PRESS RELEASE



REMARKABLE TRUE STORY OF BRITAIN'S FIRST DATING AGENCY REDISCOVERED AND REPUBLISHED FOR FIRST TIME IN 80 YEARS

Mary Oliver's frank, funny and inspiring account of 1940s matchmaking business is revived for a modern generation.

In 1939 Mary Oliver and Heather Jenner took the business of dating into their own hands and set up the country's first ever Marriage Bureau in London's fashionable Bond Street.

Now, Mary Oliver's memoirs - published only once 80 years ago - have been rediscovered, revised and republished and set out, with searing frankness, the remarkable true story of the Marriage Bureau; its successes, its failures and its many varied and interesting clients.

The Marriage Bureau marked the beginning of a dating rebellion. No longer did women have to wait for a suitor to come to their door, no longer did they have to wait for parents to arrange 'appropriate' matches — now women could put themselves out there in a safe way that didn't threaten their reputations. They could look beyond their neighborhoods' and the boy-next-door to find the person that truly made them happy. But Mary Oliver and Heather Jenner's revolutionary idea certainly had its detractors.

The story behind the Marriage Bureau is an extraordinary one, not least because it shredded the rulebook of propriety. What Mary Oliver and Heather Jenner established was nothing short of a revolution for women, who suddenly found themselves in a position of agency and power.

Today, the Tinder generation take being in control of their romantic destiny for granted but in 1939 someone had to break the shackles of tradition and that was Mary Oliver and Heather Jenner.

While there were many books circulating in the 1940s and 1950s about how to please your husband, extracts from which circulate on social media today to much hilarity and derision by both women and men, Mary's book was a refreshing read because it is just as much about how to please yourself.

Some of Mary's views reflect the period, but many blatantly don't and it's that voice (which would probably have thousands of Instagram followers today) that still makes her relevant. Mary and Heather set out to blaze their own trail and level the playing field on love. They were sharp-witted, smart and independent women who were inspiring, layered and relatable characters who will resonate with a modern audience.

The book, published by B7 Media alongside an audiobook, has been given a new introduction by screenwriter and novelist Richard Kurti (Monkey Wars, Maladapted, Going Postal) and has already attracted the attention of Hollywood producers who are looking to turn it into a TV series.

Richard says: "I sat on the sofa and started to read, expecting something stuffy and old fashioned. I couldn't have been more wrong. Mary Oliver's voice rocketed across the decades with such frankness and caustic humour that, within minutes, I was chuckling to myself. And I carried on chuckling, chapter after chapter, so much so that my wife asked what on earth I was reading. 'If I'd read this fifteen years ago, before we were married, I'd have made a much better job of being a husband,'" I confessed.

"As soon as I put the book down, she picked it up, read it, and agreed – it's a book that everyone who is even vaguely contemplating marriage should devour."

Richard Kurti was determined not to let Mary's voice fall silent and set about tracking down the rights so that he could get the book published in a brand new and updated edition. It was a massive task, involving hundreds of hours of online research and phoning complete strangers all over the world, eventually discovering that the rights were held unknowingly by seven different people across two different continents.

Long before we swiped right, imagine a time marked by a personal touch in the business of matchmaking. These women originated a rebellious spark of independence in dating and forming unions, started no less, during a time of war and loss.

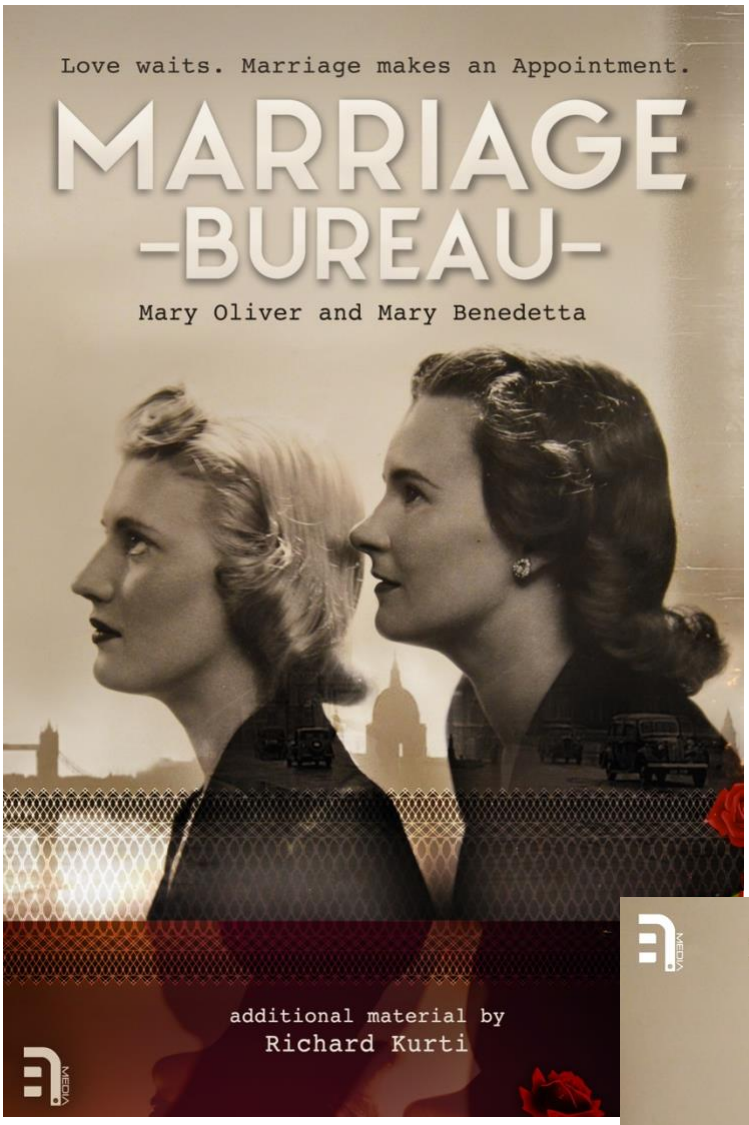
"Here is a story that is funny, romantic, and steeped in attitude, driven by two young women taking on the world," observed Richard. "It's rebels with immaculate lipstick; who doesn't want more of that?"

Marriage Bureau is published by B7 Media. The book is available to order now on Amazon and is also available as an audio book on iTunes and Audible

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For more information please contact:

JOE CLAYTON | Jo Clayton PR, Tel: 07982720539 | e. joanne.clayton@talk21.com.



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PRESS CONTACT
Jo Clayton
e: joanne.clayton@talk21.com
t: +44 (0)7982720539