

# The Ex Factor

## Books

For anyone who has ever Googled a boyfriend's ex, *Was She Pretty?*

(Sarah Crichton Books), Leanne Shapton's collection of drawings and tiny vignettes about our tendency to obsess over our predecessors—"Sheldon's ex-girlfriend was Dianna. She was uninhibited"—will resonate. "We're capable of getting jealous over the most ordinary things," says Shapton. "It could be the way she wears a turtleneck." For *O*, the Toronto-based illustrator and first-time author chose five favorite examples of jealousy culled from our cultural consciousness: **Shapton's pick:** *Rebecca* (1938). The protagonist in Daphne Du Maurier's novel is haunted by her husband's supposedly perfect first wife, Rebecca, who died less than a year before he remarried. **Our take:** Given the choice between deciding that your husband's behaving

The jealous type: Author Leanne Shapton.



oddly because (a) he's carrying a torch for his ex or (b) he murdered her, some women will take the murderer. **Shapton's pick:** "Jolene" (1974). In Dolly Parton's famous song, a woman pleads with another woman, *I'm begging of you, please don't take my man*. **Our take:** Jealous love can make you do kooky things, like try to fix a sinking relationship by appealing to the person who torpedoed it. **Shapton's pick:** *Fatal Attraction* (1987).

Envy of her lover's wife drives Alex Forrest (Glenn Close) to crazy extremes.

**Our take:** Jealousy can make you suicidal, homicidal, and unattractive. (Bonus lesson for men: If you cheat, you will pay.) **Shapton's pick:** *Sylvia* (2003). Gwyneth Paltrow's Plath is a classic jealous woman

whose certainty that her husband is having an affair helps drive him into another woman's arms.

**Our take:** Sure, jealousy can be self-fulfilling. Especially when your husband is a bred-in-the-bone womanizer.

**Shapton's pick:** *Little Black Book* (2004). This not-so-

good movie is based entirely on a single jealousy-induced action: Brittany Murphy's character steals information about her boyfriend's exes from his electronic datebook.

**Our take:** Whether they're supermodels, rocket scientists, or both, ex-girlfriends have the power to bring out the masochist in all of us. —RACHEL BERTSCHE



## ScreenGems Three new films worth standing in line for.

■ Like his two earlier films (*Amores perros* and *21 Grams*), Mexican-born director Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Babel*, a dark vision of globalism post-9/11, is no walk in the park. But it rewards viewers with a richly textured narrative; powerful acting from an ensemble cast that includes Cate Blanchett, **Brad Pitt (right)**, and Gael García Bernal; and an emotional catharsis that gives the film meaning beyond misery. ■ Emilio Estevez's *Bobby* (the former Brat Packer wrote and directed the movie) tackles the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy by focusing on

22 people who were at Los Angeles's Ambassador Hotel on the night he was shot. Though Hollywood insiders aren't so sure about Estevez's directing skills, we'll see the film for its irresistible material and impressive cast: Anthony Hopkins, Laurence Fishburne, William H. Macy, Helen Hunt, Joy Bryant, Elijah Wood, and Lindsay Lohan play characters whose lives converge one Wednesday in June 1968. ■ *Catch a Fire*, director Phillip Noyce's gripping new film about South African Patrick Chamusso, a reluctant hero of the antiapartheid movement, is packed with emotion and

suspense. Look for stellar performances from stunning Soutetan actress Bonnie Henna, Tim Robbins, and an

astonishingly convincing Derek Luke (especially because he's from New Jersey) as Chamusso. —REBECCA ROTHBAUM

