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# The Versions Of Us



## Synopsis

#1 UK Bestseller • "A joy." • Guardian • "Enchanting." • People • "Triumphant." • Sunday Telegraph • "Stunningly crafted and constantly surprising . . . An utterly convincing love story about two people destined to be together somehow, no matter what." • Times • "One Day meets Sliding Doors." • Elle • A dazzling novel about the ways the smallest decisions give shape to our lives, *The Versions of Us* charts a relationship through three possible futures. Cambridge, 1958. Late for class, Eva Edelstein swerves to miss a dog and crashes her bike. Jim Taylor hurries to help her. In that brief moment, three outcomes are born for Eva and Jim. As the strands of their lives weave together and apart across the decades from college through wildly different successes and disappointments, seductions and betrayals, births and funerals, joys and sorrows, the only constant is the power of their connection. *The Versions of Us* is a tour de force of storytelling. • "Barnett renders an irresistible concept in sweet, cool prose • a bit like a choose-your-own-adventure book in which you don't have to choose." • Observer • "One of the most engrossing novels either of us has read in years." • Richard Madeley, Richard and Judy Book Club • "I simply adored this wonderful novel." • Jessie Burton, author of *The Muse* and *The Miniaturist*

## Book Information

File Size: 5959 KB

Print Length: 434 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 0544947274

Publisher: Mariner Books; Reprint edition (May 3, 2016)

Publication Date: May 3, 2016

Language: English

ASIN: B011H56LVI

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #16,624 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #66

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## Customer Reviews

I thought this book was lovely. I couldn't put it down. The "what ifs" of life. I think all of us have those thoughts of what our lives would be like if we made different decisions or if other things happened to us. This is a story about love the glory, the difficulties, the betrayals. It's about the things that bind us to one another for life. Eva and Jim's love story is portrayed in three different incarnations: they marry as young adults; they decide to be together as mature lovers; and they share senior love. It is interesting that only in Version One where they marry young, Jim doesn't succeed in his career as an artist while Eva does as a writer. Eva says he has an "uneasiness" that artists must have, but that his was used to be a husband and father. Maybe we are meant to understand that we must first become our true selves before we dedicate ourselves to a relationship. Favorite parts of the book were many but two stand out: first when Eva says that happiness is not something that lasts but that it is made up of brief moments which we must learn to savor and enjoy; second, when Eva talks about the comfortableness of marriage and understanding each other's silences. So true! I also liked David and would have liked to see more of him. I found it clever, touching and endearing. A satisfying and thoughtful read.

I closed this book very sorry to be leaving the multiple versions of Jim and Eva's lives. This is writing at its best in terms of the author's ability to evoke a mood, an atmosphere, a life, and a character within those settings; it is the finest book I've read this year. All of the variations and permutations of the versions rang true, and although at times it required some deliberation to recognize which thread I was reading about, that didn't detract from the trajectory of the story. The concept was intriguing and it was fascinating to watch it work itself out as the story moved forward in time. I also loved the fugue-like iterations of the theme in both Jim's art and the characters' conversations. I am going to be recommending this to others who value good writing and have the motivation to accept the challenge that the author presents to us. Such a very human book about such interesting lives!

This is a beautiful love story BUT I did find the three stories confusing at times. I would forget which pieces of the story went with each version. I enjoyed it more once I stopped trying to keep track of all of the specifics. It wouldn't be a bad idea to have a little chart next to you with which marriage and which children go with each storyline so as it flips to the next one you'll know where you are in the story.

The story, or should I say "stories" are filled with lovely and rich detail about the three entwined versions of Eva and Jim's lives together. No version is as entirely happy as you hope, but each bears their own unique struggle to find and keep love. Ultimately, you will find yourself confusing and melding the various stories together in order to create a unified love story that is painful yet joyful at the same time, while leaving you wondering about your own life, loves, and various versions of yourself that might exist if given the chance.

This book was basically might as well have been written for me. I loved everything about it, from the themes to the relationships to the messiness of it all -- I just adored it all

If at first you feel confused, persevere. The writing is brilliant. The characters are authentic. And you'll be caught up in all the what ifs of life as exemplified by Eva and Jim. Despite contradictions, a sense of wholeness emerges at the end.

I found reading this parlor trick of a novel to be a bit of a chore. It didn't help that I didn't like or respect the main characters. It was not worth it to me to keep track of the "versions" since I didn't care about the outcome.

I loved the movie Sliding Doors so I bought this hoping for something similar. But while it is similar it is definitely a different take on the same theme. I have read a lot of review saying it's too confusing. Maybe a bit. But if you pay attention it is easy to follow. And so clever. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Now I want to watch that movie again too. I recommend the book.

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