



# Mary and Lou and Rhoda and Ted: And all the Brilliant Minds Who Made The Mary Tyler Moore Show a Classic

*Jennifer Keishin Armstrong*

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"Jennifer Keishin Armstrong's deft weave of social history and sharp entertainment reporting explains how [*The Mary Tyler Moore Show*] made the world safe for Lena Dunham" (Peter Biskind, author of *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*)—the making of a classic and groundbreaking TV show, as experienced by its producers, writers, and cast.

When writer-producers James L. Brooks and Allan Burns dreamed up an edgy show about a divorced woman with a career, the CBS executives they pitched replied: "American audiences won't tolerate divorce in a series' lead any more than they will tolerate Jews, people with mustaches, and people who live in New York."

Forty years later, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* is one of the most beloved and recognizable television shows of all time. It was an inspiration to a generation of women who wanted to have it all in an era when everything seemed possible.

Jennifer Keishin Armstrong's *Mary and Lou and Rhoda and Ted* tells the stories behind the making of this popular classic, introducing the groundbreaking female writers who lent real-life stories to their TV scripts; the men who created the indelible characters; the lone woman network executive who cast the legendary ensemble—and advocated for this provocative show—and the colorful cast of actors who made it all work. James L. Brooks, Grant Tinker, Allan Burns, Valerie Harper, Cloris Leachman, Betty White, Gavin MacLeod, Ed Asner, Ted Knight, Georgia Engel—they all came together to make a show that changed women's lives and television itself. *Mary and Lou and Rhoda and Ted* is the tale of how they did it.

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