

MARA PURL

When the Heart Listens

Reading Group Topics for Discussion

1. This book is the prequel to the *Milford-Haven Novels*. It provides the “back story,” occurring before the protagonist discovers the town of Milford-Haven. How does the prequel help set the stage for the saga? Why does it make you want to read *What the Heart Knows*, the first novel in the series?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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 too much? Are they equally supportive of both siblings?
5. A protagonist should have some solid, recurring qualities, but also should grow and learn from her experiences. Does Miranda grow and learn? Does she overthink her decisions? Does she truly followed her intuition in deciding to move?
6. 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?
7. How would you compare and contrast Veri, the Jones family matriarch, and Zelda McIntyre, art representative? Do either of them truly put Miranda’s interests first? Or are they focused on their own agendas?
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>