

Review: Netflix's 'Hello, Goodbye and Everything In Between' is a surprisingly mature teen rom-com



CHENNAI: Young adult romances tend to lean on the syrupy side, but Netflix's latest stroll down lover's lane is surprisingly mature and wholesome. Michael Lewen's directorial debut, "Goodbye and Everything In Between" is the latest effort at telling a coming-of-age teen romance story after smash hits like "To All the Boys I've Loved Before" won the streaming platform an army of fans.



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Penned by two industry heavyweights, Ben York Jones and Amy Reed, and based on a 2015 novel of the same name by Jennifer E. Smith, the film is charmingly narrated and, except for one moment, steers clear of unnecessary melodrama.

Early in the teen-targeted romance, a high school senior, Aidan (Jordan Fisher), catches the eye of a new classmate, Clare (Talia Ryder). They inevitably pair up, but promise to go their separate ways once the year is over, fueled by the scars of parental divorce and a jaded view of high school love.

The film is broken up into “The Hello,” “The In Between,” and lingers on the “Goodbye,” although it must be said that the reason for the break up is not as convincing as it should be. Where the film shines is its focus on the magic moments that occur during the pair’s 10-month romance — midnight swims, ice hockey games and various tame adventures that could spark nostalgia among more mature viewers.

Breezily narrated in just 82 minutes, Lewen’s work has its flip side. It is a very narrow slice of American life that we see and a rather affluent one at that, and the dizzying montages and time jumping could leave some feeling overwhelmed. However, the romance clicks with two winning performances by Fisher and Ryder, with their two best friends, Stella (Ayo Edebiri) and Scotty (Nico Hiraga), splendidly chipping in.

Fisher’s talent was explored during his tenure as the angst-ridden protagonist in “Dear Evan Hansen” on Broadway — he was the first Black actor to have played the role — while Ryder earned her stripes in the abortion drama “Never Rarely Sometimes Always.” Their latest outing is lighter, chirpier and proves their range.
