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## Happy Holidays!

### Welcome to the Holiday Season!

Here we are in December, a month of several cherished holidays. In my fictional towns of Milford-Haven, situated on California's Central Coast, residents often decorate with seashells, or even make small trees entirely out of shells with sea stars on top!



Since the whole string of special days began on Thanksgiving with gratitude, I'll start by saying how much I cherish you, my awesome readers, and how much I value the author communities in which I feel fortunate to enjoy membership. Author groups are rich in mutual support, encouragement and wisdom-sharing. So it's been wonderful to attend and present at several excellent events this year. I work hard to create presentations that will make a difference for fellow authors, and it's clear my author friends do the same, so we all leave our conferences with fresh ideas, insights and inspiration, which means we can do an even better job of creating books you'll find enjoyable, fun, useful and uplifting.

I'm excited to share a new holiday newsletter from **Milford-Haven** with you, along with news of upcoming and recent events. Here's hoping some of my offerings will help to make this a marvelous holiday season for you!

## When Angels Paint - New Novelette!

My protagonist Miranda Jones promised herself a "handside Christmas" this year, and in this story we see she's been busy sewing, glazing, firing pottery, and of course, painting.



I know I say this every time . . . but this is one of my favorite covers! This image - as always, an original watercolor by artist Mary Helcagle - takes you into the artist studio of my protagonist Miranda Jones. And here's a really fun thing for you to explore. I posted a video of me standing inside Miranda's virtual studio . . . and Mary began with that image as she created her watercolor. Take a look! [Miranda's Studio Video.](#)

Because this novelette is a companion to last year's **Where an Angel's On a Rope**, you might notice that the art work on the cover in Miranda's studio is, in fact, the cover art for the **Rope** story. Actually the two stories takes place concurrently. So while astronomer and mountaineer Cornelius Smith is having his narrow escape high in the Angeles Crest Mountains, Miranda is painting in her studio . . . a most unexpected and inexplicable image. (What does she paint? Hint: it's the cover image of the novelette about Cornelius.)

To download your **FREE copy of the new novelette**, Click [HERE](#) **When Angels Paint**, and enjoy a wonderful holiday read guaranteed to put you in the mood for the magic only angels can bring to the holidays!

## Where an Angel's On a Rope

In case you missed the first novelette in the holiday tales, here it is, the companion story to **When Angels Paint**. Both stand on their own, but you'll have so much more fun reading them both!



This one is a true adventure story, based in part on an experience I shared with a friend, and based, too, on wonderful research and experiences over the years in the Angeles Crest National Forest near my home in Los Angeles.

**Where an Angel's On a Rope** has won four awards since its publication: Gold L.A. Book Festival Award for Regional Literature, Silver Benjamin Franklin Digital Award, Silver Global E-Book Award, and Bronze CIPs Merit Award.

To read reviews and comments and find buy-links, have fun exploring this page: [MaraPurl.com/books/where-an-angels-on-a-rope!](#)

## Whose Angel Key Ring

The third of the holiday novelettes, published a couple of years ago, takes place in a gorgeously decorated Santa Barbara mansion where a lonely man feels glum after alienating both the women he'd been dating. (Grrrr!)



But then . . . locked away for many years . . . a precious secret comes to light that shifts his awareness and brings a very special Christmas moment.

This heartfelt story has won two book awards. Found out more, read reviews, and find buy links on this special page - [Whose Angel Key Ring](#).

## Book Club Visits!

Nothing delights me more than being invited to discuss my books with **book club** members! This December I've been honored to visit two fantastic meetings with dynamic, thoughtful readers, scrumptious food, and gorgeously decorated homes.



We talked late into the night about the journey from "head" to "heart", the challenges of life's different chapters, the failures and triumphs and my characters (and ourselves) and hopes and goals for the coming year.

**THANK YOU** to both book clubs!! And if you belong to a club and would like to arrange a visit -- in person or via Skype or phone -- let me know! My books always include discussion questions in the back-matter, just in case you want some starting points.

## February Book & Drama Event

In autumn 2017, some of my fellow Central Coast authors and I discovered that not only do we have story-setting in common, we also share a passion for theatre! The event we created was so successful, and fun, that we're creating an "Act II" this year.



Four authors -- Sue McGinty, Victoria Heckman, Anne R. Allen, and Mara Purl (three of whom are also actors), with the help of one additional actor, shall perform Dramatic Readings from our latest and greatest books! Great fun shall be had be all!

Join us for a bit of Book-Theatre at the glorious and delightful Coalesce-Bookstore in beautiful Morro Bay!

- **What** - Dramatic Readings from New Books
- **Where** - Coalesce Bookstore, 848 Main Street, Morro Bay, California
- **When** - Sunday, February 10th, 1:00 pm
- **Included:** Refreshments (Free) & Signed Books (no purchase)

## Ides of March - What the Soul Suspects

As many of you know, the **Milford-Haven** saga begins with a professional journalist, Christine Christian. She's always been close to my heart, and largely drawn from my own experiences of journalism days. I wrote for the *Financial Times* of London, the *Associated Press*, *Rolling Stone*, *Working Women Magazine*, and several others, and before that, cut my reporter-teeth while a teenager writing for the *Hairichi Daily News* in Tokyo.



To this day, I use every skill I learned as a journalist--researching, finding, structuring, completing a story. And I learned from some of the best in the business, working for or with them. So it was no surprise to me when "Chris" showed up in Milford-Haven.

Here is a cautionary tale, however, a disturbing one too. Though she's woven throughout the series, she kept sending me notes that she needed her own novels. When it began to make its way to the page, it took me into a paranormal realm, and that's where it'll take you. So be prepared for something entirely different . . . just in time for the Ides of March!

## My Heart is Grateful . . .

. . . for the many stages of this past year . . . blend and figurative. To have the chance to play koto at Brooklyn Academy of Music . . . to perform as Julia Morgan on a Julia-built stage in Oakland . . . and on both coasts be on stage with brilliant, accomplished colleagues . . . these are blessings that are soul gifts beyond compare.



Then there were the speaking stages for such diverse and marvelous seminars, workshops and panels at sea, in Tucson, Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, Denver, and other locations. And there are the stages-of-work as I plotted my next novels and novellas, wrote my chapters, and worked with my superb editors.

On a personal level, there are stages of friendships, some relatively new, and some stretching back to earlier decades, such that we have seen each other through many chapters of life. Every friend teaches me to love and understand better, and I'm humbled by the years of support or the immediate sense of trust and connection. My journey wouldn't be complete without you..

Here are two concerns I want to voice. I often say that fiction is about truth-telling, and Truth makes the fibers we use to weave our lives. Fiction has its place as a story-lens. Non-fiction has its place as factual data from which we can make sound decisions. Journalists are vital truth-tellers in our world, and they and their work are under threat from totalitarian regimes across the globe, and at home by unscrupulous hackers and spin-doctors. Let's use our built-in Truth Detectors and keep aware of the distinction between truth and opinion. My second concern is, as always, about ecology, about which I've done writing, research, articles, documentaries, and fiction throughout my adult life. The United Nations' recent report states that we have twelve years to make significant strides against Global Warming. Shall we do it? We can if we choose to. Why not offer a cleaner, safer planet to the next generation? None of us want to continue to deal with "hundred year" storms as they become "the new normal."

Life is so precious. Love is so enlightening. Truth is so empowering. That's what my writing, performing and speaking are really about. That's what my regard for you, my readers, is really about. And, of course, that's really what Milford-Haven is all about. Thank you for joining me on this interesting, challenging, and inspiring journey! Let's see what wonderful things we can create in the New Year!

As always, love and gratitude, **from my heart to yours!**