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The Skeleton Twins — Bill Hader Revealed

Sophia Stein · Wednesday, September 10th, 2014

A failed suicide attempt prompts an impromptu reunion of estranged twins, Milo and Maggie Dean, in Craig Johnson's tragically-comic, highly original, *The Skeleton Twins*. Bill Hader and Kristen Wiig bring the twins to life with insight and comic zeal to create a love story between brother and sister like no other.

There was never any question that Kristen Wiig, the 'Lucille Ball' of our day, would deliver as Maggie in *The Skeleton Twins*. What takes us by storm is the revelation of Bill Hader as Milo. Hader offers up a performance that is at once genuine, touching, and wry. With Milo, he has crafted an iconic character. Director Johnson observes, "I find that comic actors are able to transition to drama much more easily than dramatic actors can do comedy. Some of my favorite movies are the ones where comedic actors are recontextualized, like Adam Sandler in *Punch Drunk Love* or Jim Carrey in *The Truman Show*." It is nothing less than brilliant to see Hader recontextualized by director Johnson (at the suggestion of casting director Avy Kaufman) in *The Skeleton Twins* as an actor with serious dramatic chops.

Milo and Maggie Dean are thirty-somethings treading water in the grim realization that the reality of their lives, in relation to the great expectations of their youths, falls undeniably short. Milo is a flailing Los Angeles actor and professional waiter, while Maggie is bored to distraction in her "Martha Stewart wonderland" marriage, trying to conceive a child with "Labrador retriever husband" Lance, played with irresistible warmth by Luke Wilson. Joanna Gleason as the twins' narcissistic, new-age mom embodies delusional avoidance with spine-tingling precision. Ty Burrell, as Milo's former flame, deftly treads the line between sincerity and self-interest; and Boyd Holbrook, as Maggie's hunky Australian shark of a SCUBA instructor, turns up the fire full-flame. Even the smallest of cameos in the hands of director Johnson bristles. Kathleen Rose Perkins scores a solid comic punch as Maggie's former high school schoolmate, Carlie.

The pairing of Hader and Wiig is nothing short of genius. The fine-tuned familiarity the two actors had cultivated over many years as co-players on *Saturday Night Live* provides a fertile foundation for their onscreen relationship as siblings in *The Skeleton Twins*. Watching them play like children — whether doing nitrous oxide together in a scene set in a dental office or lip-synching to "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now" by Starship in Maggie's living room — is pure joy. They propel us back in time to our own remembered innocence.

Perhaps no one better understands our vulnerabilities and brokenness than a sibling with whom we have shared our formative years, which is why this premise — a love story between siblings — is

so inspired. The screenplay by Craig Johnson and Mark Heyman offers a delightfully unpredictable exploration of family secrets and the price we pay for the lies we tell ourselves and others. The film is artfully photographed by Reed Morano, ASC, edited by Jennifer Lee, and executive produced by Mark and Jay Duplass. *The Skeleton Twins* is a superb and despairing comedy of this time, an Oscar hopeful that is well worth your time.

Top Image: Kristen Wiig (Maggie) and Bill Hader (Milo), "The Skeleton Twins," directed by Craig Johnson. Photo courtesy of Roadside Attractions.

"The Skeleton Twins" Official Website

Bill Hader (Milo) and Kristen Wiig (Maggie), "The Skeleton Twins," directed by Craig Johnson. Photo courtesy of Roadside Attractions.

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