



WITHOUT THE **BAD,** HOW CAN YOU **FEEL SO GOOD?**

GWEN STEFANI



ALL IN THE FAMILY

Gwen and Gavin celebrated Father's Day last June with their sons, Kingston, 9, Zuma, 7, and Apollo, 2. By August, they'd announced their split. "I feel so protective over them," Gwen says of her boys. "I don't talk about them too much because I don't want them to be 15 and say, 'Mom, why did you say that?' But I'm blessed to have them. I'm just trying to hold on to as much as I can because it goes so quickly."

AMID A TRAUMATIC YEAR, NEW MUSIC – AND A NEW LOVE – TURNED THE SINGER'S LIFE AROUND

Last June, when **Gwen Stefani** started writing the songs on her new solo album, *This Is What the Truth Feels Like*, she was carrying a heartbreaking secret: She and **Gavin Rossdale**, 50, would soon announce the end of their 13-year marriage, followed by reports that he'd cheated with the family's nanny. "When you hit rock bottom, it makes you turn inward," says Gwen, 46. "The only place where I felt like I was not going to die was in the studio." She poured her feelings into a stunningly productive period of recording and says she emerged happier and more confident. Of course, falling in love with her fellow coach on *The Voice*, **Blake Shelton**, 39, didn't hurt.

Many artists find their creativity gets sparked by a breakup. Would you say that's true of you?

Well, it has in the past. I feel I need to draw from real life, and last year,

when my life kind of fell apart, I got to a point where I was, like, I don't want to go down like this. I feel like I didn't do anything wrong, why am I [letting this] ruin my life? So I went to the studio, and it was crazy, because I was so insecure about songwriting before. But it felt so right and so good, and I just couldn't stop after that. It was like drugs; I had to go back. The team around me, they lifted me up – and they didn't even know what I was going through.

On "Make Me Like You," which you've said is about Blake, you sound like you're 17 again. What were you feeling when you wrote that song?

I felt like I was 17! It's funny, you don't know what's around the corner. And when things are so bad, you need to be kind of grateful, because without the bad, how can you feel so good? When I went back to *The Voice*, and there was somebody there that was going through exactly the same thing

at the same time [Blake and wife **Miranda Lambert** split last July] – it just saved me.

That's what you say in "Truth," when you sing, "Thank you for saving me." Is that how you feel about Blake?

I don't want to go too much into all those details. But everyone knows that I found love, you know?

Are you now the happiest you've been in a long time?

Well, it's only been a year, and there are still pieces to be picked up. I'm still transitioning, trying to understand what happened and how it could happen. Like, my parents have been married since high school, and it's hard to understand that my dreams were so broken. So there's still all of that. I guess I've been trying to live in the moment. But I've been very blessed to be able to put my pain, and my joy, into this record. It really is a true miracle. **OK!**

A FINE ROMANCE



1 "I had no idea *The Voice* would give me so much," says Gwen (in fall 2014 with Adam Levine, Pharrell Williams and Blake).



2 This photo, taken in Nashville on Nov. 5, 2015, confirmed rumors that Gwen and Blake had become a couple.



3 He took her to Arizona to see his beloved Cardinals play football in late December.



4 They shared a seat and packed on the PDA at a pre-Grammys event in L.A. on Feb. 14.



5 The happy couple reaffirmed their red-hot romance at the *Vanity Fair* Oscars party on Feb. 28.