

# Character relationships are backbone of 'Bones'

By BRIDGET BYRNE  
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## LOS ANGELES

Emily Deschanel is comparing Dr. Temperance Brennan of "Bones" to a cracked egg.

"She's very flawed in odd ways, but there's something admirable, I think, in her attempt to move forward and put herself back together, like Humpty Dumpty," says Deschanel, who plays Brennan in Fox's wry-humored crime series.

Her reference could be considered slightly odd, though, as ol' H.D. possessed no bones, and bones are what Brennan is all about.

She's a forensic anthropologist and novelist who works with the FBI in solving crimes.

When bodies have disintegrated to skeletal remains, she's able to read the life history of tibias, femurs, skull fragments, vertebrae — indeed the whole bag of bones — providing clues to the manner and cause of death. Her skills have earned her the nickname "Bones."



Emily Deschanel plays Dr. Temperance Brennan on the Fox crime series "Bones." AP PHOTO

The character is inspired by real-life forensic anthropologist and author Kathy Reichs, as well as the character in Reichs' series of Temperance Brennan novels. "She's become more of a concept of a person," says Deschanel of her character. "It can be confusing I think for people who know Kathy Reichs' books. ... My character is a lot younger and different. ... Not that there aren't certain similarities, but it's a kind of a mesh."

Wearing a natty, well-fitting green lab coat, Deschanel is on a sound stage at 20th Century Fox Studios, filled from wall to wall by the show's lavish sets, an intriguing combo of elegance and utility.

Starring opposite Deschanel is David Boreanaz as FBI Agent Seeley Booth, skeptical about Brennan's skills but potentially something more than just a colleague.

"I think the characters think they have got close in a brotherly-sisterly type way, but they are the only ones who are unaware of the sexual tension between them," says executive producer Hart Hanson.

"And as long as we can protract that, that will be great," Hanson said.

Boreanaz, best known as the heart-throb vampire in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Angel," was cast first. "We knew we wanted Booth to be a

traditional leading man, not boyish, and not pretty, but handsome ... a complicated man in a suit with a lot of gravity," said Hanson.

Finding the right actress was harder. "We were looking for sexy, smart and funny. We saw dozens of actresses, and we kept getting two of those, but not very often all three. ... Emily has all three," Hanson says.

"We met, and it was just lightning in a bottle. People saw that when we tested her. It was there and it's singing now in a great way," says Boreanaz of Deschanel, who is the daughter of cinematographer Caleb Deschanel and the older sister of actress Zooey Deschanel.

When new episodes for the second season of "Bones" return at 8 p.m. Feb. 7, the Brennan-Booth relationship will continue its embryonic mating dance.

"We will clash. ... There will be jealousy. There will be hate. There will be humor. There will be love and respect. "But at the end, there is always that bond of 'I'm there for you. You're there for me,'" Boreanaz says.

## AT THE MOVIES

### 'ALPHA DOG'

Director Nick Cassavetes tries to kick butt with this re-creation of a true crime tale about suburban gangstas. An impulsive kidnapping leads to murder in SoCal.

Cassavetes indulges in some self-conscious gimmickry (a faux documentary style, for example) but gets intense performances from a cast that includes Emile Hirsch and Justin Timberlake. If nothing else, you're going to wish you had the tattoo concession.

**Rated:** R. Pervasive drug use and language, strong violence, sexuality and nudity

### 'CHARLOTTE'S WEB'

Julia Roberts heads a big-name voice cast in this charming, live-action adaptation of the classic E.B. White story about the friendship between Wilbur, a pig, and Charlotte, a spider.

A bit of humor enlivens the proceedings, which also explore such worthy subjects as mortality, the meaning of friendship and the importance of tolerance. A fine family film.

**Rated:** G

### 'DREAMGIRLS'

Full of strong performances and outsize musical energy, "Dreamgirls" has all the makings of a big-time holiday hit, and it deserves to become one.

As you may know from all the pre-movie hype, Jennifer Hudson is the movie's great discovery. Hudson, an "American Idol" contestant who didn't win, delivers a knockout blow as Effie White, the initial lead singer of a group called The Dreamettes.

Her rendition of "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going" — a heart-wrenching, show-stopper of a tune — has "bring down the house" written all over it, and all the talk you've heard about her Oscar nomination seems entirely justified.

**Rated:** PG-13, for language, some sexuality and drug content

### 'FREEDOM WRITERS'

Hilary Swank stars as an initially naive teacher who attempts to reach recalcitrant inner city kids.

Swank's performance and the movie's capacity to move us compensate for the familiarity of the tale, based on a true story.

**Rated:** PG-13. Violent content, some thematic material and language

### 'HAPPILY N'EVER AFTER'

When "Hoodwinked" came out a year ago, it felt like a poor man's "Shrek."

Guess that makes this totally uninspired fractured fairy tale the poor man's "Hoodwinked," according to The Associated Press.

**Rated:** PG. Action and mild rude humor

### 'THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS'

Will Smith's low-key performance adds credibility to an inspirational tale about a homeless man who takes care of his young son (Smith's real-life son Jaden), completes a no-pay internship at the investment firm of Dean Witter and generally tries to stay afloat.

Based on a true story, "Pursuit" may not be a classic, but Smith does this character justice. The movie also does a good job illustrating the catalog of woes that Smith's Chris Gardner faces as he attempts to pull himself out of destitution.

**Rated:** PG-13, some language

### 'THE QUEEN'

Helen Mirren is terrific as the dour Queen Elizabeth II in a Stephen Frears-directed docudrama that looks at the royal response to Princess Diana's death.

Not only does Mirren give an Oscar-caliber performance, but Michael Sheen also does brilliant work as Tony Blair. Frears avoids cheap shots, focusing instead on the how enduring societies are able to honor tradition while responding to change.

**Rated:** PG-13, brief strong language

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