

Mr. & Mrs. Smith. Directed by Doug Liman. Starring Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie... some other people, too, I think, but who cares?

Mr. & Mrs. movies: *Mr. Holland's Opus* (Richard Dreyfus); *Mr. Hobbs Takes a Vacation* (Jimmy Stewart); *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (Gary Cooper); *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House* (Cary Grant); *Mr. Mom* (Michael Keaton); *Mr. Baseball* (Tom Selleck); *Mr. Lucky* (Cary Grant); *Mr. Majestyk* (Charles Bronson); *Mister Roberts* (Henry Fonda); *Mrs. Doubtfire* (Robin Williams); *Mrs. Miniver* (Myrna Loy); *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Joanne Woodward); *Mission Impossible* (Tom Cruise); *The Missfits* (Marilyn Monroe); *Gorillas in the Mist* (Sigourney Weaver); *Mystery Alaska* (Russell Crowe); *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*... oopsy daisy... already was one of them: Alfred Hitchcock, actually, with Robert Montgomery and Carole Lombard.

Soooo... this would be a remake? A retake? A refake? A rejake? ... on account of it's a jake-leg confection of *War of the Roses*, *Kill Bill*, and *Kramer vs Kramer*? We get the title and not much else. Where the oh-ri-gin-al *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* (all the "Mr. & Mrs." flicks use the ampersand, by the bye... and no, I dunno why except that the ampersand we now use was the emblem on the belt buckle of the Roman legionnaires only upside down and backwards and in the shape of an imperial eagle not an ampersand... but that's another story) was just about, well... Mister and Missus Smith (sense of "every one," "any of us"), a couple whose marriage comes unglued and who labor, not always eagerly, to restick it together. In this *Mr. & Mrs.*, the "Smith" is clearly an alias (sense of "no one," "none of us"), expediently if not imaginatively assumed by both parties to a clueless marriage, soon a passionless marriage... I pause here to identify this film as Science Fiction: you'll find it easier to believe that flockin' aliens with big heads and spandex suits whurffle down to earth to lurch around in three-footied space dinguses then when high performance aircrafts and a bazillion guardsmen all firing pathetic little M-16's can't stop them, succumb to, oh, say... the measles (just like the Incas... that Spielberg has *such* a social conscience!) than you will to believe that your passion for an Angelina Jolie would abate or for a Brad Pitt would ebb and that you'd be moodily stirring your *ziti con formaggio* around the plate with a fork when you could jump across the table and umph umph and then umphety umph till somebody's eyes bug out and then umph umphety umph, at last to fall back gasping spasmodically, swaddled in shreds of perspiration-sodden tablecloth among the crunched breadsticks, bent flatware, and shards of Noritake in a puddle of Zinfandel languorously congeali... uh, sorry. I suppose it's to console us misshapen, overweight, untaut dumbos out here in screenland that even the glossy people have their problems (sagging, evidently, isn't among them, but...) and that it's heart-wrenching to be dewy, chewy, sinewy. Yeah? ...and my butt is butter, as the French say. And no, I dunno *why* the French say that.

Despite the "bright" stars (Jolie, Pitt... and they *are* bright, no doubt about it, especially that Jolie woman, who's got a *moue*—a *big* one—you could strike a match on, though I dunno why Pitt affects this dueling banjoes haircut since *Ocean's Eleven*, siren call of "ac-toor": appearing on screen hair groomed and chin shaven would be like admitting he's a pretty boy—he *is* a pretty boy—not a heavy hitter disheveled James Dean timber alienee. Anyhow...), you'll have to pack this one into the "dark" vision category with

its lovable killers (*Grosse Pointe Blanke*, *The Big Hit*, *Whole Nine Yards*, *Prizzi's Honor*), tee-hee blood-spattering (peddled by the Rating Board as “cartoon violence”) and cryptic indictment of um, er... *us* with our pathetic domestic illusions! The film is about marriage, communication, growth... you know, Oprah stuff: we don't really know that partner, who she is, where he's from, what's on his mind, what she wants, and on and on just like John Smith and Jane Smith, two hit persons each ignorant of the other's occupation and married on the fly, now flying apart and—the science fiction—not engaging in Ess Eee Ex, either. They've tumbled into the suburban *train-train* with its pesto (like *pasta*, I think, except with different vowels) and wine, its mini-vans and Beemers, its soundless, soulless residential... behind whose doors somber secrets lurk! As result of a botched hit for his nondescript—that is non-described—government assassination agency, John gets targeted by the ace trigger person of their competition, who—quel coinky-dinky!—is the *missus*! Chases, shootups, crashes, explosions, destruction of a Wal-Mart ensue... all pretty ordinary (for the screen), punctuated by flashback/comic relief marital counseling sessions that are funny enough—almost—to justify the price of admission (assuming, of course, that the ululating, undulating, ungulating Ms. Jolie isn't...). Annnnd... *do not* miss the last three seconds of the film. Trust me.