Version Control: A Novel

By Dexter Palmer

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An NPR, *GQ*, and Buzzfeed Best Book of the Year
One of *The Washington Post*'s best science fiction and fantasy books of the year

The acclaimed author of *The Dream of Perpetual Motion* returns with a compelling novel about the effects of science and technology on our friendships, our love lives, and our sense of self.

Rebecca Wright has reclaimed her life, finding her way out of her grief and depression following a personal tragedy years ago. She spends her days working in customer support for the internet dating site where she first met her husband. But she has a strange, persistent sense that everything around her is somewhat off-kilter: she constantly feels as if she has walked into a room and forgotten what she intended to do there; on TV, the President seems to be the wrong person in the wrong place; her dreams are full of disquiet. Meanwhile, her husband's decade-long dedication to his invention, the causality violation device (which he would greatly prefer you not call a "time machine") has effectively stalled his career and made him a laughingstock in the physics community. But he may be closer to success than either of them knows or can possibly imagine.

Version Control is about a possible near future, but it's also about the way we live now. It's about smart phones and self-driving cars and what we believe about the people we meet on the Internet. It's about a couple, Rebecca and Philip, who have experienced a tragedy, and about how they help—and fail to help—each other through it. Emotionally powerful and stunningly visionary, *Version Control* will alter the way you see your future and your present.

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Version Control: A Novel By Dexter Palmer Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal
In the very near future, self-driving cars and the use of artificial intelligence are becoming increasingly commonplace, social media has expanded its dominating role in people's lives, and a small group of physicists are close to producing the first quantitative proof of space-time anomalies. The main characters are millennials in their early to late 30s, and the story revolves around their day-to-day lives and interactions. Palmer takes his time building a world that at first seems only slightly futuristic and even somewhat mundane in its similarities to the present day. Some teens will find the slow start difficult, but those who make it through the first half of the story will begin to recognize the all-too-real possibilities for what their own futures might hold. Quantum physics, race relations, the power of social media, amoral technology, and politics are all topics of high interest among many teens. Palmer shines a disturbing spotlight on these issues, exposing the ease with which our lives can be manipulated without our awareness. VERDICT Teens with a keen interest in physical science or social psychology will find this a particularly satisfying, albeit disturbing, read.—Cary Frostick, formerly at Mary Riley Styles Public Library, Falls Church, VA

Review
The Washington Post: **Best Science Fiction & Fantasy for February**
 iO9: SF & Fantasy "Books you absolutely must not miss in February"
Book Riot: **5 Books to Watch for in February**
BuzzFeed: **5 Novels to Read in March**
 A *PW* Picks Book of the Week for 2/22
 Google Play: Best Books of Spring

"It's easily one of the smartest, most unusual time-travel stories you'll ever read—and one you don't need a PhD. to understand, because it's focused entirely on some very fascinating and flawed characters. . . . Like J.K. Rowling, Palmer understands that when your subject is utterly fantastic, you need to cloak it in everyday language. . . . A hymn to science as it should be done."
    —Chris Taylor, *Mashable*

"Deftly exploring a huge range of subjects from relationships to technology to race and much more, *Version Control* is brilliant and richly satisfying: a novel that is utterly true to the complicated and science fictional world we live in today. . . . [Palmer delivers] tricky, subtle surprises."
    —Isaac Fitzgerald, BuzzFeed Books

"Expansive in scope. . . . But [Palmer] deftly keeps the many components in harmony. The result is an intellectual novel that feels surprisingly intimate and accessible. Weighty yet emotionally rewarding, *Version Control* will appeal to all curious readers."
    —Stephenie Harrison, *BookPage*

"Dexter Palmer's *Version Control* explores the complexities of narrative. . . . With time travel as a fascinating backdrop, Palmer delicately examines the layers of stories we create when trying to differentiate 'the information from the truth.'"
    —Nancy Hightower, *The Washington Post*

"A knowing, frequently funny and often very sad novel that explores love, marriage and loss in the age of social media and perpetual online metrics. . . . Heartfelt and harrowing. . . . Rather than presenting a setting

ravaged by climate change, zombies or a deadly virus, Palmer does something more subtle, presenting a version of the modern world amplified by only a few degrees of futurity and made all the more engrossing and strange for its nearness."

   —Michael Berry, *San Francisco Chronicle*

"A thoughtful, powerful overhaul of the age-old time travel tale, one that doesn't radically deconstruct the genre so much as explore it more broadly and deeply. . . . Palmer is a novelist with an abundance of things to say—about life, about time, and about the essence of the universe. Luckily, with *Version Control*, he also has the chops and eloquence to make those things sing. . . . Palmer has given us a vertigo-inducing peek behind the veil of existence, then distilled it into a quiet, intimate tale of a couple and the trauma that binds them. It's exhilarating. It's exhausting. And the ending is a virtuoso performance that yanks the brain as it disorients the heart."

   —Jason Heller, *NPR Books*

"You know those books that have not only an amazing plot but such a smart view of the world and pop culture that you want to read every sentence aloud to someone, even if there's no one there? This is one of those books. . . . If you enjoyed books that challenge the classic narrative structure like *Fates & Furies* or books with satirical near-future settings like *Oryx & Crake*, you must get [*Version Control*] immediately."

   —*BookRiot*

"A fascinating journey that deserves to be savored with time to think, ponder, and process. . . . If you want a book that pulls you into a world that's just different enough to be fascinating and thought-provoking, then pick this one up. Savor it . . . and enjoy where this one takes you."

   —GraphicPolicy.com

"It's February, and I'm certain this will be one of my favorite books of the year. . . . Wise, immersive, and brilliant. . . . A mind-bending tour of the science and ramifications of the causality violation device that reminded me of how I felt after I first saw the movie *The Matrix*."

   —Nelson Appell, *The Missourian*

"Far more than a standard-model time travel saga. . . . Palmer's lengthy, complex, highly challenging second novel is more brilliant than his debut, *The Dream of Perpetual Motion*. . . . Palmer earned his doctorate from Princeton with a thesis on the works of James Joyce, Thomas Pynchon, and William Gaddis. This book stands with the masterpieces of those authors."

   —*Publishers Weekly,* A PW Picks Book of the Week (starred, boxed review)

"Mind-bending. . . . A compelling, thought-provoking view of time and reality."

   —*Booklist* (starred review)

"Palmer presents a fresh twist on the time-travel trope. . . . The characters are complex and flawed but thoroughly worthy of attention. Fans of Palmer's previous book, time travel, near-future technologies, and sf will find great enjoyment here."

   —*Library Journal* (starred review)

"A Mobius strip of a novel in which time is more a loop than a path and various possibilities seem to exist simultaneously. Science fiction provides a literary launching pad for this audacious sophomore novel by Palmer. It offers some of the same pleasures as one of those state-of-the-union (domestic and national) epics by Jonathan Franzen, yet its speculative nature becomes increasingly apparent. . . . A novel brimming with ideas, ambition, imagination, and possibility yet one in which the characters remain richly engaging for the

reader."
    —*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

"Dexter Palmer's *Version Control* is a gripping page-turner, an insightful and wise look into the lives of scientists, a moving time-distortion story, and a clever satire about our current information age. I enjoyed the heck out of it."
    —Jeff VanderMeer, bestselling author of The Southern Reach Trilogy

"Is it a time machine? You be the judge. I'll just say it's a wise, sweet, and deeply unsettling story—a brilliant dystopian vision of some possible futures awaiting us, the children of the Information Age."
    —James Gleick, author of *The Information: A History, A Theory, A Flood*

"Funny, poignant, and powerful—this novel is a multiverse, bursting with complexity and richness. Every time I thought it was done revealing layers of reality, it surprised me with yet another of its many worlds. And in each of those worlds, Dexter Palmer explores so many big things: race, science, philosophy, marriage, and personal histories growing together and apart and together again. It's a moving story about love and loss, and the lifelong tangle of the possible with the inevitable."
    —Charles Yu, author of *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe* and *Sorry Please Thank You*

About the Author
DEXTER PALMER's first novel *The Dream of Perpetual Motion* was selected as one of the best fiction debuts of 2010 by *Kirkus Reviews*. He lives in Princeton, New Jersey.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sheila Rocha:

Spent a free a chance to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their leisure time with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? Can be reading a book is usually option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the reserve untitled Version Control: A Novel can be good book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Sheila Carter:

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Robert Hensley:

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