

GOLD WATCH

Will Jennifer Beat Jessica?

She bragged "I beat Meryl!" at the Golden Globes and dissed her rivals on SNL. Glib quips aside, Jennifer Lawrence, 22, remains the favorite to nab best actress for her *Silver Linings Playbook* widow. "She's likable and campaigned hugely," says *Awards Daily's* Sasha Stone. Chief challenger: Jessica Chastain, 35, whose CIA agent tracks Osama bin Laden in *Zero Dark Thirty*. Still, adds Stone, "the torture bits cast a pall over the film."



Chastain got a best supporting actress nod in 2012 for *The Help*.

Lawrence would be the second-youngest best actress winner.



Oscar Night's Burning Questions

Yes, Daniel Day-Lewis will win. But the evening still holds many mysteries. *Us* offers a preview

BY BRADLEY JACOBS

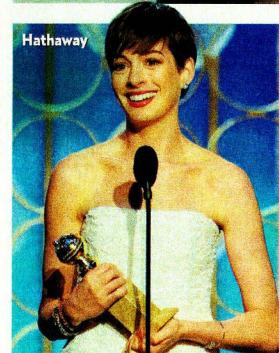
TUNE IN!
The Oscars air on ABC Sunday, Feb. 24, at 7 P.M.



How Did *Argo* Become the Front-runner?

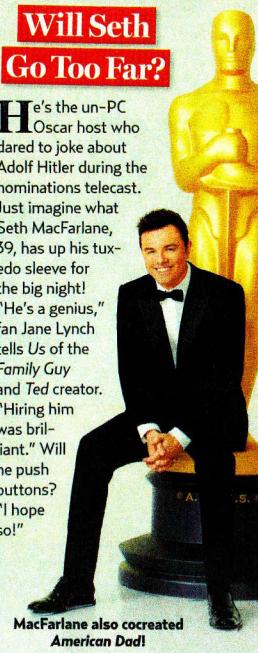
The Academy is about to apologize to Ben Affleck. Big time. *Lincoln* was an early front-runner for best pic, but the race decidedly shifted when Affleck, 40, missed out on a best

director nod. "Everyone's rallied to his side in outrage," *GoldDerby.com* founder Tom O'Neil tells *Us*. "When Ben finally has that [best picture] Oscar in hand, he'll take a swing with it!"



Is Anne Unstoppable?

Anne Hathaway and James Franco crashed as cohosts in 2011. But thanks to her searing "I Dreamed a Dream" in *Les Misérables*, the star, 30, now only hears applause. Will she win best supporting actress? Yep. Will her speech ramble again? "No excuses," says *Us* film critic Mara Reinstein. "She has had months to rehearse."



Will Seth Go Too Far?

He's the un-PC Oscar host who dared to joke about Adolf Hitler during the nominations telecast. Just imagine what Seth MacFarlane, 39, has up his tuxedo sleeve for the big night! "He's a genius," fan Jane Lynch tells *Us* of the *Family Guy* and *Ted* creator. "Hiring him was brilliant." Will he push buttons? "I hope so!"

MacFarlane also co-created *American Dad!*

WHAT IS YOUR BEST PICTURE PICK?

Readers weighed in on *Us*' Facebook page (facebook.com/usweekly)

29%
ARGO

19%
SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK

16%
LINCOLN

15%
LES MISÉRABLES

12%
DJANGO UNCHAINED

4%
ZERO DARK THIRTY

3%
LIFE OF PI

2%
BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD

0%
AMOUR