

## TV Review: Final Season of 'Dexter' Starts on Confident Note

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 30, 2013 - 9:52am

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CHICAGO – The start of the eighth and final season of “Dexter” feels like a comeback album from a band that you used to love. There’s a blend of true happiness that this show looks, after four episodes, that it will end on a strong note, but also a bit of anger at the weak storytelling and stupid decisions that led us here. It makes seasons six and seven look even dumber by comparison. Michael C. Hall, in particular, seems reinvigorated, ready to give what could be his best season-long performance to date, as he has been paired with a great supporting actress (Charlotte Rampling) and given the kind of thematic density that this character deserves as his swan song. I’m incredibly happy (and more than a little surprised) to report that “Dexter” is going to end strong.



Television Rating: **4.0/5.0**

I’ll admit that I thought the end of the last season of “Dexter” — when Deb (Jennifer Carpenter) chose to shoot LaGuerta instead of her brother Dexter (Michael C. Hall) — was straight-up ridiculous. Not only did I not believe it but it felt like a show-ending moment. How could the program come back from something like that, so far removed from what the show once was — a program about a serial killer trying to be a normal guy?



Dexter

Photo credit: Showtime

The writers, and I believe this has been their final season end game for some time, wisely take the concept back to the origin of the show. Where does Dexter come from? What defines him and how he gets through this world? And can he do so now that his sole support structure, his sister, has gone off the deep end?

It turns out that Deb is something of a problem for Dexter now. She’s left Miami Metro PD and is working with a private eye (Sean Patrick

Flannery), but she's mostly just spiraling out of control. She drinks all the time, cries a lot, and looks like she could easily confess any day now to everything she and her brother have done. She becomes not only someone who Dexter wants to emotionally save for her well-being but also needs to keep quiet. She's a loose end for a man who usually ties those up with the end of a knife. A guy with a Dark Passenger shouldn't care about his sister's well-being. It's the ultimate fight within Dexter. If she could turn him in, why didn't he just kill her? Or why doesn't he let her go away now? Does this mean he's not a psychopath? Or is there a part of him that knows he needs her in his life or else his Dark Passenger becomes the driver?



Dexter

Photo credit: Showtime

These are the issues that Dexter Morgan ends up working out with a shrink named Vogel (the great Charlotte Rampling), someone who comes in as an expert for the Miami P.D. when a serial killer dubbed the "Brain Surgeon" for the parts of skull matter that he extracts enters the picture. The Brain Surgeon is taunting Vogel and it seems likely that he's one of the doctor's former patients. While Dexter tries to help Vogel and the police find the killer who seems to have a code of his own, he learns that Vogel helped Harry (James Remar) create his. The final season of "Dexter" matches Frankenstein and her monster in increasingly fascinating ways.

There's a confidence to the storytelling here that's been missing lately as it felt like the writers of "Dexter" were spinning their wheels in seasons six and seven, flirting with ideas about religion and responsibility before discarding them in favor of inane arcs about strip club owners. The writing here is much more purposeful. The scenes between Dexter and Vogel get only more riveting as the season progresses. Rampling gives Hall what he's been missing since Lithgow — a dramatic sparring partner. And even the exchanges with Deb have renewed life, partially because Quinn (Desmond Harrington) is finally back playing a major role in the thematic progress of the show, instead of just feeling like the subplot he's been for a few years now. Even Angel (David Zayas) feels more well-rounded. The spinning wheels of the last two seasons are now headed in one fascinating direction.

Here's all I really need to say about the final season of "Dexter" — I can't wait to see the next episode. For the last two years, I went episode to episode simply because I felt like I had to do so just to see where this story would eventually end. It felt like more of a responsibility. Each of the four episodes I've seen this season was more interesting, confident, and dynamic than the one before. I can't wait to see the final eight. With this and the stellar "Ray Donovan" airing after it, this is one of the strongest two hours of drama not just this season but all year. With "Ray," "The Bridge," "Breaking Bad," "The Newsroom," and "Low Winter Sun," this looks to be the best Summer in TV history for drama fans. And, believe it or not, it starts with "Dexter."

*"Dexter" stars Michael C. Hall, Jennifer Carpenter, David Zayas, James Remar, C.S. Lee, Desmond Harrington, and Charlotte Rampling. It returns to start its final season on Sunday, June 30, 2013 at 8pm CST.*



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