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**Readers weigh in on the "Sex and the City" finale**

Feb. 24, 2004 | Last night, girlfriends all over the city hovered together to watch the final episode of "Sex and the City," HBO's groundbreaking television drama about the (sex) lives of four single women in Manhattan, waiting in anticipation for the concluding show that would at last put an end to the "happily ever after" myths that women been fed for eons.

Surprise, surprise. We were fed a happily-ever-after story. Six years of great irreverent writing, depicting competent, strong women, enjoying their lives and the sex that accompanies it, were erased in 40 minutes when all four of the show's central characters land the men of their dreams, two wind up with perfect babies, and the one insatiably horny character, devoted to great casual sex, suddenly finds that sex without love is meaningless. Even my savory Chinese noodles were hard to swallow after that.

My abhorrence for the show's ending went way beyond television. It reminded me of the sad fact that women still have to apologize for their power -- to men, to society, but most of all, to themselves. "Sex and the City" has a bevy of female writers. This was no last-minute attempt by a male-dominated media to "feminize" women. This was about women still succumbing to myths that bind and strangle, the ones that tell us that it's not possible to be complete without a man, a kid, a great wardrobe or a great body. As a single woman of 43 with none of the above attributes, I hope to God they're wrong. I yearn for a personal story line in which I find contentment with or without a partner, in which I can give birth to a project or a friendship or a piece of writing that provides meaning to myself and those around me, despite the lack of kids running around my living room.

Recognizing our own worth, whether someone wants to marry us or not, and enjoying the effectiveness that comes as a result of that, is real power, an idea whose time will arrive on TV only after it appears, first, in us.

-- Lisa Lipkin