chuck is more straightforward; it is in three Acts, beginning with Act 3, following with Act 2 and ending with Act 1.

The film is based on a Stephen King novella published in 2020. It is not, however, in his usual horror vein. The Life if Chuck is more like his life-affirming stories: *Stand By Me*, *The Shawshank Redemption* and *The Green Mile*.

The film concerns three chapters in the life of Charles Krantz – known as Chuck. In Act III (shown first), we are presented with an apocalyptic narrative; the world appears to be ending. Two characters in particular - a school teacher (Mr Anderson) and his nurse girlfriend (Felicia) - along with other characters in their locality try to make sense of what is happening to them as their experience becomes increasingly surreal, absurd and inexplicable.
Around the town, posters appear celebrating the life of Charles Krantz, a name that means nothing to them.

In Act II (shown second) we see an episode in the life of Chuck Krantz (acted by Tom Hiddleston). An accountant, walking to work, he encounters a young female drummer playing by the side of the street. An amazing dance sequence follows.

Act I (shown last) shows the family and school life of Chuck Krantz from a young boy to a teenager. He lives with his grandmother and grandfather (Albert - played by Mark Hamill who was Luke Skywalker in Star Wars) in their old house.
Upstairs there is a mysterious room that is forever locked. At school, Chuck begins to dance surrounded by classmates and teachers (including Mr Anderson from Act III). Others characters that we met in the final Act appear here in different contexts. The mystery of that Act is finally explained as Chuck gains access to the locked room.

This is a remarkable, life-affirming story that is both mysterious, philosophical, mystical and moving. It is also poetic and literary - inspired as it is by Walt Whitman's poem *Song of Myself*. Each life contains multitudes, is interconnected, and whilst it might appear ordinary, belies its profundity.

This film is a puzzle that is to be solved and understood.

Ian Brooker