
Amy Ephron

One Sunday Morning
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Q: Did you do much research in order to achieve the accuracy of detail and tone in *One Sunday Morning*?

A: 1926 was like today in many ways (the sensibility was somewhat the same, which is one of the reasons I picked it.) There was a conservative religious movement in the U.S that was at odds with some of the more liberal views, a conservative President in office who had isolated the U.S. from the rest of the world, an economic bubble that looked as if it was never going to burst, evolution was being tested in the courts, King Tut was on tour, skirts were short, the music was great, and human relationships were fueled by jealousy, love, honor, and betrayal.

I do a lot of "popular" research, as well as more conventional historical research—the music, the fiction of the times, food trends, nightspots, fashions—and from it get a sense of the rhythms and sensibility of the times.

Q: Do you feel that "keeping up appearances," i.e. the difference between what is considered moral or proper and what really goes on between human beings, still has the same weight as it did in 1926?

A: I think gossip and scandal still have somewhat the same weight as they did then. Someone said to me jokingly about this book, "Before there were paparazzi, there were windows..." which I think is probably true. As much as we like to think we're above gossip, none of us really are and human stories are still the most interesting. What fascinates me, though, is the notion that someone's reputation could be ruined inaccurately, that people can see something and draw a conclusion about it that may not be correct. In a way, because she never defends herself, that's what makes Lizzie honorable and enviable.

Q: Your female characters seem to have a good deal of autonomy, a freedom to move around and make choices, for their time. Would this have been a result of their class?

A: Yes, certainly they had the economic freedom to move around. But by 1926, women were much freer than they had been at the turn of the century—many of them had entered the workforce during the war, had become accustomed to traveling in a society without men, with a great deal of autonomy. But, in some ways, their choices were still limited, as evidenced by the character of Lucy who follows convention, and gets married quite young and is pregnant and feels constrained by the choices she's made.

Q: What writers have provided the strongest influence on your writing? Who do you read now for inspiration and for pleasure?

A: My early influences were L. Frank Baum, Frances Hodgson Burnett, and P.L. Travers as they each, in their books, created an extraordinary world that seemed so real you could get lost in it!

I also enjoy reading Isak Dineson, Somerset Maugham, Edith Wharton, Kenneth Patchen, all of whom are very clean, distinct writers.

Q: Would you like to see *One Sunday Morning* made into a film? Would anything about the story have to change in order to make it effective in that genre?

A: I think it would be fun to see it as a television series and really trash it up a bit and open up the club world and the world of '20's gangsters with music from the period and a couple of other murders (or suicides) as it goes along.