



CAREER MOVES

From erotic dramas to chilly thrillers, what's next for Lauren Lee Smith?

**N**ude scenes can be a little daunting for actresses, but Lauren Lee Smith couldn't wait to get naked for her art. After landing her breakout role in the sci-fi series *Mutant X*, the Vancouver native hungered for riskier celluloid adventures. First came Clément Virgo's 2005 high-toned erotic drama *Lie With Me*; then came the first few seasons of Showtime's *The L Word* in which she played a sexy chef. "When I took on these roles, it wasn't just about being naked; it was about being naked emotionally," explains Smith.

Smith is back on the big screen this February, playing a pathologist in the medical thriller *Pathology*. Smith and her onscreen colleagues—including *Heroes* hunk Milo Ventimiglia—are involved in a deadly

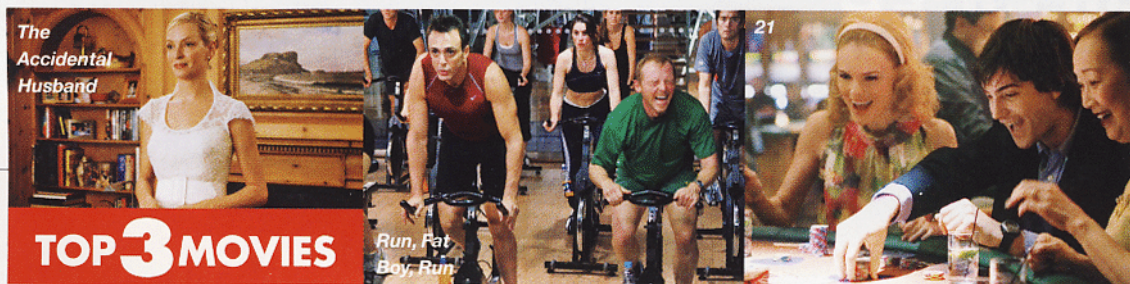
game to see who can commit the perfect undetectable murder.

To prepare, Smith hung out at the L.A. County morgue. "We watched a lot of autopsies," she says. "Beforehand, I thought, 'Oh, that's awesome! I'm not squeamish!' And then we got there and it was decay and dead bodies. But the pathologists think it's no big deal. They make jokes and even eat snacks in there!"

Moving away from horror but sticking to medical themes, Smith landed a lead role in *Helen*, a film about depression co-starring Ashley Judd. In the film, Smith plays a bipolar cellist. "It was an important role for me to play," says Smith. "I've had to deal with mental illness in friends and family—it affects everyone."

Adding to her gloomy cinematic lineup this year is the tongue-in-cheek horror movie *Trick 'r Treat* and the revenge flick *Late Fragment*, out on DVD this spring. Billed as the first North American dramatic "interactive" film, viewers can decide which story line they wish to follow by clicking their remote. The movie follows the intertwined stories of three people—a mother, a security guard and Smith's character's stripper boyfriend—who were betrayed in the past and are seeking justice. Smith's character, Lea, eggs her boyfriend on to exact bloody justice. "I'm a revenge enabler!" says Smith, laughing.

And after earning all this dramatic cred, what does Smith want to tackle next? "I'd like to do a comedy," she says. "I can actually laugh!" **BRIONY SMITH**



TOP 3 MOVIES

- **Uma Thurman** gets to show off her slapstick moves in *The Accidental Husband*. As a radio talk-show host nicknamed the "Doctor of Love," she gets into trouble after advising a listener to ditch her boyfriend, a hunky firefighter (**Jeffrey Dean Morgan**). Needless to say, the boyfriend is none too pleased. Determined to exact revenge, he messes with the love doc's own wedding plans. (**Colin Firth** plays her uptight fiancé with hilarious zeal.)
- Set in London, *Run, Fat Boy, Run* is the story of an out-of-shape loser (**Simon Pegg**) who signs up for a marathon to win back the woman (**Thandie Newton**) he stood up at the altar. **David Schwimmer** must have felt right at home directing a character who endures romantic miscalculations to rival his geeky TV alter ego.
- In *21*, a story inspired by real-life events, **Kevin Spacey** plays a charismatic gaming expert who trains a group of MIT students (among them, **Jim Sturgess** and **Kate Bosworth**) in the blackjack strategy of card counting. At first, they just want to win enough to pay tuition. But once they experience the rush of Vegas, it's hard to turn back. **EGLE PROCUTA**

movies