



## The View from Prince Street

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**The View from Prince Street** Mary Ellen Taylor

**The author of *The Union Street Bakery* and *At the Corner of King Street* returns to Alexandria, Virginia, with a heartfelt tale of reconnection.**

Rae McDonald was fifteen when a car accident took her sister's life and threw her own into reckless turmoil. When she got pregnant a year later, she found a loving couple to adopt the child. Since then, she's buried her grief and guilt under a heart of stone.

Lisa Smyth survived the fateful crash, but never told the truth about what happened. And when a family obligation draws her back to Alexandria, the weight of Lisa's guilt grows heavier by the day.

As both women confront a past refusing to be forgotten, long-buried artifacts are discovered by the Shire Architectural Salvage Company that point to a shared history between families. Now, Rae and Lisa must finally ask themselves if denying the past is worth sacrificing the future.

## The View from Prince Street Details

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Author : Mary Ellen Taylor

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## From Reader Review The View from Prince Street for online ebook

### Keanes says

So glad she continued the characters from King Street to this one. Loved this one where we could see how all three families were connected. Plus we still had some visits from the McCrae sisters. Grateful Mary Ellen Taylor had the family trees to remind readers of the legacies. Old Town Alexandria was a great sheeting for the historical format.

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### Kathy says

4.5 stars.

*The View from Prince Street* by **Mary Ellen Taylor** is an absolutely beautiful novel of forgiveness, healing and letting go of past secrets.

Rae McDonald is a successful psychologist with a thriving practice. Due to the tragedies in her past, she is quite reserved and she does such an excellent job of hiding her emotions, she has a reputation of being cold-hearted. As a teenager, the deaths of her father and older sister Jennifer just about shattered her, but it was giving her baby son up for adoption that caused her to become so emotionally detached. Rae has kept her shameful secret for sixteen years, but when her son contacts her for information about their family, she is afraid he will resent her for giving him up. Overcoming her fear of her son's rejection, she agrees to meet with him but Rae is taken off guard by how emotional she becomes once she begins to open her heart.

Lisa Smythe was in the same car accident that killed Rae's sister and she, too, has struggled in the intervening years. She turned to alcohol to numb her pain but she has been sober for the past twelve years. She left town to pursue a career in photography, but after her beloved Aunt Amelia is diagnosed with Alzheimer's, she returns to Alexandria to be with her for whatever time she has left. Lisa is very open about her battle with alcoholism and she works hard to maintain her sobriety. Although she has had her drinking under control for many years, the weight of guilt and a long held secret becomes such a heavy burden that Lisa finds it more and more difficult to resist the urge to pick up a drink.

Both women are discovering the devastating impact that secrets have on not only their happiness but their overall emotional well being. Rae is quite introspective as her emotions become impossible to suppress after her son contacts her. However she refuses to allow her feelings free reign for any length of time and although it is not easy, she continues ignoring her pain and regrets. Lisa makes the first steps in facing her painful past by paying a long overdue visit to Jennifer's grave but she continues to avoid making full amends to Rae. As she and Rae continue to cross paths, Lisa proves to be a surprising source of strength for Rae as she agrees to meet with her son, but their time together continues to remind Lisa of the terrible secret she is hiding from her.

Interwoven with the events of the present is a long ago curse involving three families who settled in the area. The removal of stones from Rae's family's original homestead led to the discovery of a witch's bottle which was intended to ward off a witch's spell and evil curses. With Rae's permission, local history buff Margaret McCrae uses the McDonald family documents to research the family's history. Since two other witches bottles have also been recently discovered, Margaret suspects a connection between the three families and her research yields startling results.

*The View from Prince Street* by **Mary Ellen Taylor** is an engrossing novel with an incredible cast of appealing characters. The plot is well-developed and the story arc about the families' shared past is quite intriguing. Although characters from previous works play prominent roles in this most recent release, *The View from Prince Street* can be read as a standalone. A charming novel about family, friendship and new beginnings that I loved and highly recommend to anyone who enjoys contemporary women's fiction.

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### **Viviane Crystal says**

A vicious car accident kills Rae McDonald's sister, and Rae is horribly scarred from this devastating loss. So much does it affect her that after beginning and ending a relationship she finds she's pregnant and actually gives up the child for adoption because she cannot deal with the fact that she could lose someone precious again. But this very rational act actually has dire consequences as Rae is haunted by who that son is with, what he's like, and what are the parents like who adopted him. She constantly imagines what it would be like if she were to find the adopted parents and tell them she wants her child back again and continues to fantasize about such a scene though logic tells her it's an extremely improbable scene.

Now Lisa Smyth appears, a woman who was also in the crash and who has a secret to which she will not admit.

Both of these women are living now in Alexandria, Virginia exploring some family artifacts of interest to those with a historian's predilection. The search brings out the history behind some witch glasses. These are glasses with certain ingredients inside them that when combined creates a curse against enemies. There are also rocks that were part of the fireplace which were given away and one returned; those rocks are said to hold a spell of protection for whoever resides in the home. The long history said to derive from those original settlers who came from England to the shores of America is still present and actively present in spirit form, affecting the lives of those who honor the presence of these relics of colonial life.

In the course of accepting these events and the dangerous scenes that naturally and suspiciously follow, Alexandra and Lisa rise above their greatest fears to discover some redeeming and freeing truths that will dramatically change the future.

*The View from Prince Street...* is thrilling reading with a cover that equally parallels the thrills and reflections of its brilliant plot. A very different, mysterious new story from this talented writer – which this reviewer recommends as a great read!

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### **Melissa says**

The second book in Taylor's Alexandria series completes the story started in the first novel, and everything wraps up beautifully. Continuing characters from the Union Street Bakery series provide richer depth to the narrative. Themes of family, letting go of the past and owning up to mistakes breathe life and emotion into the tale.

Rae McDonald has made a name for herself as a therapist, moving past tragedy and her poor choices. She's known as a matchmaker, although Rae won't own up to it — in her mind, she just lets people know who they are compatible with and who they aren't. Lisa Smyth was involved in a fatal car accident with Rae's sister, which led to years of alcoholism. As the two women come together over some interesting artifacts, they have to learn to move on with their lives to become whole again

- See more at: <http://www.rtbookreviews.com/book-rev...>

## Linda says

Complicated plot, lots of characters--always intimidated by a family tree or list of characters at the start of the book. Having said that, I did enjoy reading another in this series.

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## Linda Smatzny says

This continues the story begun in *At The Corner Of King Street* with the discovery of three witches bottles. It is the story of Rae McDonald who has closed herself off after the death of her older sister and the giving away of her son. It is also the story of Lisa Smyth who was in the car when Rae's sister was killed. Lisa became an alcoholic and is carrying the guilt of the car crash. The book was a quick easy read.

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## Judy Collins says

*A special thank you to Penguin/Berkley and NetGalley for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.*

Mary Ellen Taylor returns following *At The Corner of King Street* (Alexandria #1) with a complex multi-generational mystery of the past **THE VIEW FROM PRINCE STREET** (Alexandria #2) rich in history; with three families crossing two centuries-- *mystery, intrigue and some ancient magic to stir the pot.*

**As the locals read** the weekly Lifestyle edition and the online version of the Old Town Alexandria paper, Dr. Rae McDonald is known to have a heart of stone, however, some think she is a matchmaker, trying to help her clients find happiness.

In fact, **Rae knows sadness**, all too well. It had nearly destroyed her at age sixteen when her old sister had died, and thereafter she had made reckless choices that resulted in a pregnancy. She gave the baby boy away to another mother for adoption. The pain and the loss were crushing. Since that day she knew her survival depended suppressing her feelings. Her detachment had served her well. She can remove herself from her client's storms, problems, and her own emotions.

**We meet up with the McCrae's** we met in book one—Addie Morgan and Margaret McCrae, owners of Shire Architectural --the contractors who removed her stones six weeks ago. Addie is raising her niece, Carrie, eight weeks old. Addie was saving her family's business for the brink of ruin. Margaret worked full time with the salvage company but still maintained close ties to the archeology center. She had a PhD in History and was a well- qualified expert in local history, especially Alexandria.

They had read about Rae, the trained clinical psychologist in the paper. They had found a bottle. A witch bottle. An incredible find. Protection spells. They were created hundreds of years ago by people who feared black magic. They were designed to ward off a witch's spells and evil curses. Most were typically made of wine bottles filled with all kinds of sharp objects. (to cut or slice into the magic). *Curses? A witch.*

**One of the bottles** they found belonged to Addie's family. Sarah Shire Goodwin buried that one. Patience McDonald buried the one they found on Rae's property and Imogen Smyth made the one they found on the Prince Street Property. All three women lived in Alexandria around 1750.

As the book flashes back from the eighteenth century to the present we find the connections of three Alexandria families. At the beginning of the novel, it opens with a letter in 1751. A bind between these three families. A dangerous barter.

Rae's sister's best friend **Lisa Smyth** survived the crash, but never told the truth about it. As long-buried artifacts that link their family histories are unearthed, both women are forced to confront the secrets of the past, before they can have a future.

Secrets. A Buried past. Choices. As the book moves along, both Rae and Lisa are at a crossroads in their lives. The ties that bind. Face the past in order to have a future.

“Past, Present, and Future are links in a chain. For a chain to be strong you must have all the links. Not the ones you select. “A thought provoking question: Can you live in the now without acknowledging the problems of the past?”

Ultimately, an emotional **heartwarming novel** of motherhood, forgiveness, letting go of the past, new beginnings, and second chances. As always you can count on Mary Ellen Taylor to deliver a bold life lesson, a strong takeaway message, and some savory recipes. This time Rachel at The Union Street Bakery offers her *Lemon Polenta Cookies and Never Too Much Chocolate Chip Cookies*.

**An excellent choice** for book clubs or further reading group discussions with questions included. If you have not read *The Union Street Bakery* series, highly recommend!

JDCMustReadBooks

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## Meg - A Bookish Affair says

"The View from Prince Street" is the story of two women who are linked by a tragic event in their past that neither of them really wants to discuss. It happened when they were teenagers and now that they are adults neither of them feels like the still want to talk about what happened that fateful day. They eventually realize that in order to begin to move past that event they have to talk about it. This is the second book in the author's Alexandria series. This is very much a standalone book so you don't need to go back and read the first book if you don't want to. After reading this book, I do want to go back and read the first book in the series though!

I was drawn to this book by the local connection initially. Alexandria, Virginia sits just outside of Washington, D.C. and it's a place that I love to visit. Even though it's very close to the nation's capital, it still feels like a small town. The author includes a lot of local landmarks in and around the town of Alexandria that it really brought this book to life for me. The setting is great!

At first, I felt like the author was giving a little bit too much detail and telling instead of showing in the beginning of the book. Eventually the narrative really evens out and I got very into the book and the story of Rae and Lisa. Both women deal with their feelings in very different ways which makes for a very interesting juxtaposition. I really liked how the author was able to create two very different characters. I felt for them for different reasons. I was a little bit more drawn to Rae's story since she almost seems to be affected a little bit more by the past than Lisa does. Overall, this was a great story about family and how it is important to deal

with those hard things that may be holding you back!

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### **Gail Chianese says**

Review to come.

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### **Susan says**

Thoroughly enjoyed this story of three families with ties to Alexandria, Virginia, since the early 1700s. Current day stories with the history of the intermingling of these families over the generations was very entertaining. A light but very enjoyable read. Enjoyed learning a bit about wet plate photography.

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### **Krista Capp says**

I'd love to give this book 5 stars because I love the community all of Taylor's books take place in and the characters she creates. My problem with this book was the number of editing errors. There were many times where there would be one sentence and the very next one would be completely contradictory to it. Don't know if she changed editors, but someone needs to step it up.

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### **Jeanne Adamek says**

It was with a bit of trepidation that I started this fourth book in a series that started with The Union Street Bakery. I was worried that the author could not keep the magic going--not keep the story alive and flowing as with the previous three books. I didn't have to worry.

This was a story that I found I NEEDED to read, never really realizing before that I was missing the people I had met in Mary Ellen Taylor's previous novels, and actually missing the newest additions, characters I have never met. Reading this I felt like I was with friends... The book was wonderful.

And I have to admit that I once again felt trepidation now that I have finished. The author tied all the pieces so well together that I had the feeling that this series is finished. I hope I am wrong.

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I love re-reading books that I love. Re-reading this series continuously from the first book to the fourth and last was even more fantastic than reading them the first time. Although each of these books could be read as a stand alone, and be appreciated, it was the journey into the stories and finding small (but extremely interesting) things that I seemed to miss or ignore the first time that was wonderful. And, once again, I wish there was a fifth book. I recommend this series to anyone who enjoys history, mystery, a bit of paranormal and reading about wonderful people in small towns.

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## **Charlotte Lynn says**

The View from Prince Street is a story about living with guilt, moving past that guilt, and mending bridges. Rae and Lisa have known each other forever. Lisa was Rae's sister, Jennifer, best friend. When Jennifer dies in a car crash and Rae survives it changes their lives forever. They both dealt with the guilt in their own way and both came out alive but not living life. Rae was afraid to open her heart. She did not want to get hurt the way that she had following the accident again. Lisa kept the truth about the accident buried deep inside her and it was eating her up.

This was not a quick and easy read. It was good, actually it was really good. I started and could not put it down. I devoured each page and knew that I had to read just one more chapter, then one more, and maybe one more before I could put the book down. The characters became more than just characters in the book; they became friends and people I cared about. I needed them to find their happiness or at least become settled in the lives they were living. I was invested in finding their happy ever afters and settling their pasts.

While the story is about Lisa and Rae, it is also about intertwining families and the twisted histories. I was interested in how Fiona would tie them all together. Amelia's story is one that I wanted to know more about. I love how it was all tied together, the past, the present, and now the future.

The View from Prince Street is a great book. I recommend checking it out.

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## **Kevin Kern says**

I have liked all 4 books, in her intertwined series. This was the last, but hopefully not really the last. These young families all have a lot more to share, with their readers.

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## **Kristina says**

The View from Prince Street by Mary Ellen Taylor is a part of the Alexandria series. Dr. Rae McDonald lives in her family home in Alexandria, Virginia. The home has been in her family over two hundred years. Rae is a clinical psychologist and runs her practice out of her house. Some call her a matchmaker (but not Rae). Rae gave away a baby when she was sixteen years old (as a result of the death of her sister) and despite her academic achievements and a good career, Rae has not really moved on with her life. She is still emotionally in the same place she was sixteen years ago.

Lisa Smyth is a wet plate photographer (a very old method of taking pictures). She found a bellows camera when she was a teenager at Shire Architectural Salvage Yard and has been entranced with it since. Lisa usually travels around the country (taking photographs), but her Aunt Amelia suffered an accident. Amelia suffered a broken hip and also has advanced dementia. Lisa is getting her settled into an assisted living facility and visiting her everyday with Amelia's dog, Charlie. Lisa was in an accident sixteen years ago. Her

best friend, Jennifer died in the auto accident. Lisa was drunk at the time (so was Jennifer). Lisa's aunt helped her get into AA (after the accident). It is a constant battle for Lisa (because of the guilt she feels). She has never recovered from the accident (emotionally) and still needs to make amends to two people.

Margaret McCrae loves history. When Margaret and her business partner, Addie Morgan were clearing (they run Shire Architectural Salvage) out hearth stones at Rae McDonald's she came across a witch bottle. This is the third witch bottle they have found. One for each of the founding families (Smyth, Goodwin, and McDonald). Margaret would love to do more research into the McDonald family. Rae is reluctant (she avoids the past) until she gets a message from her biological child. We get to go on a journey into the past to see how the families began and how they are still connected to this day.

The View from Prince Street was a very good book. I was drawn in right away and just kept reading. I liked how the past and present were twined together. I did not read the first book in the Alexandria series, but it did not hinder my reading (nor enjoyment) of this novel. I will, though, be reading it as soon as I have room in my schedule (as well as Mary Ellen Taylor's other books). The View from Prince Street has some great characters and a beautiful setting. I liked how the characters developed during the book. It was enjoyable how the writer included the past (their family history) and related it to the present. I give The View from Prince Street 5 out of 5 stars. I liked it. There were no slow or boring parts. The book had a nice pace and is very well written.

I received a complimentary copy of The View from Prince Street from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Check out my blog for additional details and a giveaway: <http://bibliophileandavidreader.blogs...>

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