

## More Bitter Than Death

### Introduction and inspirations:

I got into a lot of trouble in *Site Unseen* when Emma announced (quiet unexpectedly, to me) that she hated New Hampshire. I had to find out why, because I've had fun when I've visited friends and family there, and that led me to write *More Bitter Than Death*.

I go to [Portsmouth](#) to hang out, and if you do, make a point of checking out [Strawbery Banke](#). It showcases some of the archaeology that's gone on in Portsmouth, from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I also like the [RiverRun Bookstore](#), a great independent bookstore up there. There's a crazy range of restaurants, from barbecue ([Muddy River Smokehouse](#)) to ice cream ([Annabelle's](#)) to fine dining ([The Dunaway Restaurant](#)). It's a great town for strolling.

You can probably find your own academic or professional conference to get snowed in, but if I may suggest a few mystery conventions to try out? How about [Malice Domestic](#), [Mayhem in the Midlands](#), [Bouchercon](#), or the [New England Crime Bake](#)?

### Questions:

1. Emma notices that she's no longer one of the up-and-comers and the conference, but one of the established scholars. What are some of the ways in which she embraces or rejects the change?
2. Do you think the "Bitter" in the title refers to the wintry setting? A sense of loss? Regret? Aging? Betrayal? The bad hotel coffee? Something else?
3. Compare Emma's bond with Brian with the one she had with Duncan. Is it just the difference between being in her early twenties and being in her mid-thirties that made the two relationships so dissimilar, or is there something more? Are the two relationships that different?
4. What is your favorite conference/convention/road trip story?
5. For the first time in the series, Emma is challenged to examine how growing up (professionally) with her grandfather Oscar might have been a mixed blessing. The benefits were obvious, but what does she discover were some of the drawbacks? Would she have figured these out if she hadn't gone to the conference?
6. Which of the conference attendees do you most identify with: the observer from the sidelines (Laurel), the walking party (Chris), the refugee from regular life (Lissa), the [guest of honor (Garrison)?