



Introducing Mary Ellen Taylor...

When Mary Ellen Taylor's novel **The Union Street Bakery** was published in early 2013, readers embraced Daisy McCrae and her family, whose bakery has served the people of Alexandria's Old Town for more than 150 years. And that's before they tried the recipes. Her new novel, **SWEET EXPECTATIONS** returns to the Union Street bakery where, amid renovations, a box of recipes and mementos hidden behind a wall presents a mystery that hits awfully close to home.

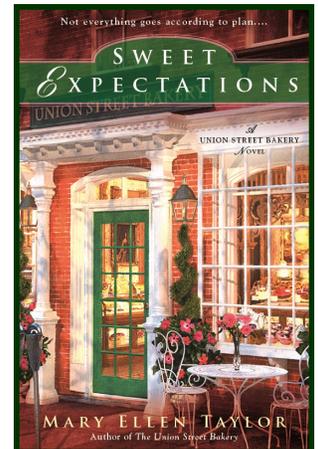
In addition to writing, cooking and baking are important creative outlets for Mary Ellen, who is well known for her cookies and for her suspense novels written as Mary Burton. It seemed inevitable that eventually those two passions—writing and baking—would come together as they did in **The Union Street Bakery** and now in **SWEET EXPECTATIONS**. "In some ways, I liken baking to my efforts as a writer. You need to learn the basics and respect the tools that give you the freedom to develop your story while helping you avert disaster—much the way knowing the difference between baking powder and baking soda can be a real lifesaver."

Mary Ellen Taylor 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. It may have been inevitable that Mary Ellen would take her storytelling heritage to new heights, moving beyond the oral tradition to become a published author.

"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 created connections, and I knew that's what I wanted to do," says Mary Ellen.

Born in Richmond, Mary Ellen has spent most of her life there, but also lived in Alexandria for four years, which is when she fell in love with Alexandria's Old Town, the location of the McCrae family's bakery. She 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 of her romance and suspense novels and four novellas written as Mary Burton have been published and have earned spots on The New York Times and USA Today bestseller lists. The latest, No Escape, has just been published.

When not writing or appearing at conferences and book signings, Mary Ellen pursues her culinary interests. She's been a kitchen assistant for more than fifty classes over the past seven years at Sur la Table and at the University of Richmond's Culinary Arts program, where she is currently completing her Baking and Pastry Arts Certificate. When not digging for mysteries in Alexandria's history or arranging murders, Mary works on behalf of Coordinators2inc, a lifetime adoption resource organization, and Sisters-in-Crime's Virginia chapter of which she is president. She and her husband spend time alternately enjoying and lamenting their newly empty nest and spoiling their miniature dachshunds, Buddy and Bella.



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