

# MARA PURL

## *What the Heart Knows*

### Reading Group Topics for Discussion

1. This is Novel #1 of the saga, and it introduces the town of Milford-Haven almost as if it were a character. What is nurturing and supportive about a small town? Is the good of the community as important as the good of the individual?
2. Is Samantha in crisis? What function does journal-writing perform in her life? Have you ever kept a journal? What did it do for you?
3. Is reporter Chris Christian courageous or foolhardy? Was her trip to the Clarke House impetuous or well-calculated? Should a journalist do almost anything to get at the truth?
4. Do relationships make us more complete? Or are we already complete, and therefore able to bring this quality to a relationship? Would you choose a life partner with your head or with your heart? Why?
5. What makes an artist like Miranda Jones essentially different from other people? Is she a serious artist, or should she get a “real” job when she “grows up”?
6. Why do some women manipulate every personal and business relationship? What are Zelda’s motives? Have you known anyone who stops at nothing to get what she wants? Do you admire or resent her behavior?
7. Is Miranda responding to a deep and soulful recognition when she meets Zack? Is there such a thing as the “right” partner? How can you tell? Can there be more than one?
8. As a former journalist who wrote for the Associated Press, the *Financial Times of London*, and *Rolling Stone* (among others) Mara Purl was trained to do extensive research and to report accurately. How does her journalistic background seem to influence her as a novelist?
9. Why is this book called *What the Heart Knows*? Does this phrase apply only to Samantha and her journal-writing? Does important information come to you through both head and heart? How do you decide which to trust?
10. 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?

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<http://marapurl.com/books/what-the-heart-knows/>