

MARA PURL

When the Heart Listens

Reading Group Topics for Discussion

1. The novellas and novelettes in this series stand alone, while the novels are written in more of a serial format. Do you prefer stories that have a traditional beginning, middle and end? Or do you prefer a serial story?
2. Though several books in the series take place in Milford-Haven, this is a prequel, occurring before the protagonist discovers the town and then decides to move there. Is it interesting or helpful to read this “background” story?
3. The story focuses on protagonist Miranda Jones, who currently lives in the world of art in San Francisco. How would you describe her feelings about her sometimes competitive career in the big city? Is she irresponsible about money? Should income be the focus of a career?
4. This novella also focuses on Miranda’s relationships with her sister Meredith. What is your impression of Meredith? Do you admire her business sense and financial success? Why does she disapprove of her artsy sister? Do they make good roommates?
5. This book shows a lot of interaction between Miranda, Meredith, and their parents. Do their parents strike the right balance of being supportive about their daughters, or do they meddle?
6. A protagonist should have some solid, recurring qualities, but also should grow and learn from her experiences. Does Miranda grow and learn? Does she overthinks her decisions? Does she truly followed her intuition in deciding to move?
7. Were you surprised by Meredith’s romantic behavior? Do you feel she should have known better than to date the man she did? Or do you think she was genuinely hoodwinked, and did a good job coming clean about a tricky situation?
8. In addition to being a writer, Mara Purl is also an actress who has performed in theatre and on television, as well as co-writing the book *Act Right*. Do you feel her understanding of characters and their behavior makes her writing more realistic?
9. Why is this book called *When the Heart Listens*? Do you believe Miranda, or any other characters, actually listened to their “heart” or intuitive information? Do you feel this gave them legitimate guidance?

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<http://marapurl.com/books/when-the-heart-listens>