

MEET MARY ELLEN TAYLOR

Novelist Mary Ellen Taylor has lived most of her life in her birthplace, Richmond, Virginia, but during her brief time in Alexandria, fell in love with that city, its history and its famed “Old Town” section. Of course, she didn’t know then that they would inspire her contemporary novels, The View from Prince Street, the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance Spring 2015 Okra Pick At the Corner of King Street, Sweet Expectations and The Union Street Bakery. It surprises no one aware of her love of history that each of these Alexandria set stories includes threads tying the present to what has come before, including people and events from the city’s founding through Civil War heroism.



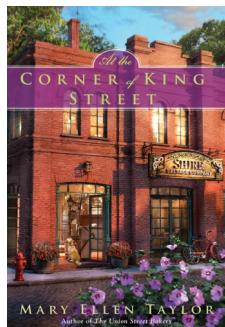
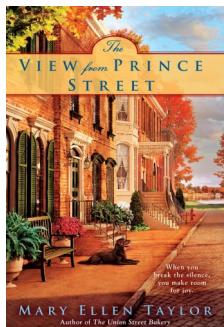
Mary Ellen grew up in a southern family that embraced stories of all kinds, from a well-told anecdote to a good yarn or a tall tale. “I realized early on the tremendous power stories have to inspire laughter, love, sorrow and even fear. It didn’t matter if they were found in the pages of a book, spoken in hushed tones around a campfire, or shared at an old-fashioned family reunion. Stories create connections and I knew that’s what I wanted to do,” says Mary Ellen.

In addition to writing, cooking and baking are important creative outlets for Mary Ellen and she’s been known to name recipes in honor of her characters. She recently earned her Baking and Pastry Arts Certificate at the University of Richmond’s Culinary Arts Program. “In some ways, I liken baking to my efforts as a writer. You need to learn the basic tools of the trade of both cooking and writing before you can push the envelope and create a distinctive sweet dessert or a savory novel. Her two passions—writing and baking—merged for the first time in The Union Street Bakery and, though her *Alexandria* novels At the Corner of King Street and The View from Prince Street are not set in her Old Town Union Street Bakery, the baker in Mary Ellen can’t resist slipping in references to favorite recipes.

Adoption issues are another of Mary Ellen’s interests that are reflected in her Alexandria-set novels. Adoption is actually a main plot point in The Union Street Bakery and to a lesser degree both At the Corner of King Street and The View from Prince Street. Her daughter and grandmother were both adopted and, in recent years, Mary Ellen’s been active in bringing attention to challenges inherent in adoption, including concerns faced by adoptees in adulthood. She spoke at Coordinators2inc’s adoption symposium “Opening Adoption: Realities, Possibilities and Challenges” held at the University of Richmond and is past president of the central Virginia chapter of Families for Russian and Ukrainian Adoption.

Mary Ellen received her degree in English from Virginia’s Hollins University. After a decade of working in marketing and sales, she left to devote her time to writing. Today, in addition to her books as Mary Ellen Taylor, twenty-four of her romantic suspense novels and five novellas written as Mary Burton have been published, several of which have appeared on *The New York Times* and *USA Today* bestseller lists. Her recent novels are I’ll Never Let You Go, Be Afraid, Cover Your Eyes and Vulnerable.

Mary Ellen and her husband spend time alternately enjoying and lamenting their newly empty nest and spoiling their miniature dachshunds, Buddy, Bella and Tiki.



Mary Ellen's Alexandria Novels

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