



What the Heart Knows

Mara Purl

Haven Books, North Hollywood, CA, \$12.95 USD, soft-cover (151p)

ISBN: 1-58436-001-1

The charming coastal town of Milford-Haven, California comes to life in Mara Purl's enchanting novel *What the Heart Knows*. Based on her award-winning BBC radio drama, this is the first serial novel in a set of twelve that invites readers to experience a slice of the mystery and romance that is life in Milford-Haven.

Although the picturesque, seaside setting of Milford-Haven plays an important role in the novel, the cast of interesting and eccentric characters is what really draws the reader into the book. The story centers around beautiful, introspective painter Miranda Jones, whose environmentally-sensitive paintings attract the interest of oil magnate Zack Calvin. Once they meet, however, it is more than mere artwork that keeps them together.

While romance is blossoming, other relationships are at risk of exploding. Sally, the eavesdropping restaurant owner, plots against local builder Jack Sawyer and his one-time love, Samantha Hugo. The peaceful town is also unaware that reporter Chris Christian has been murdered while investigating a half-built house on a bluff overlooking the ocean.

Purl, who is a former cast member on the soap opera *Days Of Our Lives*, skillfully tackles tough environmental issues such as land development and off-shore oil drilling through the lives of her characters and the events that unfold. Detailed descriptions of scenic settings, eccentric characters, and tantalizing storylines combine to make this book one that fans of romance will enjoy.

In true soap opera fashion, she leaves us hanging on the last page, living up to the requirements of a true serial novel. Luckily, readers won't have to wait for another installment in the saga, as the second novel, *Closer Than You Think*, is already in print.

BookWire Review
July 12, 2006
