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Two low-class comedies generate big laughs

New on video: *There's Something About Mary* and *Mafia!*

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The reigning kings of fart jokes are back. Peter and Bobby Farrelly, better known as the Farrelly Brothers, the masterminds behind *Kingpin* and *Dumb and Dumber*, just released their newest gross-out flick *There's Something About Mary* on video.

Cameron Diaz (*My Best Friend's Wedding*) plays energetic Mary Jenson, the object of practically every man's affection, especially Ted Strohmann (Ben Stiller, *Reality Bites*.) With a mouthful of braces and a geeky group of friends, Ted is not exactly the most popular kid in high school.

Mary is new in town and Ted happens to score a date with her to the prom. Because of a freak zipper accident, Ted and Mary don't go to the dance, and they lose touch when she moves away to go to college.

Fast-forward about 15 years and we find Ted to be no longer a nerd, yet still pining for Mary. He hires slimy Pat Healy (Matt Dillon, *In and*

Out) to find Mary and see if she is still available.

Healy soon finds out that Mary is every man's dream woman--she's thin, tall, gorgeous, blond, successful, plays golf and watches *Sportscenter*--and he decides to make a move on her himself. He spies on Mary to find out what she considers the perfect man, and then he shamelessly tries to become that man. Fortunately, Ted also pursues Mary and the two finally have a reunion.

This is lowbrow humor at its booger-flicking finest. It's silly and unsophisticated, and at times, completely disgusting. This is also one of the few movies that keeps you watching after the credits roll, because of a cute music video. Stiller, Diaz, and Dillon give great comedic performances and the supporting roles are all equally entertaining.

Like *Dumb and Dumber*, *There's Something About Mary* relies heavily on the hope that audiences will laugh at bodily functions. The Farrelly Brothers have obviously figured out a formula that works: great physical



comedy + nasty human secretions + good-looking actresses = \$\$\$\$.

Another new release from one of the gods of parody movies, Jim Abrahams, is *Mafia!* Starring Jay Mohr (*Picture Perfect*), Christina Applegate (*Married With Children*) and Lloyd Bridges in his final role, this movie spoofs the genre of Italian gangster flicks, mainly *Casino* and *The Godfather*. Other targets include *Forrest Gump*, *Child's Play*, *Jurassic Park* and *The English Patient*.

Bridges plays Vincenzo Cortino, a send-up of Marlon Brando's Don Corleone. Mohr plays his son, Anthony, who is a combination of Al Pacino in *The Godfather* and Robert De Niro in *Casino*.

Like all parody movies, the jokes in *Mafia!* are best appreciated if you've seen all the movies that are being made fun of. The little details and hardly noticeable sight gags, such as funny signs in the backgrounds of scenes, are what make parody movies so great.

You have to pay close attention to get all the jokes, and sometimes have to watch them two or three times to absorb everything.

Mafia! does a good job of thoroughly raking gangster movies over the coals, and if you don't laugh at the fakest barfing scene in history at Don Cortino's funeral, then there is seriously something wrong with you. One more thing—watch the credits closely after *Mafia!* and after most spoof movies; they are hilarious.

Clip-and-rent: If you liked *Mafia!* and *Mary*, then you might like...

Spoofs and silly flicks

- *Naked Gun* series
- *Airplane!*
- *Hot Shots!*
- *The Kentucky Fried Movie*
- Any Monty Python flick
- *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*

- *History of the World—Part 1*
- *Top Secret*
- Any National Lampoon movie
- *Young Frankenstein*
- *Blazing Saddles*
- *Spaceballs*

Cameron Diaz

- *The Mask*
- *Feeling Minnesota*
- *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*
- *My Best Friend's Wedding*
- *A Life Less Ordinary*
- *She's the One*

Ben Stiller

- *Reality Bites*
- *The Cable Guy*
- *Stella*
- *Empire of the Sun*
- *If Lucy Fell*
- *Flirting With Disaster*

Matt Dillon

- *The Outsiders*
- *Singles*
- *To Die For*
- *In and Out*
- *Wild Things*
- *Drugstore Cowboy*
- *Beautiful Girls*

She's All That proves to be all that

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Okay, so it's hard enough to forget what it was like to be in high school. Whether you were the studly quarterback dating the head cheerleader or the wallflower who remained virtually unknown, everyone recognizes these stereotypical identities as part of the grand high school scheme. And *She's All That* takes us back to those days, however long ago they were.

Starring Freddie Prinze Jr. as Zack, the "big man on campus" and Rachel Leigh Cook as Laney, the artistic, sometimes outspoken "nerd," the story unfolds when Zack is dumped harshly by his oh-so-snobish, utterly clueless girlfriend (Jodi Lyn O'Keefe). His friends make a bet with Prinze that he won't

be able to replace his girlfriend, who is a definite prom-queen shoe-in, with a geeky counterpart. Laney Boggs, one of the school's nerdy artists, is chosen as the target of Zack's attempt to bring popularity to any random girl simply by using his own popularity.

The result is one that is predictable but entertaining at the same time: once Zack gets to know Laney, he realizes that he can have feelings for more than just his bimbo girlfriend and that there is more to a person than what she looks like. Laney then falls for Zack, until she realizes that his affection was based on a bet. Through a series of mini-dramas that mirror the lives of ordinary high-schoolers (like the catastrophe of having to decide who to take to prom), the inevitable happens.

She's All That doesn't have

any outstanding scenes that will enlighten of its viewers and raise social awareness, but it does have a fun plot and plenty of yummy eye candy for both guys and girls. There is also a cameo appearance by Matthew Lillard ("Scream") that is well worth paying \$4 for, or even \$7 at a later show.

As viewers, you are likely to leave this movie with a good feeling that there is hope for all those high school nerds who haven't had their fifteen minutes of fame, and that maybe one day you'll catch the eye of that untouchable someone. In the very least, you'll reminisce about the "good ol' days," way back when how you dressed and who you hung out with was all that mattered.

However, one thing is for sure: you'll definitely walk away with a greater appreciation for college life.

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