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## A Brief Recap of 2011 Publishing News

Happy New Year! 2011 was an eventful year for the **Milford-Haven Novels!** In 2010, I signed a contract with Midpoint Trade, a large, well established publishing and distribution company in New York. Midpoint has many imprints or smaller publishing companies with whom it partners, including Bellekeep Books, recently established to publish Women's Fiction. Bellekeep, with Associate Publisher Margot Atwell, and Midpoint, with President Eric Kampmann, decided to relaunch my entire series! This is a dream come true!

## Milford-Haven Novels now with a NY Publisher

During all of 2011 I worked diligently with my new team which includes not only the new publishers, but distribution specialists, watercolor artist, graphics artist, editor, dynamic marketers, social media experts, webmasters, and more. The first novel in my series, ***What the Heart Knows***, has now been published as a gorgeous new hardcover (right), as well as being downloadable to your Kindle, Nook, Sony Reader, or any e-device. Wahoo!



### Frequently Asked Questions . . . and Answers . . .

Q: So . . . what does "relaunch" mean?

A: What it means is that early editions of my novels performed well enough that they attracted the attention and support of a large company committed to bringing my series to readers all over the country. Early editions are now out of print. New editions are being published in hardcover (for the first time) and in e-book format (for the first time). My novels and stories will now be available at any and all bookstores, libraries and websites.

Q: Are the new hardcover editions just the same books with new covers?

A: No.

Q: What's different?

A: Though my new publishers didn't require editorial changes, I felt that this was a golden opportunity to enhance the existing texts. Story elements that would have appeared later in the series now appear sooner; there's greater depth and detail; book one is, for example, about 100 pages longer than the early edition.

And that's just the editorial portion. Meanwhile, an extraordinary new team has been working to create a new graphical iteration of the novels that is so gorgeous, and so fully integrated into the story, that my little town and its residents just seem to leap right off the pages.

Perhaps the best example of this is the new cover, which is spectacular! What a joy and a blessing to be working with my good friend, noted artist Mary Helsaple. Her watercolors will now grace all the new covers, and they represent the "work" of my protagonist, artist Miranda Jones.

Q: What's the same?

A: My fictitious town of Milford-Haven; my characters; the basic overall story.

Q: Are the titles of the new books the same?

A: The title for book one is the same. From then on, titles will be different.

Q: What's the publishing schedule for the novels?

A: Book One, *What the Heart Knows*, was published in October 2011. Book Two, *Where the Heart Lives*, will be published in October 2012. The novels will continued to be published annually . . . or faster, if I can possibly work faster!

## Reviews

The major industry reviews are written by *Publishers Weekly* and *Kirkus Reviews*, publications that do not accept submissions from small indie presses. These reviews are used by library and bookstore purchasers. The new ***What the Heart Knows*** was indeed eligible and received excellent reviews from both—important milestones! Here are excerpts:

"Purl presents the first novel in her Milford-Haven series, which . . . features a setting of unadulterated beauty—the small coastal town of Milford-Haven, CA and a cast of successful, sexy, sometimes quirkily independent characters. . . Readers will find details galore. . . depictions of daily life, hints of possible future romance, the threat of scandal, and [a] carefully parsed out mystery. . . The novel is poised to convince readers to continue with the series."



"Former *Days of Our Lives* actress Purl imbues her soap opera finesse into the fictional setting of Milford-Haven, a sleepy California coastal town where a cast of characters balance matters of the head and heart. . . Simmering just below the gossip that pervades the resident's lives are heavy-hitting issues . . . This may be Apple Pie, USA, but hearts are on the line, professions are at stake and a possible murder has tainted the landscape. Ending each plot line in a cliffhanger, Purl closes the saga with a peek at the next installment in the Milford-Haven series. A whirlwind of juicy drama with dangling-carrot closure."



The major Indie source for reviews—used by independent bookstores, who are always looking for good books that might not get attention at the chain stores—is ForeWord Magazine Review. Happy my new novel also received an excellent review from this top indie publishing magazine! So gratifying when a reviewer really gets the book. . . . Here's an excerpt from the full-page review of **What the Heart Knows**:



*“What the Heart Knows is an upbeat novel, billed by the author as “small town fiction,” and the first book of Purl’s Milford-Haven series. The book opens powerfully with the appearance of the first of many strongly developed characters, Christine Christian. A television reporter, Christian is lured to the construction site of a controversial mansion-to-be with the promise of the inside scoop. Her fate remains unanswered in the pages that follow, until the reader discovers the prologue for book two generously included at the close of book one. Teasing mentions of the reporter keep one reading to find the answer.*

*What the Heart Knows is set in the mid-1990s, before the tidal wave of personal technology devices, social media, and the need to be “connected” 24/7. Purl does not use external paraphernalia to bring her characters to life. Instead, she creates genuine relationships that make sense within the story; each character has a clear set of goals and morals, all served up through dialogue and inner thought processes. Sound old-fashioned? It is. The author puts in the work so the reader does not need to Google each reference to stay on top of the story.*

*In a time of high unemployment and the resulting panic, it is also a pleasure to encounter characters that have profitable businesses and strong careers. Each person evolves through insightful internal dialogue written by the author and “spoken” during times when the characters are alone, reflective, and seriously mulling over their current situations and future plans..*

*Purl’s characters are well-traveled, educated, and street smart. While she indulges in some clichés and predictable moments, these are redeemed in subsequent pages. For a prequel of book two in the series, When Hummers Dream, visit the author’s website: [www.marapurl.com](http://www.marapurl.com).”*

## Milford-Haven Short Stories

When I mentioned to my publisher Margot and to the Midpoint team that I had short stories set in Milford-Haven, they were very excited. Why? Because Amazon offers unique promotional programs for their Kindle e-reader. What we decided to do was create a short story as a prequel for **What the Heart Knows**. The novel—set in the autumn of 1996—is thus preceded by the never-before-published story **When Hummers Dream**, which takes place in the previous August.

**When Hummers Dream** was also published in August (of 2011) and became a best-seller in the Kindle store! What fun it was to receive cryptic e-mails from the publishers reporting the numbers: 4, 375 downloads the first week . . . and by the time the promotion concluded at month’s end, more than 15,000 readers had downloaded this short e-book!

So . . . if you have a Kindle, Nook, or any e-reader, I invite you to buy this little book—\$1.99 on most websites. Though it’s not necessary to read it to enjoy the novel, you’ll have an “inside track” if you *do* read it. Don’t have an e-reader? Let me know! I’ll be delighted to e-mail you the beautifully designed pdf version of the story! [MaraPurl@aol.com](mailto:MaraPurl@aol.com).

By the way, this publishing plan worked so well and delighted so many readers, that we’ve decided to follow this same plan throughout the series. So, next August look for the short story e-book **When Whales Watch**. It will be published prior to the October release of the hardcover **Where the Heart Lives**.

And . . . there’s more! The publishers also released one of my holiday short stories as an e-book! On December 1, **Whose Angel Key Ring** was published, and also became a Kindle best-seller, featured on their beautiful new Kindle Fire device.



## Blogging

There are two parts to my 2011 blogging. First, is my own blog. When my new publishers asked me to start a blog, I was horrified. How could I blog (that is, keep a “web log” or ongoing journal) on a regular basis, and also finish my book?? But, since they asked, I complied. Well, it’s been a revelation. I always wanted to write a regular column. And my wish has come true! I now blog weekly at [www.MaraPurl.WordPress.com](http://www.MaraPurl.WordPress.com), with a new post published each Monday. What do I write about? I discovered my theme: Head and Heart. Rather than describe it further, I invite you to read a few posts. They’re short (300 - 500 words) and cover a wide range of topics seen from the perspective of head . . . or heart.



Part two is my blog tour. What, exactly, is a blog tour? Well, I found out last August when I did my very first one. All over the country there are major blogs that function something like networks: they have followers that number in the hundreds of thousands, and in some cases, in the millions. To keep these followers engaged, the owners of these blogs must provide good content, part of which is interesting guests who either provide essays, or answer questions followers can read. Partnering with Dianemarie Collins, one of my marketing mavens, we created a virtual tour during which I “visited” (provided content for) 20 blog sites in 30 days. It was intense full-time work, and it was an extraordinary experience both in terms of writing and connecting. At the end of the tour we were stunned to discover I’d actually reached 17 million readers! I am so grateful to each host, and to each follower. The entire tour is still posted at [www.MaraPurl.com](http://www.MaraPurl.com) if you’d like to read any segments. I’ll be back for blog tour #2 in August 2012. Join us!! It’s fun and fascinating.

## Events in Person!

As many of you know, I did two book tours this year (and begin another one January 26<sup>th</sup>). My travels concentrated in California, Colorado, and the Chicago area. What a delight it is to connect with my readers in person! Events included book festivals, writers’ conferences and seminars, book store and library signings, and my own Milford-Haven Socie-Tea gatherings. I love each of these different kinds of events for their own special qualities . . . the polish of the beautiful Barnes & Noble stores . . . the cozy creativity and community commitment of independent bookstores . . . and the elegance and comraderie of events with women’s groups and organizations.



To find out where I’ve been, you can visit the Milford-Haven Novels Facebook page, or [www.MaraPurl.com](http://www.MaraPurl.com) which we’ll be updating regularly with event photos. To find where I’m going to be next, again visit my website, or subscribe to my monthly newsletter.

Next up is my Western States Tour with events in Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. Then on February 12th, I’ll be doing a very special event, the first “Uni-Tea”—a fund raiser for the wonderful Unity Shop in Santa Barbara. Please check my site and join me!

## Media, Photos & Video on-line

Thanks to my fantastic marketing tem, Dianemarie and Doug Collins of DM Productions, my press releases, head shots, bios, and videos are posted at the professional media site [www.CisionWire.com/mara-purl](http://www.CisionWire.com/mara-purl).

## Indie Bookstores

Do you still have a local independent bookstore in your town? If so, make a point of dropping by and buying some wonderful treasure for yourself or for someone else. Every one of these stores has an element of magic as far as I'm concerned. Employees usually are dedicated readers and have encyclopedic knowledge on many subjects that might interest you. These stores are almost always connected to the community through events, sponsorships, educational programs, and generally support creativity and ingenuity in your area. And they just *feel* good, don't they? Let's support them and keep them around. And any indie bookstore will either already have my book, or be able to order it in two clicks.

## Libraries

You may not think that your local library's purchase of my hardcover novel would matter much to my own publishing success. But nothing could be farther from the truth! In fact, books that libraries choose to purchase and keep in their inventories can simultaneously support an author, support your local community, and support the publisher. It's a Win-Win-Win!! So here's my request: that if you haven't already done so, **please contact your own local library and request *What the Heart Knows*—hardcover edition only! (Any earlier edition will not count.)** Several of you have already made this request and so have already made a difference. Thank you!!!

## Jewelry??

Yes, there is now Milford-Haven jewelry! Specifically, there is a charm.

Why? Well, to put it succinctly, what do novels and jewelry have in common? They're both all about stories. When women admire one another's jewelry, they often share little bits of history. "This was my grandmother's" or "My husband gave me that for our anniversary."

To give you more detail—novels published in hardcover editions are truly works of art from the cover to the paper, from the foil stamping to the font. The symbol that appears at the start of each chapter is called a "dingbat" (really!) and when the publishers and I were discussing the design of my new book (I get a lot more say than most authors, because of my long history with Milford-Haven) we agreed the dingbat symbol should be connected to the ocean, as this is a coastal series. It occurred to me the symbol should be a seashell, and that each book in the series should have its own shell.

Looking around my homes, I realized I have shells everywhere. I've always loved them, always collected them. (In fact, when my mother helped me to plan the first Milford-Haven Tea, we used her shell collection to decorate the tables.) I went into research-land and discovered an amazing shell to use for this first book: the heart cockle shell. (It's described in detail on the Colophon page at the end of the novel.) My cover artist Mary Helsaple drew the dingbat for the interior of the book, and painted one that appears on the back cover. It's a truly gorgeous shell, shaped like a heart, with delicate ridges.

Meanwhile, have you noticed that charm bracelets are back in style in a huge way? There are several companies that make gorgeous bracelets and hundreds of charms: Pandora, Troll, and Reflections among them. Working with Carol Falls, a wonderful jewelry designer in Colorado Springs, we created the heart cockle charm. And we'll create a new charm for each of the novels. This beautiful keepsake is available in white bronze (blue ribbon), oxidized bronze (green ribbon), and now in sterling silver (silver ribbon)! To purchase the charm, send an e-mail to [MaraPurl@MaraPurl.com](mailto:MaraPurl@MaraPurl.com).



## How to Succeed?

And now we come to an important question. How will I succeed with this publishing venture? Some say no one reads any more. Actually, all the surveys indicate just the opposite—that we're reading more than ever in the history of the planet. We're reading constantly. We're reading on every possible platform—books, magazine, e-readers, tablets, phones, laptops, big screens, tiny screens, and everything in between.

Does reading still make a difference in your life? I know it does in mine. I learn, escape, connect, discover, and rediscover who I am and what I'm up to both through my reading and through my writing. Yet writing and publishing is no longer being created for "everyone." It's being created within genres, so like-minded people can find one another. In this way, writing is no longer a monologue; it's a dialogue with readers.

An interesting theory postulates that to succeed, a writer (or anyone creating new products) needs 1,000 "true followers." A "true" follower is one who buys what that writer is selling. So my goal this year is to identify my 1,000, and to offer better prices, interesting bonuses, and a sense of belonging within this core community.

Because **you** are on the list that's receiving this personal letter, most likely **you** are one of these true-blue core group members. And if you help me by buying one of my books each year (an investment of about \$30), I believe you'll help me create success that is contagious and inspiring for all my readers, for fellow writers, for all the groups for whom I speak, for all the charities to which I donate, and for the larger world community in which we're functioning. What an exciting prospect! Some goals are individual. But as we progress in life, goals progress too. This is not a goal I can accomplish on my own.

So, if you'd like to participate, there are many sources where you can buy your very own copy of this beautiful book!

To get an unsigned book, buy from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million, or your wonderful local independent bookstore.

To get a personally signed book, send me an e-mail [MaraPurl@MaraPurl.com](mailto:MaraPurl@MaraPurl.com) or visit [www.HavenBooks.net](http://www.HavenBooks.net), which has agreed to continue to sell my books retail at [www.HavenBooks.net/Order](http://www.HavenBooks.net/Order). To get special premium packages with watercolor prints or with jewelry, visit that same page.

When you make any kind of purchase, send me an e-mail or a postcard. I will immediately put you on this core list of *one thousand true followers*.

## What My Heart Knows

Writing my novels has, so far, been a journey of twelve years. Though it's been a challenge, I cherish each step for what I've learned and am still learning. Before the novels began to appear, I wrote sixty episodes of an original drama, ultimately producing these as broadcast programs. *Milford-Haven, U.S.A.* became the first American radio drama ever broadcast on the BBC in 1992 . . . so this is the 20 year celebration! Now, when I'm being interviewed on various television and radio shows, I get to say "I'll be an overnight success after 20 years!"

You, my friends and colleagues, neighbors and classmates, have been so very supportive each step of the way. Thank you for being part of my journey! And especially I thank you now, as my mission to create engaging, transformative novels continues to call me into an engaging sense of purpose and mission.

And may the New Year's plans and resolutions that dance in your head be informed by the warmth and wisdom of your heart! See you soon in . . . Milford-Haven!



## **The Milford-Haven Series**

Got Novel? Got Short Story? Here's your checklist:



### **When Hummers Dream**

August 2011

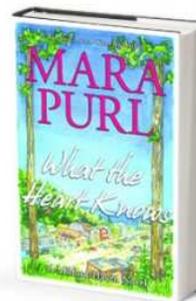
short story prequel to first novel  
available now on Kindle, Nook, and all e-readers  
also available from me to core reader group  
as special pdf download

### **What the Heart Knows**

Novel #1

October 2011

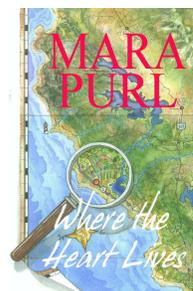
available now as hardcover or e-book



### **When Whales Watch**

August 2012

short story prequel to second novel  
will be available on Kindle, Nook, and all e-readers  
also available from me to core reader group  
as special pdf download



### **Where the Heart Lives**

Novel #2

October 2012

will be available as hardcover or e-book



### **Whose Angel Key Ring**

holiday short story

available now on Kindle, Nook, and all e-readers  
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