

# 15

## MOVIES

to

## FALL FOR

*Us* rounds up this season's reel appealing flicks, from superhero epics and holiday capers to lush period dramas

BY JAMIE BLYNN



### Justice League

NOVEMBER 17

» Even superheroes need backup. With the emergence of a new powerful enemy (the immortal, hand-to-hand combat expert Steppenwolf), Batman (Ben Affleck) and Wonder Woman (Gal Gadot) must enlist a team of metahumans — including Aquaman (Jason Momoa) and The Flash (Ezra Miller) — to save the world once more. Explains Gadot of the hotly anticipated comic book flick, "Some of the biggest icons in the whole DC universe come together to fight for the first time." The Israeli actress and Boston-born Affleck jump into action with *Us*.



**Q: How have your characters changed since we last saw them?**  
**GG** She's grown up — it's been a century, after all! She'll bring her specific qualities to a group dynamic, and she understands the enemy better than anyone else.  
**BA** In *Batman v Superman*, he was at the end of his rope. But in *Justice League* he's finding hope again. He has to open up and play well with others. He knows he needs them.



**Q: Ben, does Batman struggle to fit in?**  
**BA** He's sort of the ultimate loner, but he's really trying to make it work

and develop a good relationship with all of them. He might be a mentor to The Flash.

**Q: What's the dynamic between Batman and Wonder Woman?**

**GG** Since they've fought together, they know each other's strengths. They also understand the hope Superman stood for, that was lost [when he died], so they feel that more than the others.

**Q: Physically, how did you prep?**

**BA** It's all about paying attention to what you eat, lifting weights, cardio sessions. The batsuit is really form-fitting, so you have to prepare!

CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN: CLAY ENOS/DC COMICS; ION KOPALOFF/FILMAGIC; FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES



## A Bad Moms Christmas

NOVEMBER 3

Justin Hartley was feeling less than jolly. As a nearly naked Santa in the comedy's sequel, "I had to strip for Mila Kunis and Susan Sarandon," he recalls. "I was like, 'What the hell am I thinking?'" He bares more. **Q: Did you use a strict diet?** Not really. But you certainly don't want to be eating

Twinkies the morning before. Of course, the moment you do a scene like that is the moment you're craving one. **Q: Steal any inspiration from the stars of *Magic Mike*?** Those moves are all mine. I worked with this great dancer who taught me a few things and then I botched everything up and made it funny.



## Wonder

NOVEMBER 17

I knew this could inspire children to be kinder." That's why director Stephen Chbosky brought life to the bestseller about Auggie (Jacob Tremblay), a fifth-grader with a facial deformity, whose parents (Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson) enroll him in school. Roberts took her mom role to heart. Says Chbosky, "She invited her film family over and made meals."

## Only the Brave

OCTOBER 20

To prep for their roles as wildfire fighters, the cast of this drama (including Josh Brolin and Taylor Kitsch) were shipped to the woods for training. Two weeks later, says director Joseph Kosinski, "I was sent back 20 firefighters. It built a camaraderie you really feel in the film."



## Battle of the Sexes

SEPTEMBER 22

acing the gender-equality movement: The film shares the story of the 1973 tennis match between Billie Jean King (Emma Stone) and misogynistic fellow pro Bobby Riggs (Steve Carell). Directors Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris insisted the cast remain retro to their underwear ("Bras made people different, this was before plastic surgery," says Dayton) and find their stroke. Carell trained with Riggs' coach, while Stone scored lessons from King. "Emma had four months with her," says Faris. "She felt like a stalker."



## Professor Marston and the Wonder Women

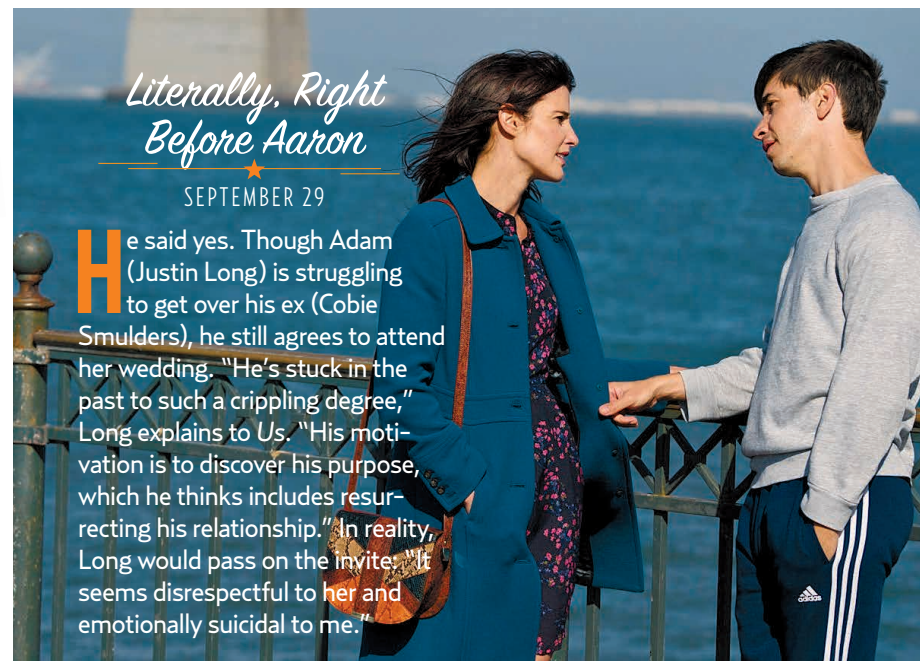
OCTOBER 13

In the true, 1940s-set film, the titular psychologist (Luke Evans) is inspired by his wife (Rebecca Hall) and their lover (Bella Heathcote) to create an Amazon princess. "He decided men are inherently violent and women should rule," says director Angela Robinson. "So he created Wonder Woman to make men and boys excited about a powerful woman."

## Literally, Right Before Aaron

SEPTEMBER 29

He said yes. Though Adam (Justin Long) is struggling to get over his ex (Cobie Smulders), he still agrees to attend her wedding. "He's stuck in the past to such a crippling degree," Long explains to *Us*. "His motivation is to discover his purpose, which he thinks includes resurrecting his relationship." In reality, Long would pass on the invite. "It seems disrespectful to her and emotionally suicidal to me."



## Flatliners

SEPTEMBER 29

ying still suits Nina Dobrev. In this reboot of the '90s sci-fi flick, she stars as one of five med students who decide to temporarily stop their hearts in an effort to experience the afterlife. Remaining still and breathless was a cinch to the star "because of all the shark diving I do," she tells *Us*. "I don't want to brag and say I was the best at holding my breath, but I was!"



## Suburbicon

OCTOBER 27

The George Clooney-directed film peers into 1950s racial tensions, but Noah Jupe says the mood on set was light. "George was always making jokes," says the Brit, 12, who plays Matt Damon and Julianne Moore's son Nicky. And between takes, he and Damon played catch. Though Nicky doesn't like his dad, says Jupe, "I love Matt."



THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: RICHARD FOREMAN, JR./LONSGATE; DALE ROBINETTE; HILARY BRONWYN GAYLE; MELINDA SUE GORDON; MICHAEL GIBSON; HILARY BRONWYN GAY; MICHAEL MORIARTIS; CLAIRE FOLGER/ANNAPURNA PICTURES



## Daddy's Home 2

NOVEMBER 10

**H**o, ho, hot mess. To perfect Christmas in this sequel, dad-stepdad duo Dusty and Brad (Mark Wahlberg, Will Ferrell) join forces — only to be torn apart by their own fathers (Mel Gibson, John Lithgow). The holiday stress is relatable, says Wahlberg's onscreen love Alessandra Ambrosio: "Something always goes wrong. I've had a Santa no-show!"



## Blade Runner 2049

OCTOBER 6

**T**hirty-five years after the sci-fi masterpiece depicted a dystopian L.A. (set in 2019!) the much-anticipated sequel — starring vet Harrison Ford and franchise newcomers Ryan Gosling and Jared Leto — predicts a new dark feature. But actress Ana de Armas insists there's no need to study up on the original. "This movie stands

alone," she tells *Us*. "It's about the future, which is something we all are about. We're all intrigued about what it promises — and threatens." Well, unless you're de Armas. "I'm focused on the day-to-day," says the star, who plays Gosling's best friend and lover in the film. "Hopefully we don't lose our minds on the way there."

## Murder on the Orient Express

NOVEMBER 10

**»** Tom Bateman didn't fit the part. As detective Poirot's friend Bouc in the adaption of Agatha Christie's whodunit, "I'm supposed to be 45 and French," notes the 28-year-old Brit. But director Kenneth Branagh made a case for Bateman. "He thought a young, British guy would be more interesting," adds the actor. "He said, 'Under no circumstances do I want to hear your French accent.'" Bateman speaks to *Us*.

**Q: Does the film stray from the book in other ways?**

Ken said he wasn't looking for a whodunit, but a why-dunit. So it's a look at why someone would commit murder and why people might be pushed to that length.

**Q: Ever get starstruck on set?**

It was a bit overwhelming at times — Willem Dafoe, Michelle Pfeiffer, Josh Gad and Judi Dench! But it was a joy. Penélope Cruz introduced us to this parlor game where someone was a killer and we had to work out who. We would do that on Friday nights to unwind. We felt like family.



## My Friend Dahmer

NOVEMBER 3

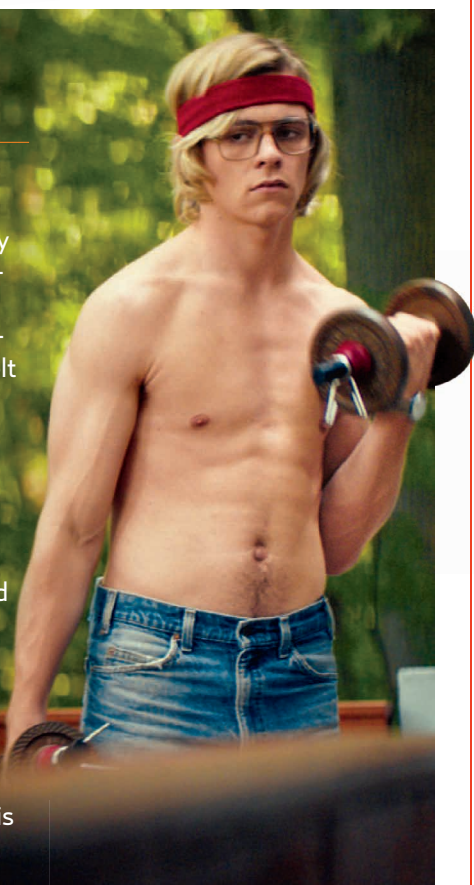
**»** To get in the headspace of notorious serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer, Ross Lynch sought isolation. In Ohio before filming, "I was alone, like Dahmer throughout his childhood," he says. "I felt a wide range of emotion." The Disney alum opens up to *Us*.

**Q: How did you master Dahmer's mannerisms?**

I watched a lot of videos to see how he walked, talked. Dahmer was tragically interesting. Behind closed doors, he was probably different. Everyone has levels.

**Q: Message for audiences?**

The most asked question is, are serial killers born this way or bred? This may raise flags so when people see someone who is hard to grasp, they'll try to help.



## The LEGO Ninjago Movie

SEPTEMBER 22

**E**very kid gets embarrassed by their parents. But Lloyd (Dave Franco), whose dad is an evil warlord (Justin Theroux) trying to conquer the city, has legit beef. "A big lesson Lloyd is trying to learn is to let go of things he can't control," says Olivia Munn, who voices his mom. "Thankfully he's got a loving mother. She encourages him." Still, she has to admit Theroux would kick butt as a ninja. Says the actress, "We've all seen his abs!"



## Stronger

SEPTEMBER 22

**H**e was ready to celebrate. In 2013, Jeff (Jake Gyllenhaal) was waiting for wife Erin (Tatiana Maslany) to cross the Boston Marathon finish line when a bomb claimed both his legs. Though he later helped identify one of the two suspects, a grueling rehab waited. "This story has a lot of hope in it," Maslany says of the drama, based on Jeff's titular memoir. "I related to that push-pull, that anything can happen even in the most loving relationships." While filming in Boston, she found inspiration in the 2016 runners. "I watched survivors cross the finish line against all odds," she recalls. "They are incredible human beings."