

Shelton
(in 2013) is
"superhappy,"
says a source.



BLAKE & GWEN

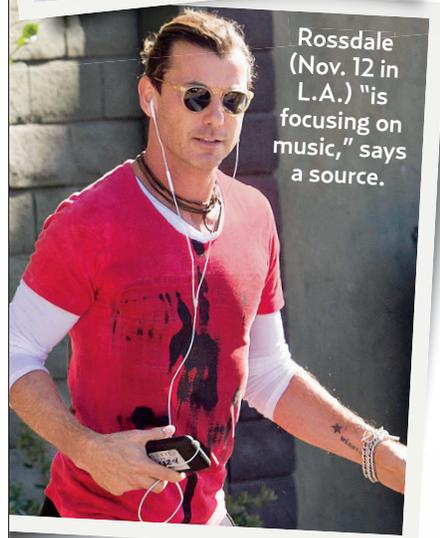
REVENGE

"Gwen is so comfortable with Blake," says a source of Stefani (Jan. 20).

Shelton and Stefani help each other move on from devastating splits — and show their exes what they're missing **BY SARAH GROSSBART**

Gwen Stefani isn't above groveling. After wrapping her first season as a coach on NBC's *The Voice* last December, she pleaded with execs to sign her up for another round. "I was, like, on my hands and knees, begging them to let me come back. 'Please, I want to do it again! Please!'" the three-time Grammy winner admitted to *Us* at a November 10 taping of the hit singing competition. Now settled back into her red rotating chair beside Adam Levine, Blake Shelton and Pharrell Williams, she's keeping the boys on their toes. "I'm really, really, really excited," she said. "I think, generally, in my life I'm really excited. I feel so grateful for everything!"

Especially Shelton. Since ending her 13-year marriage to Gavin Rossdale in August — six months after allegedly discovering the Bush frontman, 50, was having a multi-year affair with their sons' nanny Mindy Mann — the 46-year-old has found a kindred spirit in her fellow coach. The rugged, 6-foot-5 Oklahoma-born country king had been coping with his own sudden split from wife of



ROMANCE

From Flirty Friends to Flames in One Year

After a televised warm-up, the *Voice* mentors bring their relationship to a crescendo



NOVEMBER 2014

Two months after joining the show, she captions a pic with Shelton, "<3 him."



DECEMBER 2014

Stefani snaps a set shot of Shelton, who has gushed that she "is just an icon."

DECEMBER 2014

Behind-the-scenes hijinks! She calls the show "the funnest thing I've ever done."

four years Miranda Lambert, 32, after she refused to follow through on their plan to start a family, says a source. Shelton and the mom of Kingston, 9, Zuma, 7, and Apollo, 20 months, "have both been through horrible marriages and are bonding over that," explains a source close to Stefani. "The relationship is very new, but it's a lot of fun."

And should their ex-spouses catch sight of all that fun — or, say, read the November 4 statement Stefani's rep released to *Us* confirming their romance — that's a bonus. "Blake kind of wants to get back at Miranda," says a *Voice* insider. Stefani, who directed her team to release the statement hours before she and Shelton, 39, made their debut at a Country Music Association Awards bash, wouldn't mind delivering a little comeuppance of her own. "After everything Gavin has done," says a Stefani source, "she hopes he sees what he's missing." And who she's

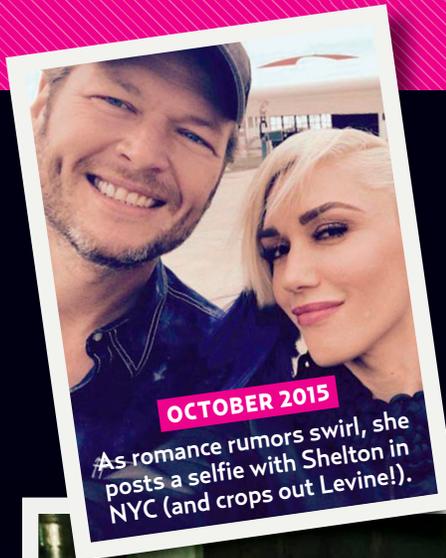
with: Shelton, a six-time Grammy nominee, has sold 7 million-plus records and racked up 17 No. 1 country singles. (As a solo artist, Rossdale has landed only one song — the 2008 ballad "Love Remains the Same" — in the Top 40.) Continues the source, "She's moved on with somebody better who is really good to her. Her being happy is the best revenge. And she deserves it."

▶ PUTTING ON A SHOW

Her euphoria is practically palpable on Monday and Tuesday nights. On *The Voice*'s live November 9 episode, she giggled as her new man (who she's dubbed "a pretty rad guy") sang her praises. During Stefani's playoff round with Levine, Shelton proclaimed his girlfriend the winner: "Team Gwen, overall, is whipping the crap out of Team Adam tonight," he crowed. "It makes me so happy!" (From across the room, Stefani shot him a coy grin.)

Shelton doesn't bother to hide his affection for the "Used to Love You" singer. As the five-time Country Music Association Male Vocalist of the Year declared to *Us* before the November 10 taping: "I'm pumped about having Gwen back."

At least one fan is enjoying watching their banter. While chatting with *Us* November 12 about Verizon's HopeLine campaign supporting domestic violence prevention, *Voice* coach Christina Aguilera — on hiatus for season 9 — said she approves of the coupling. "How could I not?" said the five-time Grammy winner. "I've known Gwen for a really long time, and Blake I know now from the show. And I know the two of them are both great people." As a fellow divorcée, Aguilera says she understands the pain of recovering from heartbreak. "I keep telling them both to stay strong and have fun," she told *Us*. "Divorce and life are hard enough! If you find



OCTOBER 2015

As romance rumors swirl, she posts a selfie with Shelton in NYC (and crops out Levine!).



NOVEMBER 2015

After confirming they're dating, the duo hold hands at a Warner Brothers CMA's bash.



DECEMBER 2014

The foursome (including Adam Levine and Pharrell Williams, right) bond. "I am such good friends with all the coaches," she has said.



OCTOBER 2015

Levine is a third wheel on Halloween (above). The couple also partied together at an Oct. 30 bash.

New-Relationship No-Nos

» "It's very common to rebound from a breakup with someone who has also recently ended a relationship," says L.A.-based couples therapist Rhonda Richards-Smith. "Fellow rebounders will likely be more understanding and supportive as they heal." She makes the love connection for *Us*.

DO

- **BE READY TO MOVE ON** "Without giving yourself time to fully process your previous relationship, you may replicate the same problems in your next partnership," she explains.
- **CHOOSE A PAL** If you already know your partner, "developing a closeness on a romantic level can happen effortlessly," adds the pro. "Friendship provides the perfect foundation to build upon."
- **KNOW YOURSELF** "Reassess your own relationship priorities and deal-breakers," she says. "These can change over time."

DON'T

- **MAKE COMPARISONS** "Trying to change your current partner into your previous significant other won't work," she advises. "You won't succeed if you expect them to be someone they're not."
- **GRIPE ABOUT YOUR EX** "Bonding over challenges of a previous relationship can spell trouble if you allow this to dominate conversations," she says.
- **MOVE TOO QUICKLY** Says Richards-Smith, "Take it slow and don't feel the need to rush into a serious, long-term commitment if you're not ready."

someone who makes you happy, you gotta go for it. So they deserve it and they deserve to be happy."

Stefani hopes Rossdale is tuning in too. Though a source says the No Doubt singer was "completely devastated" by Rossdale's betrayal, she wants him to know she's already bouncing back. "It's good for Gavin to see that he couldn't destroy her," explains the source. "Deep down I'm sure she wants him to regret treating her so badly. He threw away a good thing."

THE EX FACTOR

Those close to Rossdale say he's well aware of his mistakes. With Australia native Mann, "he knows he was in the wrong," claims a source close to Rossdale. He is also coming to terms with what one source calls "monogamy struggles" throughout the couple's two-decade relationship, including an eight-month dalliance with Courtney Love in

the '90s. Not to mention his trouble with truth-telling. Up until the moment a 2004 paternity test named him the father of his then 15-year-old goddaughter, model Daisy Lowe, a source says he insisted to Stefani that he never slept with her mom, Pearl. With all he's put Stefani through, says a Rossdale insider, he realizes he must be supportive of her decision to move on. "He thought it was a little weird that she announced the relationship," says a Rossdale insider, who adds that the exes communicate via text about the children. "But he knows he has no right to feel angry. She gave him many, many chances, so there's nothing he can say now."

As for Lambert, she's letting her social-media feed do the talking. In the days since the November 4 reveal, the country star has carefully cultivated her Instagram to create the image of a single girl reveling in her freedom (*see box, below*). On November 9, she posted snapshots of herself riding Sophie, a pony transformed into a unicorn with a fake horn and glitter paint. The next day — her 32nd birthday — she showed off a new double ear piercing. By November 11, she was revealing fresh ink: a faux tattoo of



A source says Rossdale (Nov. 15 in L.A.) replaced his wedding band with a ring from a friend.

Miranda's Wild Weekend

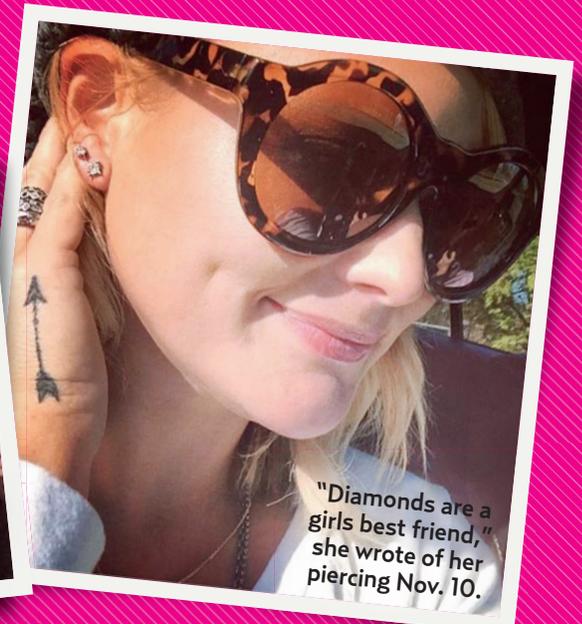
Smokin' and drinkin'! Lambert turned 32 November 10



"The morning after," she captioned a shot of a faux unicorn tattoo Nov. 11.



The singer called herself a "loser" while partying at Losers bar in Nashville Nov. 12.



"Diamonds are a girls best friend," she wrote of her piercing Nov. 10.



On Nov. 14, Mann strolled to a friend's car in L.A.

way so they could enjoy the night.”) Another insider says Lambert, who told the audience as she accepted her trophy that she needed a “bright spot,” appeared upset backstage: “She came out halfway through the show with a highball glass full of whiskey and looked like she had been crying.”

But a Lambert source insists she’s since dried her tears. “She doesn’t believe Blake cheated on her with Gwen and she really doesn’t care,” says the insider. “The marriage was really constraining for her. She wants to feel young and free again — she’s just glad to have her life back.”

HELLA GOOD

Shelton’s country attitude, however, blends seamlessly with Stefani’s rock ’n’ roll persona, says a source. “With Blake, it’s so easy for Gwen,” adds the insider. “They just hang out and talk and talk all the time — that’s mostly what they do. They bond over their work and the industry.” Their messy pasts are also a frequent topic of conversation. “Gwen’s confided in him about her marriage troubles and he’s been a shoulder she can cry on, so to speak,” says an insider of Shelton, who visited Stefani at her six-bedroom Beverly Hills home November 9. “He’s a very nurturing, supportive guy anyway, so she found a good one.” The other men in Stefani’s life agree. The Shelton insider says the jokester has hung with Kingston, Zuma and Apollo on the NBC set. Says the Stefani source, “The kids think Blake is cool. Everyone is all for it.”

But music’s newest power couple are content to keep their romance at a slow tempo. “Who knows if it will last,” notes the source. “But it’s good for both of them right now.” Particularly Stefani. “Gwen needs something easy and fun after years of living through hell with Gavin,” says the source. “If this is a rebound, then good for her. She’s living in the moment and enjoying it!”



a unicorn. But her celebration that night at Nashville dive bar Losers was very real. Posting a photo from the outing, Lambert cheekily wrote, “I’m a loser baby.”

She may have been going for a pun, but a source says the country queen hasn’t exactly been feeling her best. The timing of Stefani and Shelton’s relationship admission — mere hours before her yearly victory lap at the CMAAs, where she collected her sixth straight Female Vocalist of the Year honors — stung. “She was annoyed at how they announced it and when,” admits a Lambert source, “because it was on her big night.” (A Stefani source counters that she wanted to get in front of press speculation: “They got it out of the



Vince Vaughn & Jennifer Aniston

“He literally brought me back to life,” Aniston said of dating the *Wedding Crashers* actor after her 2005 divorce from Brad Pitt. Even so, the *Break-Up* costars’ union died in 2006.

HISTORIC REBOUNDS

Mr. Right Now doesn’t always stick around. Take it from these couples



John Mayer & Katy Perry

Admitting she was “depressed” after her bitter 2011 divorce from Russell Brand, the “Roar” singer sought laughs with Mayer. They began dating on and off in August 2012 — and parted three years later.



Jake Gyllenhaal & Reese Witherspoon

After filming 2007’s thriller *Rendition*, Witherspoon (who had just split from husband Ryan Phillippe) and Gyllenhaal dated for two years. Later, the mom of three said she was focused on “just trying to feel better.”