



May Books in Bloom

Spring has sprung! As of May Day, the air is filled with the fragrance of flowering trees . . . orange blossom, hot-pink trumpets, and our signature jacaranda---the tall trees that burst into purple blooms. My balcony is twined with jasmine that perfume my office, and the gardenias are just beginning to open.



To match all this blooming in the natural world, I'm happy to report that this year's Los Angeles Times Festival of Books was another grand success! The Times decided to move from its long-time event-location on the campus of UCLA to the equally beautiful campus of USC. We wondered if people would find us . . . well, 150,000 did!

This has long been a favorite event of mine. I'm proud of our city. Los Angeles may not derive most of its fame as a reading capital, yet each year we host the largest book festival in the country. We're actually a huge reading community, and the festival offers everything from classics to the latest releases, bookstore faves and indie titles not seen elsewhere. It's a wonderful family event, so if you're in So Cal at the end of next April, be sure to make a day of it.

Meanwhile, what was it like at my booth this year? The best so far . . .

Mara & a Fabulous Team at the L.A. Times Festival of Books

April 30th and May 1st . . . it was an amazing weekend in Los Angeles. This year the Milford-Haven Novels booth did something truly NOVEL if you'll pardon the pun. First, my friend and cover-artist Mary Helsaple, the gifted and multiple award-winning artist, painted the most gorgeous miniature watercolors throughout the event. People were, of course, intrigued to watch her create these magical pieces out of thin air . . . and colored water.



Second, I had as always a fantastic team helping me. Pictured are actress & athlete Katy Sullivan and blogger Monica Fay. In addition Professor Lorien Goodman spoke to my many visitors so eloquently, and Bill Berkuta helped make everyone welcome. Dianemarie and Doug Collins were on hand shooting video on Sunday. [Click here to view VIDEO!](#)

Third, I had the longest lines I've ever experienced at this event! I want to THANK the scores of women who stood in the hot sun waiting for a signed Advance Reader Copy of *What the Heart Knows*! It was a joy to meet each of you, and I'm thrilled you've joined my growing newsletter list. I promise to keep you posted! And if you have COMMENTS after reading the book, please send them! As many of you know, for the past few years I've been co-creating and co-hosting special author tea events. We did **Hospitali-Teas**, **Possibili-Teas**, and **Generosi-Teas** . . . and we have many more in the planning stages. But what I wanted to do was create an actual membership society my readers could join, whether or not you're able to attend these events in person.

So . . . I'm thrilled to announce the new **Milford-Haven Socie-Tea!** Membership enrollment will open April 30th at the L.A. Times Festival of Books, and in the next newsletter I'll give you the link for joining. Membership will entitle you to all kinds of goodies, like better book prices and special bonus items.

During the summer I'll be doing small Author Tea events in California and Colorado that we call Authori-Teas. Would you like to co-host one with me? If so, pick your theme, and pick your charity. I always donate a percentage of book sales to a favorite non-profit. Guests at my Tea events can pre-order the beautiful hardcover for a discounted price and receive a special bonus item as well. If this sounds like fun, e-mail Reya@HavenBooks.net, who will continue to assist with my personal events.

An exciting list of events is in the planning stages for next fall. My marketing team [DM Productions](#) is cooking up some wonderful events. For example, I'll be doing a Virtual Book Tour throughout the month of August. And in September I've been invited to speak in San Luis Obispo, first to the SLO NightWriters, and then at the annual Central Coast Book Festival. Several other events are in the planning stages too. Meanwhile, what's right around the corner is the LA Times Festival of Books later this month, and Book Expo American in May!

First Members of the new Socie-Tea

WELCOME new members! Enrollment for membership in the brand new Milford-Haven Socie-Tea opened at the L.A. Times Festival of Books.



So far, Socie-Tea events coming in summer and early fall include a Pool Par-Tea in Colorado, and a Creativi-Tea in L.A. I'll announce the dates and send invitations in plenty of time. Guests at my Tea events can pre-order the beautiful hardcover for a discounted price and receive a special bonus item as well. If this sounds like fun, e-mail Reya@HavenBooks.net, who will continue to assist with my special events.

Additions to the Press Room!

If you'd like to find out anything about the new book and the new book launch, join us in the Press Room ! Here the media can find photos, press releases, and all the latest news about my books and events. The symbol is a link to allow you to subscribe via RSS feed to my news. We have some great new VIDEO from the book festival!



We're already getting a wonderful response from the press! Is there a newspaper in your town or city that you think might be interested in topics like: What do women read? What is Women's Fiction? Is there Men's Fiction? What's the difference between Women's Fiction and Romance? Is fiction relevant to today's world? And . . . many other related topics . . . let me know! My wonderful marketing team will be happy to schedule an interview. Contact DMProductionsLLC.

The World of Authoring

More people are reading these days than ever in the history of our country. That's good, because more people are writing now than ever before as well!

But how can authors succeed in this era of dwindling major presses and expanding small presses? How can authors create authentic branding rather than just more noise? How can authors define and then reach their readers?

To help authors navigate these treacherous waters, my friend, colleague and mentor Judith Briles established Author U in Denver, Colorado. Judith has been a very successful author and speaker for decades. But her own success wasn't her ultimate goal. Her passion now is to help others who are serious about creating breakthroughs with both writing and marketing. So on May 6th and 7th she produced the first annual Author U Extravaganza. (After my plane from L.A. landed, I only had eight hours to unpack, repack, and sleep before this next event started.)



A full agenda with speakers from around the country gathered in the Mile High city. The entire symposium is now available on DVD, and Author U will be producing webinars, for those who can't attend montly programs in person. If you're an author, consider this a valuable resource.

Up Next . . . Book Expo America!

I never did put away my suitcase, and it's packed again now, ready for New York! May is the month for the largest book trade show in the country, Book Expo America, or BEA. This is where publishers connect with buyers, and authors debut their latest books to the trade. It's one of the key events of the year for the publishing business. This year it will again take place in the Big Apple, at the Jacob Javits Center in New York City.

It will be a thrill for me to be there with my new publishers! I'll be signing the ARCs of my new book twice on Wednesday, May 25th. The first signing is from Noon to 1:00 pm in the official Autographing Hall. The second is from 2:30 - 3:30 in the huge Midpoint Trade Books booth, number 2439. If you're in the book biz, please stop by! I look forward to meeting you in person and signing a book for you!



New Plot Line – A Teaser from Book One

So you've been hearing about the NEW content in the NEW edition of What the Heart Knows. . . . Here's your next HINT of what to expect. . . .

Do you belong to a book club? Do you enjoy the discussions? Do you ever have a hard time agreeing upon which books to read?

In Book One, a small group of women in Milford-Haven are also wrestling a little bit with several possible options. Since this book is set in 1996, it was fascinating to review what the bestsellers were at the time, and what book clubs were discussing most! Want to hazard a guess as to what books I included for Milford-Haven's book club? If you guess right, we'll knock \$2 off your What the Heart Knows book order.



By the way, in the real world, my novels are favorites with book clubs. At the back of my books you'll always find a page with wonderful Topics for Discussion, and these are also posted at my website and at my publisher's website. One of the most wonderful resources for book clubs all over the country is Reading Group Choices. They feature my novels, and many others you might enjoy. Watch for their listing of the brand new What the Heart Knows!

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



Blog-adocious

A weekly blog?? At first I was trepidatious. Now I think a weekly blog is expialidocious (to quote the expert, Mary Poppins). Why? Because it's causing me to look at life, issue by issue, from the perspective of the heart. That's what this year of the "heart" book is all about. I truly learn something every week.

I've been getting advice from well-meaning (and extremely successful) blog-gurus that I should actually be blogging daily. Well, not to say they're wrong, but what works well for non-fiction writers doesn't necessarily work the same way for fiction writers.

I'm not writing "daily tips", nor political tidbits, nor financial reports. I'm writing from the inner recesses of the heart, where feelings resonate, and where ideas need time to drift and settle, like shiny coins dropped over the side of a ship gradually making their way to the sandy bottom.

I would love to hear what you're thinking, or how you're feeling. If you'd like to share this part of my journey, you can read or subscribe at MaraPurl.WordPress.com I hope you'll join me and find yourself in . . . Milford-Haven!

