

# Pooja Bedi

An English professor wrote, 'woman without her man is nothing' and asked his students to punctuate it. The men wrote, "Woman, without her man, is nothing!" and the women wrote, "Woman! Without her, man is nothing!!" Welcome to the battle of the sexes; fought on a minefield of explosive egos mainly triggered by a series of below the belt attacks.

For every Jeff Foxworthy who claims that "marrying for sex is like buying a 747 for the peanuts (very expensive proposition!)", there is a woman who will retort that for 300 grams of sausage it's not worth buying the entire pig. And now, in the ongoing fight for rights, 'burn the bra' has been replaced by "love and respect the vagina".

A clitoral moan, a vaginal moan, an aristocratic moan, the doggy moan, the mountaineering moan and even a religious moan!! I loved the 'vagina monologues' so much that I saw it two nights consecutively. It took us an emotional roller coaster. While the Pakistani artists' interpretations about women who endure physical abuse were moving and disturbing, Jane Fonda's rendition of an "experience with Bob" who looked so ordinary but wasn't when it came to exploring her vagina had us in splits of laughter. Dolly Thakore's touching narrative of a grandmother who saw her grandchild being delivered titled "I was there" was beautifully offset by Mahabanoo's side-splitting performance of an old Parsi woman dealing with her "flooding" dilemmas.

It was exhilarating to see the women in the audience weep, cheer and laugh uproariously (Jayati Bhatia's orgasm medley was fantastic!) and endearing to see the men entertained, but somewhat uncomfortable, like outsiders at a school reunion.

The compères dig at Mark Twain being wrong... "Because he was a man", or questioning Prasoona Joshi being a 'talented man': "Can we use those two words together?" was unnecessary for such an evening. It should have been about celebrating women, not bashing men.

A male friend joked later that an aggressive woman was just as off-putting as a male chauvinist and if women were only just discovering their orgasmic centres despite living with their body parts their entire lives how dared they call men ignorant? While it's apparent that women today are liberated and at ease with their sexuality it's also evident that hardened feminists seem to have lost their perspective.

Avantika Akerkar's quirky tale of a little girl who had bad experiences with men but delighted in a lesbian experience at age 14 with a much older woman was unpardonable. She took sexual advantage of a minor and had she been a male it would tantamount to rape. The perpetrator being a woman doesn't make it respectable or celebratory. I personally think it's quite cocky of women to tom-tom and celebrate "Vagina Day", though I do support and appreciate the endeavour to end violence against women. The focus on a vagina makes for an entertaining play but to brandish the body part, outside

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the theatre, in effort to propel a worldwide movement isn't a show of strength. It is politically incorrect and as offensive as a man scratching his balls in public.

Why try to be a better man when you can be all woman without trying? A woman's strength does not lie in sexual aggression or putting men down. It lies in her sensitivity, generosity of spirit and in being a woman. Marissa Tomei's "my short skirt and everything under it is MINE and has nothing to do with you" illustrated such strength. Meanwhile, the battle of the sexes continues undeterred, and Alyque Padamsee's up next, with the P (penis) dialogues!!