

Goodbye to Sex and the City by Wendy Levine

I had such a strong reaction to the last few episodes of "Sex and the City" I had to do some inner assessing. What was I hoping would happen and why was I so anxious? When "Big" reappeared in Carrie's life, my heart skipped a beat. I'd been so angry at the show's writers the last two seasons, suspecting they'd gone the way of gay male clothing designers in an apparent lack of affection for their subjects. The last two years, Carrie especially seemed to go backward in time, forgetting every sensible thing she ever knew about relationships, men and herself. Suddenly "The Russian" is too romantic; a week before, she told him she wasn't the kind of girl he could just see casually. Since when? Where is the Carrie who had one-night stands (not to mention an abortion)? Choices made throughout the last few years by most of the women were maddeningly out of character and often incomprehensibly stupid. The original Miranda would NOT have had that baby when she became pregnant. She'd barely expressed an interest in kids and suddenly she's in a position to have one at the worst possible time and she figures, why not? And don't get me started on her new husband, the low-aiming bartender. Though they had a cute chemistry together, they were always mismatched, with very different goals. Then each of them finds a better mate and this somehow causes them both to discard all their previous expectations, hopes and dreams, not to mention current boyfriend and girlfriend, in favor of each other.

Who *does* that? Every one of these women has lost her independence in one way or another, and that shouldn't happen. Conversely, I know the idea is to present this raucous quartet as each other's family, but after two weddings, a baby and breast cancer, there isn't a mother or nephew between them. Do none of these people have any living relatives? These women used to be smart and stable, so why has their world grown so impossibly small? When "The Russian came around, I felt better, not just because Baryshnikov is aging so magnificently, but because I thought he represented a maturity and self-awareness that all the characters were starting to embrace. And when "Big" returned and Carrie resisted his phone calls and even told him off in person, I was so proud of her. You go, girl! You don't stay hooked on a man who mistreats you, especially if you write a sex column! Then the music starts to swell and the writers start to make "Big" into every woman's fantasy--the one that NEVER EVER happens. The non-committal guy changes every stripe: professing his love, swearing it's always been you, acting insecure for the first time and ready to give you everything. What should happen is that you learn to stay away from men who are trouble and don't know how to love you. You recognize that you deserve better, which can sometimes mean being alone. I don't want anyone to be lonely, but the writers seemed afraid to leave Carrie alone for even a minute. We all have to learn to enjoy our own company because being married or otherwise committed doesn't mean you'll never be alone. And the writers claiming your great dysfunctional love can change into the man you always wanted him to be is not just irresponsible; it's a bald-faced lie and a bad example

to set for grown women, let alone the young girls we know are watching. I realize their mothers don't want them copying the sometimes free-wheeling sexual adventures of the SATC clan, but I think it's even more damaging to convey the underlying message that women are going to be unhappy until or unless they hook up with a man before the music stops, the series ends, or they turn 40. As one of my once-favorite groundbreaking shows comes to an end, sure I want everyone to live happily ever after. Despite HBO's claims to the contrary, it IS tv. But couldn't Carrie's story have ended on a high note without turning into a fairy tale?