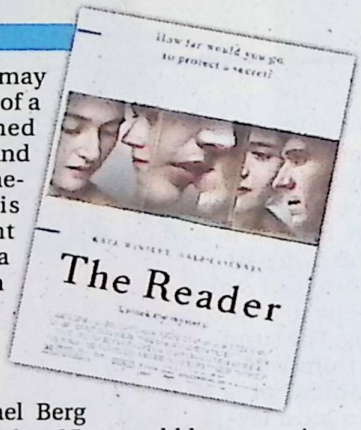
# Oscar Fever

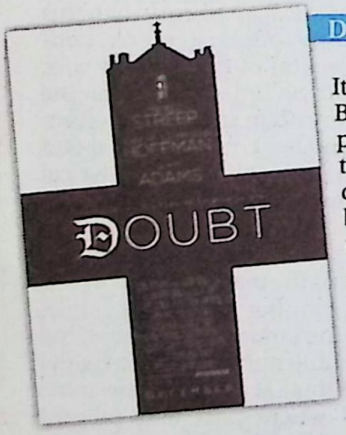
This weak we take a peak at the movies that wreaked havoc at the Oscars, this year.

## The Reader



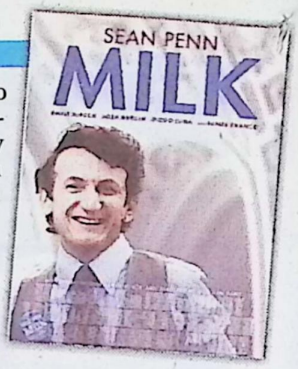

Though THE READER may boast the typical pedigree of a Holocaust film--acclaimed actors, a literary source, and an Oscar-baiting end-of-the-year release date--this drama has a significant difference: it focuses on a perpetrator, rather than the victims. Kate Winslet takes on the hefty supporting role of Hanna Schmitz, a woman who has an affair with Michael Berg (German actor David Kross), a 15-year-old boy in 1950s Germany. They spend their brief romance alternately making love and focusing on literature, with Michael reading everything from Chekov to Homer to his lover. Soon, Hanna abruptly disappears, and Michael returns to his normal life. Almost a decade later, Michael is studying law, when he sees Hanna again; she is on trial for her crimes as an S.S. guard during the war. Michael is torn between a desire for justice and his knowledge of a secret that may save Hanna.

## Doubt




It's 1964, at St. Nicholas in the Bronx, a vibrant, charismatic priest, Father Flynn, is trying to upend the schools' strict customs, which have long been fiercely guarded by Sister Aloysius Beauvier (Academy Award® winner Meryl Streep), the iron-gloved Principal who believes in the power of fear and discipline. The winds of political change are sweeping through the community, and indeed, the school has just accepted its first black student, Donald Miller. But when Sister, a hopeful innocent, shares with Sister Aloysius her guilt-inducing suspicion that Father Flynn is paying too much personal attention to Donald, Sister Aloysius sets off on a personal crusade to unearth the truth and to expunge Flynn from the school. Now, without a shard of proof besides her moral certainty, Sister Aloysius locks into a battle of wills with Father Flynn, which threatens to tear apart the community with irrevocable consequence.

## Milk




In 1977, Harvey Milk was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, becoming the first openly gay man to be voted into public office in America. His victory was not just a victory for gay rights; he forged coalitions across the political spectrum. From senior citizens to union workers, Harvey Milk changed the very nature of what it means to be a fighter for human rights and became, before his untimely death in 1978, a hero for all Americans. Sean Penn stars as Harvey Milk under the direction of Gus Van Sant in Milk, filmed on location in San Francisco from an original screenplay by Dustin Lance Black, produced by Dan Jinks and Bruce Cohen. Milk charts the last eight years of Harvey Milk's life.

## The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

At once epic in scope and intimate in detail, David Fincher's THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON is certainly the director's most emotional film to date (though FIGHT CLUB and SEVEN don't offer much in the way of competition). Loosely based on an F. Scott Fitzgerald story, this romantic drama tells the tale of Benjamin Button (Brad Pitt), born in 1918 in New Orleans as a baby with wrinkles, cataracts, and arthritis. Benjamin will age backwards, getting younger as he watches those around him growing older. Included in that group are his adoptive mother, Queenie (Taraji P. Henson), and Daisy (Cate Blanchett), the love of his life whom he meets when she is just a little girl and he is an old man.

## Slumdog Millionaire




British director Danny Boyle takes another intriguing career turn with this heartfelt underdog tale. Jamal Malik (Dev Patel) is a street kid (or "slumdog") who has landed an appearance on India's version of the hit TV game show WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? Jamal exceeds expectations on the show, and the producers alert the police after they become suspicious of his methods. The young contestant is subsequently arrested and is interrogated at the hands of a nameless police inspector (played by Bollywood star Irfan Khan). As the interrogation proceeds, Boyle tells Jamal's story through harrowing flashbacks that both show the terrible poverty of Mumbai and help explain how he knew the answers to the MILLIONAIRE questions. SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE is a tightly woven story that has been expertly edited into shape. The contrast between Jamal's upbringing and his chance of escaping it on the show are adeptly juxtaposed. Mumbai is portrayed as a place of terrifying poverty and unforgettable brutality, and Jamal and his brother get into a never-ending succession of challenging situations.

Source: Rotten Tomatoes