

Biography for Amy Edelman

Amy Holman Edelman moved to New York after college to become a clothing designer. After failing miserably, she fell into a career as a publicist and started her own company six months before her first child was born. She is the author of *The Little Black Dress*, which explores how the little black dress influenced contemporary fashion, art, literature, and film. In 2001 her husband of 12 years died unexpectedly. The following holiday, her youngest daughter asked for a daddy. The following year she began looking for another man and discovered dating in the 21st century as a 43-year-old widow with two kids. Her happy ending was reported in the *New York Times* "Vows" section on October 7, 2007.

Q&A with Amy

Q. What inspired you to write *Manless in Montclair*?

A. Writing has always provided me with an outlet...a way to sort things out in my head. In high school it was poetry, this time it was a memoir that grew to be a novel.

Q. So is *Manless in Montclair* a true story?

A. I wanted to call it a fictional memoir. It was inspired by some true incidents, but all of the characters and many of the situations have been changed or just plain made up, to make the story more interesting. Fiction allows you to do that...with a straight memoir you're pretty much tied to the whole truth.

Q. Is Jack, the man Isabel meets at the end of the story, based on a real person?

A. He's actually based on a couple of people, none of which I actually ended up with.

Q. What would you say to people who say the book is a cop-out with a predictably happy ending?

A. When my publisher initially asked me how the memoir would end, I said I had no idea. So she suggested writing it as fiction so I could make it end however I wanted it to. Now, I'm a sucker for Disney movies and I grew up with Meg Ryan romantic comedies. There was no way the book was not going to end happily. But the funny thing is, a friend read the book early on and said that the ending sounded made up..."nothing like that could ever happen in real life," he said. But in reality, what ended up happening was even less believable than the fiction. In my defense I'd say that life has its ups and downs and that there's as much of a chance of things ending well as ending terribly. So why not look for the silver lining? Either way, you may as well try to enjoy the ride.

Q. What would you say were the biggest contributors to getting you through such a tough situation?

A. Without question, my family, my friends and my kids.

Q. Describe the worst date you've ever been on?

A. The worst, which I think is mentioned in the book, was when I ended up back at a guy's apartment for a cup of coffee. He excused himself to go to the bathroom and came back stark naked. It was kind of funny, actually, but I thought it best not to laugh too hard at the time.

Q. Describe the best date you've ever been on?

- A.** That's a harder question to answer. Maybe it's because I think like a writer...on some level always looking for material...but I found many of the dates I went on, in one way or another, were at least fairly interesting. If the guy was a dud, the food was usually pretty good. And overall, I heard some pretty crazy stories.

Q. What advice do you have for a single woman looking for a lasting relationship?

- A.** The advice I got was that "things happen when they're supposed to happen." Now, I'm not a sit-around-and-wait-for-it-to-happen-kind-of-girl and patience is really not one of my virtues. That said, I'd say go for it. But if you don't find someone right away, don't discount the experience of looking, cause in the end, things happen when they're supposed to happen.

Q. What was the most difficult thing about dating as a single mom?

- A.** Forget about dating. The hardest thing about being a single mom is finding time for yourself, even if it's just to take a shower! I was lucky to have a caregiver for my kids who has been with us since my older daughter was one. She jumped right in after my husband died and really became a co-parent. We couldn't have made it without her!

Q. Do you have plans to write another book?

- A.** Truthfully, I still can't believe I wrote this one! My dream scenerio would be for someone to option this book for a movie...and to hire me to write the screenplay with, perhaps, Reese Witherspoon, in the title role?"
-