

# Making a Big deal about 'Sex'

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COPQUIN  
*Special to The Times*

Much like "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" of the 1970s, which chronicled a fictional single, career woman navigating love, friendship and fulfillment, its contemporary counterpart, "Sex and the City," has utterly influenced a cross-generation of women. Sure, its idealized narrative requires a gargantuan suspension of disbelief (leading gal Carrie Bradshaw, a New York City-based freelance writer, can, for instance, fund a \$40,000 designer shoe collection and a closet of haute couture), but we are rooting for Carrie. We want her to make it after all.

So among devotees, there's been a frenzy of speculation pertaining to the coming feature film, adapted from the series that aired on HBO from 1998 to 2004. The finale left fans presuming that Carrie's future would be neatly tied in a knot, and it appears that much of the movie's story line does indeed revolve around a walk down the aisle. "Get Carried Away" is the film's teaser tag line. And the trailer features glimpses of Carrie in full bridal regalia. Now, we won't know until the release May 30, of course, but a second trailer also hints that a ball-gowned Carrie could be left stranded at the altar. Due to a change of heart? A heart attack? Whatever, but if that's the case, I for one will nod in wholehearted approval — that union would be a Big mistake.

But let's rewind to the last episode four years ago. After six years of serially bouncing from one imprudent liaison to another, Carrie had become romantically entangled with another Mr. Amiss, this time also erroneously relocating with him to Paris. In the end, we found her defecting from her narcissist Russian lover and right into the arms of her on-off/on-off American paramour known only as Big, who'd sprinted abroad just in time to sweep her off her Jimmy Choos.

"It took me a really long time to get here," he stiffly admitted, "but I'm here. Carrie, you're the one." And with that, she breathlessly asked to be taken home — a cleverly devised Hollywood ending, with the remainder left to the

viewer's own fancy.

But show business being what it is, a big-screen adaptation became an irresistible proposition. Now, I'm all for marriage and for Carrie to find fulfillment with the man of her dreams. But not with Big. He's not the one.

Though charismatic and successful, Big was also a cad. Self-centered, emotionally detached and commitment-phobic, he was a chronic disappointment. Among his more serious foibles: He cheated on his first wife. When with Carrie, he dated other women behind her back and refused to introduce her to his mother. Then he moved overseas without a thought to their relationship, returning to New York engaged to a vapid model, whom he married, only to initiate an illicit affair with Carrie months later, thereby destroying her singular healthy relationship (with enlightened Aidan).

In Season 4, a divorced Big unexpectedly moved away again — to California — leaving Carrie a corny recording of "Moon River" to ease her loneliness. It wasn't until the last season and Carrie was again in the throes of a serious relationship (with the elder, moody artist Aleksandr Petrovsky) that Big reappeared to claim her.

At this point, Carrie, of course, desperately needs an intermission; a Big time out for reflection. So if I had written the screenplay, we'd open with a close-up of a post-Paris Carrie, back at her apartment. Gazing thoughtfully at her laptop, her voice-over:

"As I buried the berets and dusted off my Manolos, I couldn't help but wonder: Is six seasons too long to wait for a Big commitment?" Followed by: "Though legions of my fans are insisting on a fairy-tale ending, would Mary Richards say 'I do' to a man who'd repeatedly hollered 'I don't'?"

She'd wisely sum up the past as Big lessons in conditional love, character, honor, virtue, attachment and self-worth, and courageously conclude that love is all around, no need to waste it, that it's time she started living, it's time to let someone else do some giving.

And then she would Carrie on, hopefully ever after. ...

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