

Are you my alternative?!

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October 22, 2002



That of course is the famous riposte made by a feminist when a heckler from the crowd demanded to know if she was a lesbian. The last time I was in Bombay I got together with the girls for the customary night out. As usual we moaned the lack of decent men. If they're 30-plus, interesting, intelligent and unmarried — they're lying!

A Tequila Shot suggested that we do more than moan. A Whisky Sour took up the suggestion enthusiastically. The result was that we all drew potato chips to see who got to research the option. The task fell on a Gin and Tonic who had been unenthusiastic. Exhortations like 'Are you feminist or fake?' 'Don't you believe in multiple choices?' etc., got her to agree.

Everybody personally knows at least four gays.

('Some of my best friends...') but no lesbians. The Tequila Shot confided she'd once had her bottom pinched in a crowded ladies only compartment. No one else had any leads. But at that moment of Feminist Fever it seemed like a great option. Everyone pitched in with reasons why women were better. 'They call the next morning.' 'Hey, they get out of bed and make breakfast!'

And so the Gin and Tonic went forth to find a weapon for us to strike our blow for freedom of choice. First she hit the net. Trawling through millions of pornographic sites, she found a site that called for all Men/Women/MSM (men who sleep with men)/WSW (you can work that out!)/Transvestites and Hermaphrodites to band together to make the world a better place to live in. It also featured a poem by a 'Pakistani Transvestite now transformed into an American Gay poet' that was titled 'For A Dead Paedophile'. Another site was a Marriage Bureau. It was filled with advertisements from gays in Gujarat and lesbians in Ludhiana seeking partners for a marriage of convenience that would allow both parties to carry on — um — alternating. There was a side effect to the research. Suddenly her inbox was full of mails from interesting people like 'Pus. E. Kat' and 'BIG Sister.'

The G 'n' T phoned us in despair. 'I can't find one anywhere!' she said. We assured her that she just didn't know how to spot them. No doubt they were all about her. 'Damn!' she said 'I'll never be able to go to the ladies loo in the office again.' The only other suggestion she got was 'You're not giving out the

right vibes. I think you've got to wear a nosering in your right nostril.'

We'd forgotten all about it when the Gin and Tonic phoned around triumphantly one evening. 'I've found one!' she announced, 'She's an artist!'. (What is it with artists and alternative choices?) At this point Feminist Liberation Theory crashed judderingly into reality. Who was going to — er — bell the cat? The Gin and Tonic refused to let us off the hook.

'After all my hard work one of you better at least have tea with her.' An emergency conference was called. We reluctantly pulled potato chips. Finally we called. The artist had our number in a second. 'Oh come on — I get this all the time. Silly feminists thinking that they're being liberated. You aren't liberated. You aren't even remotely lesbian. You're scared stiff. So don't waste my time.'

We've gone back to moaning about how awful men are. But softly. Softly.