

Last weekend, Indiana Jones got his butt kicked by a girl.

Well, four girls, really. At the box office, "Sex and the City" thoroughly trounced "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," with Carrie Bradshaw and the girls taking in an astonishing \$56.8 million, a full \$12 million more than Indy.

The studios were incredibly surprised. After all, this is a movie about four fortysomethings in New York City, based on a pay cable show that ended years ago, coming out against big summer movies. And, most importantly, "Sex and the City" is the rare movie that is made almost entirely for just half of the population: women.

I know, I know – romantic comedies come out all the time, and they're mostly geared towards women, right? But men will go see a lot of those movies for the humor, or to see their favorite funny guys, like John Cusack, Matthew McConaughey, and Adam Sandler. And in the last few years, perpetual "guy's guy" Judd Apatow ("The 40-Year-Old Virgin," "Knocked Up") has practically taken control of the romantic comedy, giving it a unique and purely male perspective.

In fact, the most frequent viewers for romantic comedies are couples, who can each find something they like in, say, "Made of Honor" or "Forgetting Sarah Marshall." Even a movie like "Baby Mama" is identifiable to men, many of whom have gone through pregnancies and parenting with their partners.

"Sex and the City," on the other hand, isn't particularly relatable to men at all. It's a women's show about a women's world, where very real problems with relationships, jobs, kids, and yes, sex, are set against a background of high fashion and glamorous clubs.

And that, you see, is what studio heads and "Sex and the City" critics have never understood about the show: it's a perfect formula. I'm not arguing that "Sex and the City" was a perfect show, or a perfect film. The television version was wildly uneven, the fashions were often cringeworthy, and more than one plotline was just a little too unbelievable (Carrie's seemingly fantastic boyfriend suddenly dumps her via Post-It note? Huh?). And the film plays more like an extended episode than a well-developed full-length feature. But it doesn't really matter, does it? The important thing here isn't the final result, it's the chemistry, and in that regard "Sex and the City" has an unbeatable formula. One part real issues, one part wish fulfillment.

Maybe there are real partygirls in New York City who gallop about in Jimmy Choos and high-priced apartments. But for most women, myself included, that isn't exactly a valid five-year plan. It's a fantasy, the dream about having all the money, clothes, professional power, and great friends you can imagine.

However, at the same time, those partygirls are dealing with the same issues that any other girl faces. After all, what woman hasn't worried about commitment, or struggled with a difficult boss, or found themselves in a relationship that had turned toxic? Every girl with a dating history has wondered if they're with the right guy, and if he feels the same. The problems that Carrie Bradshaw and her friends face on "Sex and the City" are the very same problems that women in Poughkeepsie, or Boise, or Sacramento face every day.

By connecting the New York City fantasy to very real, very identifiable problems that every woman faces, "Sex and the City" struck gold. And while there have been many imitators and many, many bad knockoffs, no one has gotten the formula as pitch-perfect as the original.

Which is probably why, a full four years after the show's last episode, the "Sex and the City" movie has found so much success. I do wish it well. After all, "Sex and the City" functions as a sort of social common denominator, a fantasy and a reality that women all over the world can relate back to. There's a comfort in knowing that the same emotions that strike you are striking someone else for the same reason. And, in a season ruled by the boys, Carrie Bradshaw stepped in and showed the boys who's boss.

We are.