



Mara Purl

## Milford Haven Novels Newsletter

### A Valentine From My Heart to Yours

February 2011

Greetings on this special "heart" day. Valentine's Day represents the essence of romance . . . and as a writer of romantic Women's Fiction, I do love the elegance and sentiment connected to this particular celebration. I'm also celebrating this year with my whole heart because I have incredible news!



I have a new publisher who will be re-launching the Milford-Haven Novels! The new launch will begin with *What the Heart Knows*, with September as the official "pub date." What my heart knows is that this is the opportunity for which I've been waiting, and working, for many years! What a thrilling way to start the new year!

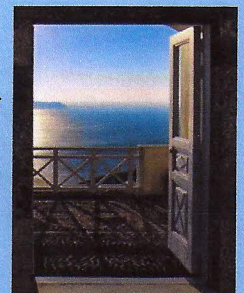
### A New World of Publishing

For those of you who know something about the publishing world, you know being picked up by a New York publisher is a wonderful thing. Essentially, it means access to a larger audience. You might ask – why would any publisher want to re-issue books that already exist? Well, it's because they have a larger vision for the book—or in my case, for the whole series. And they believe they can help expand on a world they know already excites my readers.

My new deal is with Bellekeep Books – a new imprint for Women's Fiction – in partnership with Midpoint Trade -- a major national distributor (on a recent cover of Publishers Weekly). A wonderful team of people are working hard behind the scenes to create this thrilling new launch. Some have already worked on this series with me for years. Many are brand new to the project. Our mutual goal is two-fold. We want to reach new readers; and we want to reward my existing readers. With the many special things we're planning, we know we'll succeed at both . . . with your help!

### Opening New Doors For My Readers

I think of my books as being doors that open into special spaces where author and reader can meet to exchange ideas; where, as an author, I can share experiences, moments, ideas that spark new possibilities for you; and where you, my readers, can connect with one another and offer your valuable insights and feedback to me. To open these exciting doors, my new colleagues are helping me to create improved ways for me to share with you. My **Milford-Haven Newsletter** will be published monthly, beginning with this issue. My blog, [MaraPurl.WordPress.com](http://MaraPurl.WordPress.com), will be posted weekly, beginning today. You can follow me on **Twitter**. You can join the conversation on my new **Facebook Page**. There will be new, easier ways to find my books at bookstores and at libraries. You'll be able to join me at events in person or on line. And we're creating some exciting new products to enhance and expand the Milford-Haven series. Because we're creating a community, every book of mine that you purchase, read and enjoy, then share with someone else is worth its weight in gold. In the coming months, have fun opening doors with me. How? Forward this newsletter to a friend. Enjoy my blog and share it. "Like" my new Facebook page. Send me an e-mail. Join me at an author event. Milford-Haven is a special space of infinite possibilities. Let's see what magical possibilities we can create!



## What Will Stay the Same

1 - The basic story of residents and visitors to the town of Milford-Haven . . . with its rich history of early editions, and the ground-breaking BBC Radio Drama . . . continues! But there are a few new characters you'll meet, and a few new locations you'll discover.

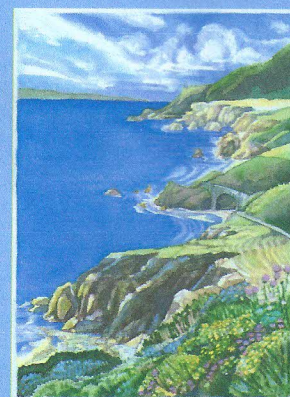
2 - Your involvement has always been central to the world of Milford-Haven . . . and it now matters more than ever. It's because of your commitment to reading my books, to attending my events, and because of your wonderful comments . . . that my new publishers have such confidence in me, and have chosen to bring a whole new team of experts to my series.

3 - Special Tea Events . . . will continue and expand. As you know, I've been emerging as a new voice in Women's Fiction. Last year I sent you a recap of the many chapters of this progression—panels, speaking programs, seminars, book club visits, and my very special Milford-Haven Tea events, the "Hospitali-Teas" and the "Possibili-Teas." These events are so exciting, not only because they're fun! But also because they benefit those who attend, and then together we're able to benefit many others. Why? Because we choose a local charity, invite a spokesperson to share about what they do for the community, then the authors—myself and my guest-authors—all donate a percentage of our book sales to that charity. The more books we sell, the more the charity benefits! It's a win-win-win scenario. Attendees have fun at an elegant event, they get to do some great shopping, and together we benefit others. (In next months' newsletter, I'll give you a recap of last year's fantastic events!)



## What Will Change

1 – Book Covers! You won't believe how gorgeous the new book covers are! I promise to show you the cover for book one soon, as created by gifted cover designer and graphic artist Kevin Meyer. But first, here's a new image that shows the coastal setting of Milford-Haven. Notice anything different? Yes! It's a watercolor! Those of you who know the series know my protagonist Miranda Jones is a watercolor artist. We see so much of the story through her eyes, it was only right that you, the reader, see it through her eyes as well! I'm so honored that award-winning artist Mary Helsaple agreed to become the cover artist for the Milford-Haven Novels! Mary and I will be sharing wonderful images with you in the coming months.



2 – Book Titles! The upcoming titles will change! Each will begin with one of the key journalist questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why? Book One remains . . . What the Heart Knows.

3 - Less waiting! Instead of being published annually, the hardcover editions will be published every six months!

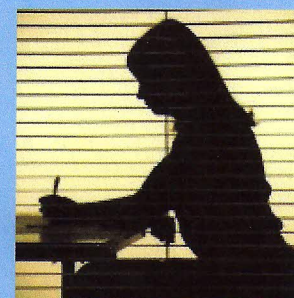
4 – Bookstores! The books will be more available than ever before. The more you ask at your local bookstore—be it a major chain store like Barnes & Noble or Borders, or be it an independent bookstore—the more you'll help the flow of my books through bookstores.

We'll keep you posted about all the upcoming changes!

## Writing and Re-writing

Writers are a funny breed, in that we like to RE-do our work. Most people prefer to finish a job and be done with it. But for writers . . . musicians . . . actors . . . artists of all kinds . . . we usually feel we can do better, and we hanker after opportunities to prove it. It's not like polishing silver, where we obsess that there's always one more spec of tarnish to remove. It's about the fact that as we practice our art, we grow.

My new publisher and I were discussing the upcoming launch of book one (it was all I could do not to leap out of my chair and dance around the room, but I tried to play it cool!) We talked about you -- the readers. If this series is new to you, you'll have the treat of reading these novels as they were always meant to be. If you've already read the earlier editions, what could I bring to you that would make it worth your while to read these new editions?



It has to be new for you, too. That was the answer. So that meant doing a major re-write. And I did, working up to five hours a day,

many of those hours with my trusted, brilliant and tough-minded editor. And by re-writing, I don't just mean switching around descriptions and tightening up dialogue. I added new material—so much that the book is noticeable longer, yet it's also "tight"—high praise from the new publisher. Some things that would've been introduced later in the series now start earlier. Some magical new elements that always wanted to be in the book, now somehow had "permission" to appear. Now that the NEW *What the Heart Knows* re-write is complete, I can honestly say it's been a thrill to watch the core—the heart—of this book reveal itself, first to me, and soon, to my readers. Believe me, you won't want to miss a single page.

Fiction is truth-telling, so it has to have the "ring" of truth. When it does, the sound is unmistakable. Since this book is about what the heart knows, I had to ask myself—what does my heart know? Since I was rewriting the fiction, was I also rewriting the narrative of my own heart? That question really rang my bell.

When you ask yourself what your heart knows, does it answer that it wants clearer purpose, bigger goals, more fulfillment? Mine does. And thanks to what I've learned from writing this book, I know more, now, about listening to heart-wisdom. Unburdened, the heart can beat more freely, pumping new information all the way through our system.

Thoughts become things. And the conduit through which this occurs is words. For a fiction-writer, sometimes substituting even a single word can change the message and outcome of the story. You might enjoy my Valentine's Day blog *Re-writing the Narrative of Your Heart*.

## Answers To Your Questions

1 – Will the content of the books be the same as in the early editions?

– No! In honor of you, my readers, I've added SO much new material to *What the Heart Knows*, that you won't want to miss the new pieces.

– Yes! The basic story remains the same, a tale of artist Miranda Jones and her career and romance; a tale of Milford-Haven and its good (and bad) citizens; a tale of Santa Barbara and its beautiful people; a tale of journalist Chris Christian and of her mysterious murder.

2 – Will you still be able to purchase books online?

– Yes! We'll be sending you all the information you need for ordering.

3 – Will e-book editions be available?

-- Yes! Bellekeep will be publishing the Milford-Haven Novels in e-book form for all platforms, so you'll be able to get versions for Kindle, Nook, Sony Reader, iPad, and whatever your favorite e-reader happens to be.

4 – Will previous readers enjoy any special benefit from having bought the early editions?

– Yes! Over the next couple of months, I'll be announcing some of the special things we're creating just for you.



## Early Editions

Are they still available? Most are . . . in very limited quantities. If you're a collector, and want to be sure you have these early editions for posterity, now is the time to purchase them! Visit Haven Books, and click "Order".

Here's the list:

*What the Heart Knows (Sold Out)*

*What the Heart Knows - Audio Book*

*Closer Than You Think*

*Closer Than You Think - Audio Book*

*Child Secrets*

*Cause and Conscience*

*Christmas Angels*

*Christmas Angels - Audio Book*



## Transformation

Can we have a brief heart to heart? If you're my reader, you're most likely a woman who has many similarities to me. I've always been a person with goals. Have you? For me, the common denominator in every goal has something to do with transformation—whether it's about being a better listener, following a better exercise regime, or creating fiction that's really fun to read, but that also makes a difference to your life. I love books that make me want to return to them, and make me want to share them with friends. From what you kindly tell me, these are the kind of books I write. So, even though I've been working toward, and expecting big changes in bringing my books to a wider audience, there's a part of me that's startled at my good fortune.



This really is not about my good fortune, however. This is about some top professionals I greatly respect opening a door for me. The door leads to a national stage. Once the curtain goes up, it'll be up to me to have something worthwhile to offer, and to be able to truly engage you, my readers.

During quiet times, when I'm walking by the ocean, or when I've tiptoed back to my office in the wee hours, I listen for the gems of truth that speak through my characters and through the situations they face. I remember things that happened to me or to others, and imagine things that might have happened. I recall the comments you send me. And always, I write from the heart, knowing this is what I'm meant to be doing.

You're a vital part of this journey. As you help me progress, I hope perhaps I can help you progress too. Not one of us is truly alone. We're on this journey together. It's going to be an amazing year! I hope you'll join me and find yourself in . . . **Milford-Haven!**