

## Past Malice

### Introduction and inspirations:

Most of my archaeological work was on the coast of New England, where I grew up, so the place really resonates for me. If you ever get the chance to walk around [Salem](#), [Newburyport](#), [Marblehead](#) (in MA), or [Portsmouth](#) (in NH) you can still see a lot of the 17<sup>th</sup>-, 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century houses and wharves and really get a flavor for the place. The historical houses will often have tours and I always try to hit the nearest [National Park Service](#) installation; I think they do a bang-up job of addressing historical, architectural, natural, and cultural issues. And...there are usually bathrooms! When in Salem, go to the [Peabody Essex Museum](#) and then swing over to [Cornerstone Books](#) and drop some cash at a great indie.

I invented the land-locked “Yacht Club” in this book out of a desperate need for a tiki bar near my own home. There isn't one. I'm glad I created one, because in addition to working on my mai-tai recipe, now I have Raylene and Erik the Red, who re-appear in an important scene in *Ashes and Bones*.

If you're not going to go with mai-tais, I'd score some [Ipswich Original Ale](#) . Anything from The Mercury Brewing Co. is tasty stuff (I'm also fond of the Mercury Cream Soda).

### Questions:

1. William Faulkner once said, “The past isn't dead; it isn't even past.” This is clearly the case in Stone Harbor, where history seems to affect a lot of people in the present. Where do you draw the line between commerce and history? Between individual rights and the dictates of a historic community? Tourism and locals?
2. As sisters, Emma and Bucky seem to be opposites in many ways, and certainly competitive. Are they that different, or is it their similarities that make them fight so often? Is this the case with you and your siblings or friends?
3. As the danger increases through the book, Brian and Emma fight over whether she should continue the investigation. Does he have the right to ask her to stay away from the dig? Does she have a right to say no? What's fair here?
4. During the dig, Emma and Brian's unfinished house is full of visitors—the graduate students and Bucky. Have you ever had your home taken over by guests?
5. The Chandler house dig, like every excavation, seems to raise more questions than it answers. Why is it so important to Emma that she keep digging, both at the house and into the documents? Is this related to why she keeps pursuing the murder investigation?
6. Emma notices that on some occasions Bucky seems to understand Brian better than she

does and that their relationship is a lot more carefree. Is she right to be jealous her sister?