

Notes on 'The Versions of Us' – Laura Barnett

PART ONE pp. 7 – p. 102

Similarities and differences between the versions

In all the versions they meet and then Eva marries. Eva, Jim and David all have identical backgrounds and interests and characters.

In the last sections of PART ONE they are all in New York:

one: Eva and Jim: Eva goes to David's play, Jim (not painting much) goes to a show then to bed with dancer, Pamela.

two: Eva at Katz' play, not writing much, meets Jim (who is there for artistic reasons) she thinks, for the first time, finds him 'unsettling', in a pretty private conversation Eva says he'd better get back to painting and he dreams of her whilst going to sleep, whereas David and Eva take Sarah to hospital.

Three: Jim in NY assisting a successful sculptor, was going to go to dancing (see one) but goes to Katz' play (see two). At party afterwards (p.99ff) they regret much in their thoughts, she gives him a note to meet the next day (but, we learn later, does not go there).

PART TWO: pp.105 – 264 – Vivian's death.

1) Vivian's funeral 2) Eva doesn't send condolences to Jim. Thinks he is quite independent. 3) Eva and Jim together in the end

Beware from here there are SPOILERS all over the place!

PART THREE

Final chapters are (following Ted's death, two and three?) all about Anton's funeral and Jim's illness. Same: Eva and Thea have written eulogy etc.

One: how Carl slowly fitted into Eva's life (deeply intelligent, considerate and essentially light of heart, p. 371) cf Jim's restlessness. Jim asks if they can meet sometime and she assents.

Two: (Jim's point of view). Here Jim has given up smoking, uses Facebook, has often derided Eva, whom he hardly knows but does go back to the house – 'two separate tracks, now suddenly, unexpectedly, veering closer'. They arrange to meet.

Three: They are already man and wife – he now decides in favour of chemo

2014 – each about how Eva nurses Jim to his death, they are at peace and one drawing (or triptych) as motif.

(one) Eva clearing out Jim's house (at peace during funeral) – finds drawing of her: It is her, and it is not her. A version of her. His version, or the version she once offered him. (p. 392)

(two) Eva being interviewed in Jim's House in Cornwall. Dignified. She had moved to St Ives to spend the end of his life together. Members of both families come (ie Sarah, Dylan....); The Versions of Us is there and the woman looks like Eva.

(three) C'b Backs, Eva and Penelope looking for nail-place. (2nd Mrs Taylor – Adeola).

(Another) drawing of her – also pencil – sleeping on her side: 1976. She'd never seen it while he was alive.

Characters and connections (Contains SPOILERS)

Jim Taylor

relationships:

Eva = wife (one), Pamela (NY p. 85 one when Eva is at Katz' theatre performance) Greta (one) Bella Hurst (one: Eva finds out 286; Bella later leaves him for Andrew Sullivan) ; Veronica, (two); Helena (two) ; Caitlin (two), Vanessa (two); (thinks fondly of Eva (two) who is caring for Ted; Helena (two and three -moves to her p 139; also meeting Eva secretly; Helena takes off with Iris after 229), finally Eva

parents: Lewis (Sonia and more)and Vivian; Sinclair

children: Jennifer (one with Eva), Robyn (one with Bella) , Dylan (two with Helena); Sophie , (three with Helena) who has Alice,

cousin Toby, aunts Frances and Pamela

Friend Stephen Hargreaves

Eva Edelstein

relationships:

Jim in VERSION ONE her husband, but later one night stand with Leo p. 224

David Katz = husband in two and three

In VERSION TWO married to Katz/Curtis. In Paris with Ted her writing tails off (as from p. 170, 1971). Jim always fair to her cf 195, she doesn't accept the dinner invitation; after Vivian's death writes a card she doesn't send p. 251 ff:

In VERSION THREE married to Katz/Curtis daughter Rebecca b u t p. 125 'seven years into her marriage'...had married as right thing, has run after Jim in Agonquin and then not gone to meet him. Shame. (p. 127 'No cage, says Miriam, You only need to open the door'. After this she decides to speak – result is Sam.)

p. 164ff apologizes at Anton's party for not going to meet him; (Jim and Eva meet for the second/third time p. 157-160; 179 ff still exhibition. p. 201 ff meeting Jim regularly.They decide to make something new work. But 220 she pretends she hasn't heard him ask her to come away with him.)

As from 256 they are a patchwork family: Eva, Jim, Rebecca, Sophie and Jim is happy p. 259.

parents – Miriam and Jakob; Brother Anton marries Thea and has child Hanna

children

Jennifer and Daniel (one with Jim)

Sarah (two with David – after grandmother who left her money, , thoughtful, private child. Has son, musical Pierre, with Justin in Paris; is later with Stuart)

Rebecca (three, interested in appearance; goes over to US to live with David at 18;) Sam (three)

friend: Penelope, husband Gerald.

David Katz/Curtis Eva Juliet (two leaves Eva unofficially p. 135)

Parents: Judith and Abraham

children: Sarah, Daniel (two with Eva); Rebecca, Sam (three with Eva)

friends: Harry Janus,

General summaries:

VERSION ONE:

Part One: Jim and Eva married (after the nail they go off together straight away), honeymoon soon, they live with Edelsteins, he goes to RADA. They buy the pink house (legacy), Eva happy p. 75; .Eva successful, Jim a teacher; Jennifer.

VERSION TWO:

Part One: Starts not with Eva but with David. (Eva forgets Jim immediately.) They marry. Live with Katz' and he goes to RADA. Jim becomes lawyer in Bristol to be near Mother. Eva and David have Regent's Park flat but Eva can't write and Juliet is there almost from the beginning. Rude re pregnancy. . In NY Eva and Jim meet p.91ff, Jim not doing much art. Drinking.

Part two: Eva ;2 successful books, limps through the third. Eva married to Ted Simpson, Paris and Rome;

Jim with Helena – successful painter, paints THE VERSIONS OF US p. 231

VERSION THREE:

Part One: Starts from Jim's point of view. They go off together. After Ely trip she tells David and writes Jim a farewell note. Eva married to David. Married lodgings in C'b and even then David came home late. She becomes reader. Jim often thinks of Eva. In NY he is assistant to a sculptor and goes to Katz play. Thinks it was a mistake to let Eva go in C'b; she gives him a note to meet.

Part Two: Apparently longs for him but is unfair often before they start meeting secretly. Finally tells David she loves Jim (p. 241-2)