

## **'Dash & Lily': A hidden, quirky holiday delight**

Netflix's "Dash & Lily" is a holiday must-watch before Christmas is here.

Wanting to watch something to get in the Christmas spirit, but the urge to watch "Elf" or "Home Alone 2" again just isn't there? Maybe the time commitment of watching a full movie is a little unrealistic right now. Cheesy Hallmark movies are off the table, and it seems like the classics are scattered around every streaming service.

This time, Netflix comes in clutch.

Let's face it: Netflix doesn't have the best Christmas movie selection. But what if there was a Christmas show option?

I faced a similar dilemma. Last night, I wanted something jolly to play in the background while I crocheted, but didn't want to hunt for "A Christmas Story" or "A Charlie Brown Christmas." I opened Netflix. The recommended section is where I like to start, and that is where I came across season one - the only season - of "Dash & Lily." The cursor hovered over the title, so the preview began to play.

My initial thoughts on the show's preview went a little something like this: Huh, that reminds me of "Will Grayson, Will Grayson" (a book by John Green and David Levithan). Wait, is that the guy from "Euphoria"? Oh, it takes place during Christmas?

Hook. Line. Sinker.

I glanced at the oven's clock: 9:36 p.m. "It's a show, not a movie but I'll give it a chance," thought to myself. I pressed start. Little did I know that I would remain cuddled with my cat on the couch four hours later, wanting to restart the eight 30-minute episodes.

“Dash & Lily” captivated me immediately. It felt like a punishment to keep myself from clicking “next episode” as soon as the credits rolled, so I just didn't.

I found the show to be charming and adorable with enough suspense and drama to make me giddy for more. With less than a week until Christmas, the festive element of the show added a nice bonus.

In the show, bright-eyed Lily is prompted by her older brother Langston and his boyfriend Benny to leave a red notebook of clues and dares titled “Do You Dare...?” in a bookstore. Self-proclaimed loner Dash finds it, solves the riddle, finishes the dare and finds himself enamored by this “Clue Girl.”

The following episodes depict the characters' individual lives and stories, with the red notebook and each other's dares looming in the background. Most people feel like they can be more vulnerable when they aren't communicating face to face, and this accelerates Dash and Lily's relationship even though they think that they have never seen each other in person. The pair develop genuine feelings for each other, but when they finally meet it is anything but romantic. I'll leave it to you to find out how it ends; However, expect a Jonas Brothers cameo.

### **The origins of “Dash & Lily”**

The season is based on “Dash & Lily's Book of Dares,” which is the first of the three-book series by Rachel Cohn and David Levithan. Each book takes place around Christmas and seems to be a testament to Dash and Lily's love story after they fell in love through communicating via notebook in various parts of New York.

Having read “Will Grayson, Will Grayson” by David Levithan and John Green — a novel where Levithan and Green alternate writing every other chapter as two different characters with the same name who eventually meet — I quickly put together that the show was based on a book that followed a similar chapter pattern. I haven't read anything by Cohn, but

after seeing the LGBTQ+ representation and nods to Broadway musicals, it became obvious to me that the show was partly inspired by *Levithan*.

If there weren't only five days until Christmas Day, I would storm Barnes and Noble looking for the series. However, I am excited to read the novels next holiday season. It will be interesting to compare and contrast them with Joe Tracz's 2020 Netflix adaptation.

### **Is one season enough?**

It is safe to say that Netflix won't be renewing "Dash & Lily" for another season, but I don't feel like they would necessarily need to. My opinion may change once I read the full series; However, I think the one season served its purpose of being a cute and fun love story for holiday viewers. If the show served as a fairly honest representation of what happens in the book, I am not sure if I need more from Dash and Lily. The finale provided a lot of closure and bliss, especially for those watching it for something festive, or with no intentions of reading the books.

Needless to say, "Dash & Lily" will certainly be in my holiday rotation next year, both on the screen and my bookshelf.