

Dash & Lily's Book of Dares Study Guide

Dash & Lily's Book of Dares by Rachel Cohn

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Plot Summary

Dash and Lily's *Book of Dares* is the third collaboration between writers Rachel Cohn and David Levithan. In this novel, Dash finds a notebook in his favorite bookstore. The notebook is full of clues that promise to be the beginning of an adventure. Dash completes the clues and leaves a message for the girl who created the notebook. Lily, the creator of the notebook, is surprised to have gotten a response, but she quickly jumps in to have an adventure. For a few days, Lily and Dash exchange the notebook, giving each other fun tasks to do that are both entertaining and humiliating.

At the end of one dare, Lily becomes frightened and forgets to leave the notebook behind, causing an end to the adventure. However, Dash is determined to learn more about Lily, so he uses a boot she left behind as the only clue to find her. When he does, Dash is disappointed by the reality because she is far different from the fantasy.

Lily has grown more courageous through her flirtation with Dash and begins to use that courage in other avenues of her life. She makes friends for the first time in her life and even goes on a date. However, there is something about Dash she cannot forget, so she continues to seek him out even after a mistake has caused him to walk away.

Dash begins to offer Lily a second chance. While they are out walking together, they are both accused of crimes against children and arrested. It gives them a chance to get to know one another better, but it also makes them unwilling celebrities. Again Dash is silent, leaving Lily to think it is over for good. However, he asks her out on a date that proves to be the most romantic one she has ever experienced. Dash and Lily connect on an intimate level and begin a romance that the reader can imagine will last for years to come.



Chapters 1-4

Summary

Chapter 1. Dash

Dash is in Strands, his favorite bookstore. He's looking through the shelves a few days before Christmas when he finds a notebook that dares the person who finds it to solve a couple of clues. Dash does and is fascinated with the feminine mind that could have made up the puzzle. For this reason, he plays along and leaves a message for the notebook girl, Lily.

Chapter 2, Lily

Lily is sad that her parents have chosen to spend this Christmas away from home. Lily's brother has come up with the idea of finding Lily a boyfriend by leaving clues in a notebook at their favorite bookstore to keep her busy. Lily is surprised when she learns that someone has taken the bait. Lily follows the clues he has left her and leaves him a clue in a Christmas movie despite his clear instructions not to use a Christmas movie.

Chapter 3, Dash

Dash is not happy to find that Lily's clues are all about Christmas. He follows them just the same, finding himself running around Macy's just days before Christmas. He even sits on Santa's lap. In revenge, Dash decides to send Lily to one of the most offensive Christmas movies.

Chapter 4, Lily.

Lily attends the showing of *Gramma Got Run Over by a Reindeer*, but she leaves less than half an hour into it because of the noisy children in the theater. Lily reads what Dash wrote to her about his best Christmas ever. It inspires her to ask him what he wants most for Christmas.

Analysis

Lily and Dash are two teenagers in New York who have never met one another. However, they have a great deal in common. Thanks to Lily's brother, Dash and Lily are drawn to one another through a game of dares. It begins with their favorite bookstore but expands to include some of Lily's many relatives and Dash's most detested holiday events. The reader can see from the very beginning that Dash and Lily are perfect for one another but wonder if they can make it from a simple flirtation to something more important.



Discussion Question 1

Who wrote the clues in the red, moleskin notebook that Dash finds in Strands? For what reason were the clues written?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Lily play along with Dash and the notebook of dares? Why is she not spending the holiday with friends?

Discussion Question 3

What things do Lily and Dash have in common? In what ways are they different?

Vocabulary

Reindeer, pavement, comforting, festive, subsist, humor, vintage, staged, secular, complete, returned, majorette, tasseled, platform, retired, stockings, inspired, inspected, shuddered, hateful, oxford, embroidered.



Chapters 5-8

Summary

Chapter 5, Dash

Dash goes out with his friend Boomer to see a Disney film. Dash takes the opportunity to pick up the moleskin notebook Lily has left him along with some cookies. Dash and Boomer share the cookies, and Dash is amazed by their quality. Afterward, Dash and Boomer go to the wax museum while Dash struggles to find an answer to Lily's question. Finally, Dash tells Lily in the notebook that he would like an Oxford Expanded Dictionary, a very large and expensive dictionary.

Chapter 6, Lily

Lily likes Dash's answer to her request for his most desired Christmas gift. However, she is annoyed by his refusal to tell her his name. Langston, Lily's brother, comes inside from sleeping under the stars with a cold. As he asks Lily to take care of him, he accidentally lets it slip that she might be moving to Fiji with her parents next year. Lily becomes very upset and leaves the apartment. In the notebook, Lily writes to Dash that she wants to believe. Then Lily goes to FAO Schwartz as instructed to leave the notebook. However, the Muppet workshop where she is supposed to leave the notebook is not there. A girl overhears her asking for it and takes her to a small room where a boy is waiting. The boy, who turns out to be Dash's friend Boomer, instructs Lily to make a Muppet. She does, making it look like she imagines Dash to look. When time is up, Lily gives the Muppet to Boomer along with the notebook, stopping briefly to add something to what she has already written.

Chapter 7, Dash

Dash interrogates Boomer for details about Lily, but he gets few satisfactory answers. After he reads what Lily has written, he writes a response that surprises even him. Dash spends the evening alone, enjoying his books. Both his parents call and check in, both believing he is with the other. After the calls, Dash takes the train to the Nutcracker House and writes his impressions down for Lily. Before he leaves, Dash leaves the Muppet and the moleskin for Lily.

Chapter 8, Lily

Lily has a video chat with her parents early the next morning. Lily confronts her parents on their plans to move to Fiji only to have them confirm it. Lily then checks in on Langston, who is still sick, before going for a walk. Lily stops to see her Aunt Ida. At dinner time, another relative brings the notebook to Lily. Lily tries to sneak out, but her relatives will not let her. Lily leaves as quickly as she can. Lily goes home and reads the notebook. Dash wants Lily to go to a late night club, but she is not sure she wants to. However, she decides to be brave and go anyway. When Lily arrives, the bouncer



makes her come up with a good complaint to get inside. When Lily tells the woman she has never been properly kissed, the bouncer is interested. Lily is allowed inside, but she feels instantly conspicuous, as though everyone is staring at her. The music is amazing, however, and it makes her forget her insecurity. On the bathroom wall, Lily finds a message from Dash telling her who to give the notebook to. However, she becomes spooked and leaves with the notebook.

Analysis

Lily and Dash continue exchanging the notebook, both coming up with funny dares for the other. As they finish the dares, they begin to talk to each other. At first it is somewhat shallow, talking about things they want for Christmas and the like, but soon they begin to get into deeper things like Lily's desire to believe again. They make a connection that is deep despite the odd way in which they are communicating.

Dash is home alone due to a divorce. It is clear he is lonely even though he is a popular boy with lots of friends at school. A friend is having a party, and he knows his ex-girlfriend will be there. This seems to insert a little uncertainty into the plot. Dash clearly does not know what he wants, but his game with Lily is making him look at things a little differently. At the same time, Lily has just discovered her parents want to move to Fiji in the new year. This leaves her with the possibility of beginning a new relationship only to be forced to end it due to distance. It is a complicated situation that only seems to be getting more so, especially when Lily manages to not leave the notebook for Dash.

Discussion Question 1

Who is Snarly? Why he is named Snarly? What happens to him?

Discussion Question 2

What does Lily tell Dash she wants for Christmas? What does she mean by this request?

Discussion Question 3

Where does Lily learn she might move in the new year? For what reason? How does she feel about it?

Vocabulary

Notebook, snarly, afflicted, safekeeping, yarmulke, sentimentalist, messages, alternated, romantic, happened, wondered, scrawl, museum, return, lifetime, related, hipsters, universal, believed, happened, message, instructed, thrashed, apparently.



Chapters 9-12

Summary

Chapter 9, Dash

Dash's friends, Dov and Yohnny, come by his place with the boot Lily left behind, but no notebook. Dash thinks the boot is a clue, so he begins retracing his steps to figure it out. Dash begins at Macy's where he asks for the man who played Santa. Unfortunately, he is unable to find him. Dash returns home where he starts to write to Lily, but it just is not the same without the notebook. Dash thinks about his ex-girlfriend, Sofia, before it is time to get ready for the party. At the party, Dash and Sofia begin to talk. When they sneak away to have a moment alone, they accidentally interrupt Dov and Yohnny's make out session. Sofia tells Dash she fell in love in Spain, but it did not work out. Dash then tells her about Lily, and Sofia encourages him to pursue it.

Chapter 10, Lily

Lily comes home from the club to discover her grandpa has unexpectedly returned from Florida. He tries to punish Lily, but she only laughs. Before going to bed, Lily writes to Dash in the notebook. The following day, Lily goes with her grandfather to meet his buddies for coffee. Lily learns that her grandfather came home early because he proposed to a lady friend who turned him down. Her grandfather's friends spend the afternoon trying to cheer him up. Later, Lily and her grandfather go for a walk in the park where Lily runs into an old classmate named Edgar who recognizes her. He has grown into a good-looking young man. Edgar asks Lily to a party, and she agrees.

Chapter 11, Dash

The next day, Dash goes to Strands where he asks for Mark, the clerk who took his book for Lily the first day he found the notebook. Dash convinces Mark to give him Lily's address. However, the address turns out to be that of Lily's Aunt Ida. Ida invites Dash in. Ida interviews Dash before she will help him contact Lily.

Chapter 12, Lily

Edgar takes Lily out, but he decides the party he wanted to go to will be boring. So, he offers to take her elsewhere. When Edgar learns Lily has to be home early, he offers to take her to a movie. Lily slips out of the movie and sits in the bathroom to write to Dash. Instead of getting a kiss when Edgar drops her off, Edgar asks for half the cab fare. The next day, Lily continues to write to Dash in the notebook while on a second date with Edgar. While at the restaurant, Lily receives a call from her Uncle Carmine and her Aunt Ida at practically the same time. Lily ignores Aunt Ida's call in favor of learning more about Dash from Uncle Carmine. Lily then attends a birthday party with her group of carolers. When the notebook falls out of her bag, she decides to leave it there since she thinks she has ruined all chances with Dash. Lily is a little drunk when she turns to



Edgar for a kiss. A boy named Dash comes into the bar and looks oddly at Lily because she is wearing one boot and one tennis shoe. Then she passes out.

Analysis

Dash goes to the Christmas party where his ex-girlfriend is supposed to be and speaks to her for awhile. Sofia convinces Dash that they were never meant to be, but Lily sounds like the perfect girl for him. Sofia urges Dash to explore this new relationship even though Lily did not leave the notebook for Dash during his last dare. Dash takes it seriously and begins to search for Lily. He has little luck at first. Finally, Dash gets the address of Lily's Aunt Ida. He goes to her house, but Ida insists on knowing everything about him before calling Lily.

Lily runs into the boy who ruined her social life in elementary school. He has grown into a good looking young man and is interested in her. For this reason, Lily goes out with him, but she continuously sneaks off to the bathroom to write to Dash in her notebook. Then she gets drunk at a birthday party and meets the real Dash, but she is too drunk to realize that it is Dash. It is a frustrating moment for the reader who assumes this will ruin the chance of the two of them making a love match. However, Dash seems to be a smart young man who might believe in second chances.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Lily go to a dance club in the middle for the night? What kind of club is it? What does the next clue tell her to do?

Discussion Question 2

How does Lily miss leaving the notebook for Dash? What does Dash think that this means? What does he do?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Lily begin dating Edgar? What does this mean about her feelings for Dash? Does this suggest Lily does not take her flirtation with Dash seriously?

Vocabulary

Nugget, wisdom, inebriated, arrived, tipsy, secluded, transformed, choice, veritable, lyric, gesturing, defiant, dangerous, majorette, bulletin, insane, performance, incorrectness, political, aimlessly, carolers.



Chapters 13-16

Summary

Chapter 13, Dash

Dash is very disappointed to have found Lily and to realize she is a drunk. However, he decides to take her home since Edgar clearly does not care. All the way to her aunt's, Lily apologizes to Dash. At the apartment, Dash is forced to carry her inside because she is too drunk to walk. Dash leaves the notebook on a dresser and tells Ida that she should tell Lily not to take the whole thing so seriously. Edgar calls Dash to check on Lily. Dash subtly chastises him for his behavior before refusing an invitation to go back to the bar. Dash goes to the bar where Sofia is staying and buys several postcards on which he writes notes to Lily, or his idea of Lily.

Chapter 14. Lily

Ida has covered for Lily with her grandfather, but she lectures her just the same. Ida tells Lily that she has more than likely blown it with Dash, but she should try for a second chance. Lily texts Edgar in an attempt to find Dash. He tells her approximately where Dash lives. So, Lily goes to the neighborhood and starts asking the neighbors if Dash lives in their building. Lily finally finds his building and leaves the notebook and some tea with his doorman.

Chapter 15, Dash.

Dash wakes up with Sofia in her hotel room. They did not do anything, but when her parents come to wake her the next morning, he doesn't believe that they will be inclined to believe him. So, he hides under the bed when her dad knocks on the door. Dash gets into a snow fight on the way home and discovers that someone wrote about it on a blog, accusing him of assault. Dash then finds the notebook in a package the doorman had given him when he arrived home. Dash fills out the last of the postcards and plans his dare for Lily.

Chapter 16, Lily

Grandpa has decided to return to Florida to work things out with his girlfriend. Later, Lily goes to Strands to help out a friend and runs into Boomer. Boomer has the notebook so Lily asks for it, but Boomer insists she is supposed to find it on the shelf. Instead, Lily takes Boomer out for a snack. Her cousin Mark joins them and grills Boomer about Dash. Lily reads the postcards Dash left for her and makes a date to have coffee with a girl from school. Later, while walking her clients' dogs, she runs into Dash.



Analysis

Lily messes up her relationship with Dash when she drinks too much at a party and makes a fool of herself in front of him. Dash is deeply disappointed by the Lily he meets in person and begins to think the relationship is over before it begins. Lily is not who he thought she was.

Lily thinks she has really messed up, but she decides not to give up. She finds Dash and gives the notebook back to him. Dash responds, much to her surprise. Lily begins to hope again even as she makes her first friend and discovers that she does not need a notebook to put herself out there and make friends.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Lily lie to her grandfather about where she is going with Edgar? What happens while Lily is out with Edgar? Why?

Discussion Question 2

How does Dash happen to find Lily drunk in a bar? What is his reaction? Is this reaction reasonable?

Discussion Question 3

How does Lily finally get the notebook back to Dash? How does he respond?

Vocabulary

Direction, opposite, awesome, expected, farther, crimson, moment, casual, posted, explain, literally, potentially, unlikable, genuinely, pervert, comfortable, heartfelt, depend, defense, spite, judgment, finicky, divorce, rescue.



Chapters 17-20

Summary

Chapter 17, Dash

Things are awkward between Dash and Lily until the dog suddenly runs off, causing Lily to fall over. Dash goes after the dog only to run into the child whose eye he reportedly assaulted. As Dash is cornered by a group of mothers, Lily rushes in to save a falling baby and is suddenly accused of trying to steal the baby. The police arrive and take Lily and Dash to the police station. As they wait to learn their fate, Lily and Dash finally begin to talk and learn a great deal more about one another. The cops let them go after reviewing the video evidence. Lily is considered a hero by half the city and a criminal by the other. As he leaves, Dash realizes Lily had slipped the notebook into his pocket.

Chapter 18, Lily

Everyone knows of Lily's exploits, even her parents in Fiji. Grandpa turns around to come back and tries to ground Lily again. Several girls from Lily's school come over to help her deal with her new fame. All the while, Lily worries that Dash does not really like her. Lily thinks of calling or texting Dash when Boris the dog comes home with the notebook in his mouth.

Chapter 19, Dash.

Dash hides out in his apartment after his arrest. Sofia again offers Dash advice and urges him to continue his relationship with Lily. Dash discusses the whole situation with all his friends and they, too, encourage him to try again. The next morning, Dash comes up with a new dare. He takes the notebook to Ida who promises to get it to Lily. When Lily arrives at Rockefeller Center, she seems nervous. Dash takes her to the studio kitchen of Boomer's famous aunt where they make Rice Krispy snacks together.

Chapter 20, Lily

Dash and Lily dance on the subway platform on their way to meet Mark at the Strand. Lily has talked Mark into letting them into the Strand for the night. Once alone, Lily takes Mark into the basement where there is a copy of the Oxford English Dictionary. They spend the night looking up words and writing them in the notebook. When they decide to go back upstairs, they are shocked to discover they are locked in. Lily calls Mark, but he refuses to come rescue them until morning. Dash gives Lily a kiss before insisting he be allowed to go to sleep.



Analysis

Dash and Lily are both convinced their relationship has ended before it has begun until they are arrested. Dash is accused of assaulting a kid, and Lily is accused of trying to steal a baby. It is all blown out of proportion, but not before they become Internet celebrities. Their short time alone together in jail brings them closer together briefly, but when Dash does not call soon afterward, Lily begins to wonder if he has changed his mind about her.

On New Year's Eve, Dash plans a romantic date for Lily. It goes perfectly, ending with them getting locked in the basement of the Strand where they have gone to spend some quality time with a dictionary. However, it goes so well that Lily finally gets her first kiss, and the future looks bright for them both.

Discussion Question 1

What does Lily do that causes her to be accused of stealing a baby? Why are Lily and Dash arrested? What does this do for their reputations?

Discussion Question 2

How has Lily's life changed in the short time she has known Dash? Why?

Discussion Question 3

What is the OED? Why is Dash so excited to see one? What does he do with it?

Vocabulary

Cherish, derivative, anticipator, seriously, resume, frequency, maneuvering, obscene, imprisoning, snarl, quiescent, stranded, anticipation, lifetime, rescue, predicament.



Characters

Lily

Lily is a sixteen year old girl who has spent much of her childhood as an outcast because of one unfortunate incident when she was young. For this reason, Lily has no friends and rarely goes out. Books are Lily's constant companion. Therefore, when her brother decides Lily needs a boyfriend, he leaves a notebook filled with clues in a bookstore to create a flirtation for her. It works, and a boy begins responding to the notebook. It takes Lily on an adventure she did not foresee.

Dash

Dash is a popular young man at school with many girlfriends. However, he is a serious minded boy who would prefer to have one love. He thought that love was his former girlfriend Sofia, but he soon learned that he was too condescending with her, driving her away.

When Dash remains home for the holidays to avoid the uncomfortable drama of his divorced parents, he finds himself drawn to his favorite bookstore. There he finds a notebook with clues to a dare that he decides to accept. The notebook takes Dash on a wonderful adventure, and he meets the perfect girl for him. However, there are multiple bumps along the way and Dash finds it hard to keep on the road. He is greatly rewarded in the end.

Boomer

Boomer is Dash's best friend. Boomer is a loveable guy who is kind of stuck in childhood. However, Boomer is very kind and loyal to Dash, defending him as he helps him woo Lily. In the end, Boomer plays an important part in Lily and Dash's courtship.

Edgar

Edgar is a young man Lily once went to school with and the author of her worst moment in school. Edgar has grown into a good looking young man who finds himself drawn to Lily. This catches Lily by surprise, but she decides to go out with him just for the experience. On one of their dates, Lily gets drunk. At that moment, she meets the elusive Dash with whom she has been sharing a notebook. Dash is disappointed by her behavior and considers ending the relationship.



Langston

Langston is Lily's brother. Langston masterminded the dare notebook. Langston wants Lily to find a boyfriend so that she will not spend so much time at home. However, Langston offers little support as Lily struggles with the adventures the notebook presents.

Bennie

Bennie is Langston's boyfriend. Bennie offers Lily fashion advice when she first begins talking to Dash through the notebook, encouraging her to wear the boots that she will eventually lose and leave behind for Dash to use as a clue to her identity.

Aunt Ida

Aunt Ida is Lily's great aunt and a guard at Madame Tousse's. Dash is able to find Ida because she was the former owner of Lily's boots. He found one of the boots where Lily was supposed to leave the notebook. He uses the shoe to track down Aunt Ida. Ida interrogates Dash and tries to help him meet Lily in person. She helps Lily with the notebook adventure by accepting it from Dash while they are still trading it back and forth. Ida proves to be a great supporter of the young couple.

Grandpa

Grandpa is Lily's maternal grandfather. Grandpa lives in Florida in the winter, but this winter he asked his lady friend to marry him. She turned him down, so he returned to New York just in time to catch Lily sneaking back into the house after going on one of Dash's dares. Grandpa proves to be something of an obstacle for Lily in her courtship with Dash.

Mark

Mark is Lily's cousin and a clerk at Strand, the bookstore. Mark does not like Dash at first; however, he gives Lily and Mark access to Strand in the middle of the night so they can look through the Oxford English Dictionary.

Sofia

Sofia was Dash's girlfriend until she had to move back to Spain. When Dash learns Sofia is back in New York, he considers getting back with her. Sofia is honest enough to tell Dash that he should pursue a girl more like him. This makes Dash think more seriously about Lily.



Symbols and Symbolism

Red Moleskine Notebook

The notebook Lily and Dash trade between them is a red moleskine notebook.

White Board

Lily uses a white board to communicate on Christmas in protest for her parents being gone.

White Boots

Bennie encourages Lily to wear white boots that are more feminine and match her Christmas clothing better. Lily loses one of these during a dare for Dash one night. He uses it to try to track her down.

Blog

Dash is identified as an assailant against a kid on a local mommy blog.

OED

The OED, or Oxford English Dictionary, is a twenty volume dictionary that Dash wants to own. Lily gives him access to one at Strand on New Year's Eve during their first official date.

Cookies

Lily gives Dash cookies with the notebook after completing one of his dares.

Rice Krispy Treats

Lily and Dash make Rice Krispy Treats on their first official date.

Bedding

Lily leaves a clue for Dash under a pillow in the bedding department at Macy's.



Reindeer Mittens

Lily leaves a clue for Dash in some reindeer mittens at Macy's.

Gramma Got Run Over by a Reindeer

Lily sees the movie, Gramma Got Run Over by a Reindeer twice in the novel, once on a dare from Dash and once with Edgar.

Settings

Strands

Strands is a famous bookstore in New York. This is where Lily leaves the notebook that begins her adventures with Dash.

New York

Lily and Dash both live in New York. Lily's parents have an apartment over her grandfather's former business. Dash lives with his mother, but he also spends time with his father.



Themes and Motifs

Holidays

The novel is set in the week before and the week after Christmas. Christmas plays a major role in the adventure that Lily and Dash have for two different reasons. Dash dislikes Christmas and has chosen to lie to both his parents this year so that he will not have to spend the holiday with either of them. Lily, however, loves Christmas and is upset that her parents have postponed it so that they might spend their anniversary in Fiji.

As Lily and Dash begin their adventure, many of their dares toward one another involve the holiday. Lily picks a Christmas movie, gives Christmas cookies, and asks Dash about his favorite Christmas holiday. Dash also includes Christmas in his dares, but focuses more on the darker side of things.

Family

Family is a theme in this novel because of the number of Lily's relatives who take part in their adventure. It seems that every place that involves the dares that Lily presents to Dash include one or more of her relatives. In fact, the dare idea came from Lily's brother. When Dash loses contact with Lily, he turns to some of these relatives to help find her.

At the same time family helps Lily and Dash's with their adventure, they also disrupt it. Dash's parents present an obstacle when they fail to notice that he lied to them. He is not spending the holiday with either. Lily's parents are an obstacle when they talk about moving to Fiji. However, Dash and Lily hope to find a way to overcome these obstacles.

Popularity

Lily has no friends, and she feels isolated in her school. For this reason, she is looking for love and relationships in all the wrong places. At the same time, Dash is very popular, and his ex-girlfriend keeps popping up in all the wrong places.

To a teenager, their reputation at school is the most important thing. However, Dash finds himself with a lot of friends, but he has no parents who care enough to know where he is during the holidays. On the other hand, Lily has parents who care, but no friends. It is an imbalanced situation that hopefully their relationship with one another can repair.



Styles

Point of View

The novel is written in the first person point of view. The authors each use this point of view to tell the different characters' stories. Each author wrote in one of the main character's voice, meaning Ms. Cohen wrote the first person narration of Lily while Mr. Levinthan wrote the first person narration of Dash.

The point of view of this novel works well because it allows the reader to build a close relationship with each of the main characters. This leaves the reader rooting for each of them. The novel is based on the idea that neither knows much about the other character, leaving them both guessing about the other's motives. The point of view adds to this tension, creating a likeable story for the reader.

Language and Meaning

The novel is written about and for a young audience. Therefore, the language tends to be simple English. However, both the main characters are bibliophiles who have a strong vocabulary, so there is the occasional use of more sophisticated language in the novel.

The language of this novel works well with the plot. It is a simple language that reflects the age of the characters, but it is also somewhat sophisticated, allowing for the advanced knowledge that being avid readers brings the characters. The language remains what one would expect teenagers to use, but it also reflects the era the novel is set in and the type of people who populate it.

Structure

The novel is divided into twenty chapters. The two authors have traded off, one writing in the voice of Lily and the other of Dash, so that the chapters alternate between the two writers and the two characters. This makes for a novel that is filled with alternating styles and voice.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows the budding relationship between Lily and Dash. One subplot follows Lily's attempts to make friends among her schoolmates. Another follows the varying relationships in Dash's life. All the plots come to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel.



Quotes

This year I had managed to become a voluntary orphan for Christmas, telling my mother that I was spending it with my father, and my father that I was spending it with my mother, so that each of them booked nonrefundable vacations with their post-divorce paramours.

-- Dash (Chapter 1 paragraph 7)

Importance: This quote explains how Dash is on his own during Christmas and how broken his family is that his parents allow it to happen.

Oh, impertinence! I should have known better than to mention Christmas movies.

-- Dash (Chapter 3 paragraph 2)

Importance: This quote shows Dash's disdain for Christmas and his strong vocabulary.

Grandpa said he decided to renovate the upstairs apartment for his later-in-life bachelor digs because climbing the stairs every day would keep him young.

-- Lily (Chapter 6 paragraph 3)

Importance: This quote shows a snippet of the personality of Lily's grandfather before the reader meets him.

I walked from room to room, naked as the day I was born, only without the blood and amniotic fluid.

-- Dash (Chapter 7 paragraph 28)

Importance: This quote shows Dash's new found freedom and his sense of humor.

Grandpas give out dollar bills and bicycles and hugs. They don't give out punishments to grandchildren! Everybody knows that.

-- Lily (Chapter 10 paragraph 3)

Importance: This shows Lily's shock when her grandfather punishes her for being out in the middle of the night.

What a wasted girl. What a wasted hope.

-- Dash (Chapter 13 paragraph 9)

Importance: This is Dash's reaction to meeting Lily for the first time and finding her drunk.

What a waste.

-- Lily (Chapter 14 paragraph 3)



Importance: This is Lily's reaction to realizing she has blown it with Dash. It is exactly the same reaction he had.

As it happened, the maids at the Belvedere did a fine job of vacuuming, so when I hid under the bed, I was attacked by neither rats nor dust mites. Just the general fear of a vengeful father storming into a hotel room.

-- Dash (Chapter 15 paragraph 9)

Importance: This quote shows again Dash's humor even as he is almost caught having slept the entire night in his ex-girlfriend's hotel room.

She had a winsome quality now - but smartly winsome, not vacuously winsome.

-- Dash (Chapter 17 paragraph 6)

Importance: Dash's second impression of Lily.

That was a marvelous catch, darling.

-- Lily's mother (Chapter 18 paragraph 18)

Importance: This is the way Lily's mother responds to her daughter's new fame.

Once upon a time, during the storybook version of dating we'd gone through, I'd pretended that it was possible to love her when I only mildly liked her. Now I had no desire to pretend we'd ever be in love, and I liked her madly.

-- Dash (Chapter 19 paragraph 17)

Importance: Dash realizes how he really feels about his ex-girlfriend.

It pays to know people.

-- Lily (Chapter 20 paragraph 18)

Importance: Lily says this as she and Dash spend the evening first at a famous television studio and later at Strands bookstore.