

The Forty Year Old Virgin (no hyphens). Directed by Judd Apatow (and written by him). Starring Steve Carell (and written by *him*) annnnnnnnd... who?

Sweet. Lovable. Innocent. Personally, I'd hoped to make it all the way to Arlington Cemetery without seeing any of the above applied to me (for what it's worth, looks as if I'm on track, too...). Hymns to virginity surface now and again, of course: Who is it...Brunhilda? double-teamed and undone by (invisible) sex (think that may be what happened to me at the prom, actually). Enkidu "tamed" by the painted woman, Velveeta, in *Gilgamesh*. Brooke Shields' (French major from Princeton, by the bye) delivers herself of oracular utterance about the "precious treasure of her virginity," (delivered of that, too, evidently) which if that didn't engorge any other organs out there among us at least gave the gag reflex a workout. We're peddling abstinence again. So here's a virgin flick. Unhappily, despite any number of honest but half-hearted encomia to don't-do-it-tude and save-it-for-marriage-osity, we spend the whole time rooting for this guy—dud stud ("Way back in nineteen fifty-six...Tol' you that I was a flop with chicks..." Fats Domino)—to unvirginate himself, guyify himself and join us, the unclean, the unholy, the undone. And a cheer the audience lets out, too, when it happens and the poor schlub nails the object of the exercise, who's no virgin her own self, so it's okay I guess (oops... didn't mean to ruin it for you... or *her*). And predictably, before anybody gets deflowered (or *redeflowered* in the case of our used lily), we get to watch the ritual humiliation of the poor dumbo (us) same way it happened at the prom and in the dorm room and at the singles bar and at Luv.com and in the back seat of the Pinto and in the restaurant where we asked little Suzie waitperson in the tight jeans for a date and she dumped a pot of nacho cheese in our lap.

You could write the plot. And likely the dialogue, too... well, actually, you oughta ask little Melissa, the potty mouf^o, for guidance. There's some *reaaaaaaally* raunchy repartee in this thing, so if you were thinking of dragging nana and the pastor to a, like, virgin flick, might wanna hold off. Reaaaaaaally raunchy. And that's a career infantryman talking, too. Anyhow, Andy Spitzer (Carell), adorable wimp at *Circuit City* (or something) hasn't done it, fact that his three idiot buds (a bald black guy with one of those sissy Mark McGuire beardlets; a fat, pasty, unkempt white guy with all the funny lines; another white guy) soon unearth and set about um, er... *remediating*. Follows a batch of assortedly droll scenes where we un-wimp Andy. We treat him, for instance and for some reason, to an exfoliating though I'da thought hairlessness sign of weenie and body hair sign of guy guy but maybe it's *where* you sprout the *hair* that count and I'll get back to you on this one; it's during the depilating scene, by the way, that we get an earful of the m-word, the c-word, the s-word, the f-word (that's, of course, "marmalade," "cormorant," "susurrantion," and "funicular") only it's, like, okay, *yuckable* the first time the Koh-rean depilatrix yanks off the wax thingie and he howls his pain, outrage in obscenities, maybe *funny* the second time, possibly *amusing* the fourth time, *titterable* the fifth, and just plain old *insulting* the next five times. Same might be said for the homosexual joke session (no kidding), which after the first eighteen "You might be one of them if..." wears out even the most ardent -phobe (and likely won't not amuse the -philes, neither).

Well, then, natch, we run Andy through a series of mis-matches with implausible young women. Predictable bits turning on contraceptive devices, toilet sex, personal hygiene, clumsiness, humiliation, despair... you know, all the real laughs in a fella's life. Happily, though, despite the maladroit efforts his buds subject him to—well-intended, we're asked to believe, as mortification bursts upon mortification into the poor little schmuck's circumscribed world of silence and solitude—in course, Andy finds a girl of his own, right across the street in some kind of e-sales business now that she's dee-vorced: sweet, gorgeous, brainy high cheekbones, pouty lips, tight jeans entrepreneuse... easy to see why some guy wanted shut of *her*... With this and that and after an appalling *contretemps* (a lot like “waste of time,” but—you know—classy!), we break—so to speak—the spell—so to speak—and it's done: virtue is served as virtue is swerved. “Uxoriousness,” sniffed Matthew Arnold or Cardinal Newman or one of them, leads to the Fall of Man. Rocky, though, knew the real secret: “Women weaken legs.”