



Winter Cottage

Mary Ellen Taylor

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A gripping novel about family secrets...and coming home for the first time.

Still grieving the loss of her wandering, free-spirited mother, Lucy Kincaid leaves Nashville for the faded town of Cape Hudson, Virginia. She goes to see the house she's inherited—one she never knew existed, bequeathed to her by a woman she's never even met. At the heart of this mystery is the hope that maybe—just *maybe*—this “Winter Cottage” will answer the endless questions about her mother's past...including the identity of her birth father.

Rather than the quaint Virginian bungalow Lucy expected, Winter Cottage is a grand old estate of many shadows—big enough to hold a century of secrets, passions, and betrayals. It also comes with a handsome and enigmatic stranger, a man next in line to claim Lucy's inheritance.

Now, as Lucy sifts through the past, uncovering the legacy of secrets that Winter Cottage holds, she'll come to discover as much about her family history as she does about herself. In searching, she could finally find the one thing she's never really had: a *home*.

Winter Cottage Details

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Author : Mary Ellen Taylor

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Genre : Romance, Fiction, Mystery, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Winter Cottage for online ebook

Yeni says

I have read books by this author and have always enjoyed her Mary Burton books. This was a nice change for me. I have always preferred books that deal with police procedure. This book is nothing like her other stories. I do recommend it if you are looking for a story that has mystery but without the gruesome murder. There is a murder but it is not as detailed as the ones from her other books. The characters are interesting and you are hoping for the best in the end for each one. It is a sweet story that changes between different time periods. I enjoyed the various characters, but felt sympathy for them because they all endure so much heartache. You are hoping that by the end they can find the happiness that they all deserve. I recommend this book to anyone looking for a sweet romance.

-Yeni

Katie B says

3.5 stars

This was a really enjoyable work of fiction that had elements of romance and mystery. Lucy Kincaid was raised by her single mother, Beth. After Beth dies, Lucy finds out she has inherited a house, known as the Winter Cottage, in the town of Cape Hudson, Virginia, which is where her mother grew up. Lucy knows nothing about her mother's past, and what made her leave her hometown as a teenager and never return. She stumbles upon some video recordings from the late 1980s of her then teenage mother interviewing the home's former owner, Catherine Buchanan, for a school project, and soon Lucy realizes this is a home filled with secrets of the past.

The story alternates between Lucy in the present day, her mother in the 1980s, and Claire working for the wealthy Buchanan family in the early 1900s. Each of these characters brought something to the table in making this an interesting read however I really felt the most invested in Claire's story.

There were a few things that I didn't particularly care for in the book. Some things just did not seem realistic in the year 2018. The whole this is a small town thing therefore things are done differently didn't ring true in a few instances. The other thing that bugged me was I thought the author tried to fill the story with too many twists to the point which it detracted from the characters and story. None of these things ruined the book for me though. They were just minor annoyances.

Definitely a good read if you are looking for something with interesting female lead characters. I would definitely read something again by Mary Ellen Taylor who also writes books under the name Mary Burton.

I won a free ebook in a giveaway but was under no obligation to post a review. All views expressed are my honest opinion.

Sarah says

4.5 Stars

Original review can be found on my blog: [Review: Winter Cottage](#)

When I requested this book from NetGalley it was the cover that drew me in right away. I didn't read anything about the book and went into it with no real knowledge of what it was about, and am I ever glad I did.

In my opinion, this book is best experienced that way (my apologize for posting the back copy text above for this reason). I was pulled into this story right from the beginning, with a flashback to Lucy's mother as a teenager and then you delve into Lucy's story. I actually don't want to talk too much about this book, other than it was absolutely fantastic!

This book is listed as a romance and yes there is romantic elements and a love story within the book, it is so much more than that. If you love historical fiction, you will love this story. It is told as a dual time line (more than just two, because it flashes back to not only the late 1980's, but also around 1917). I think I enjoyed those parts of the story much more than the present day story.

This is book about love, loss and family secrets. It also contains a great mystery that follows all three time lines which was so well written and kept me guessing right up until the very end.

Mary Ellen Taylor may be better known to more readers as the amazing romantic suspense author, Mary Burton (who I also recommend you check out her books) and it shows with the mystery and suspense aspects of this novel.

This is absolutely a must read for fans of history fiction or romance or mystery. There really is a little something in this book for just about everyone.

I received a digital review copy of this book from Montlake Romance via NetGalley.

Challenges:

♥ RRRC October 2018 Monthly Challenge #3. Featured Author Challenge

Elizabeth says

This book hit almost all the marks for me. I love books that mix the past with the present and "Winter Cottage" definitely provided me with a wonderful read! I have never read any books by this author and will definitely be seeking more books written by her in the future.

The story is fairly simple. Girl's mother dies, she finds that mom had inherited a cottage near the Chesapeake Bay. Girl goes because she hopes to find her father there. The simplicity ends there. Lucy, the primary character, finds more questions than answers. She also discovers a lot more. But the reader should discover that! I loved the story and the characters! The reason for the one star is that I kept getting confused with the names and dates. That may be just a "me" thing, but it put me off just a bit.

Thank you to NetGalley and Montlake Romance for the opportunity to read and provide an honest review of this book.

Elsie Broadbent says

My first read under the name Mary Ellen Taylor and a delightful book it was. I am so used to reading this author as Mary Burton that it took me by surprise how gentle and interesting it was. Lucy has come to bring her Mother's ashes back to her small hometown, not wanting to stay as she loves her life in Nashville, but there is a hero called Hank and things go on from there. I particularly liked the time shift, going backwards to Claire's story and retold to Beth, Lucy's Mum, by Mrs Buchanan who had her own love story to tell. All in all, different but well worth a read.

Sandy *The world could end while I was reading and I would never notice* says

EXCERPT: "Was it love at first sight?"

Mrs Buchanan is silent for a long moment. The drumbeat of secrets grows louder. "Yes. But that love wasn't for my husband, Robert."

Blue eyes are calculating like the fox's were when he sniffed fresh fish in the trap.

"Who?"

"See you on Friday."

ABOUT THIS BOOK: Still grieving the loss of her wandering, free-spirited mother, Lucy Kincaid leaves Nashville for the faded town of Cape Hudson, Virginia. She goes to see the house she's inherited—one she never knew existed, bequeathed to her by a woman she's never even met. At the heart of this mystery is the hope that maybe—just maybe—this "Winter Cottage" will answer the endless questions about her mother's past...including the identity of her birth father.

Rather than the quaint Virginian bungalow Lucy expected, Winter Cottage is a grand old estate of many shadows—big enough to hold a century of secrets, passions, and betrayals. It also comes with a handsome and enigmatic stranger, a man next in line to claim Lucy's inheritance.

Now, as Lucy sifts through the past, uncovering the legacy of secrets that Winter Cottage holds, she'll come to discover as much about her family history as she does about herself. In searching, she could finally find the one thing she's never really had: a home.

MY THOUGHTS: The opening chapter of Winter Cottage by Mary Ellen Taylor drew me in, but then I felt that the book lost its way for a time, before finally getting back on track and reaching a satisfying conclusion. It all became a little confusing with the story split over two timelines and quite a large cast of characters. Each story has merit, and each could easily have stood on its own. But, in the end, the tying of the two stories together worked for me.

We have all been guilty, at one time or another, of saying nothing when we ought to have spoken up, whether it was a matter of principal or something more personal. And it is the unsaid things in family relationships that are at the centre of this mystery. That, and settling for second best.

Taylor has a lovely turn of phrase. 'Old pains bob like distant buoys.' and 'the drumbeat of secrets grows louder' are two examples that stuck in my mind.

Lucy's character struck a chord with me, as did that of Natasha, but I thought Hank too good to be true! The plot is not predictable, in fact mostly entirely the opposite. There are plenty of twists and turns to keep the reader interested.

While not entirely enthralled by *Winter Cottage*, it intrigued me enough that I would read more by this author, and I intend to check out the books this author has written under the name of Mary Burton.

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THE AUTHOR: 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 Taylor would take her storytelling heritage to new heights, moving beyond the oral tradition to become a published author.

Taylor, who finds cooking and baking to be important creative outlets, explores some of the challenges and comforts of those pursuits in her Alexandria set novels *THE UNION STREET BAKERY*, *SWEET EXPECTATIONS*, *AT THE CORNER OF KING STREET* and *THE VIEW FROM PRINCE STREET*. The novels, which explore themes of family, adoption, belonging and personal history, are influenced by her life and family. Both her grandmother and her daughter were adopted, as is Daisy McCrae, the protagonist in her first novel written as Mary Ellen Taylor, *THE UNION STREET BAKERY*.

Taylor was born and has spent most of her life in Richmond, but also lived in Alexandria for four years. She received her degree in English from Virginia's Hollins University, and worked in marketing and sales before she became convinced she could write and sell one of the many stories swirling in her head. Today, twenty-eight of her romance and suspense novels and five novellas written as Mary Burton have been published, earning praise from readers and reviewers and have made her a *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author. *THE UNION STREET BAKERY* was her first novel as Mary Ellen Taylor.

When not writing or appearing at conferences and book signings, Taylor continues her culinary pursuits. She's been a kitchen assistant for more than fifty culinary classes over the past seven years at *Sur la Table* and earned her Baking and Pastry Arts Certificate from the University of Richmond's Culinary Arts program. In addition to spending time with her family and her three miniature dachshunds, Buddy, Bella and Tiki, Mary Ellen enjoys walking and honing her culinary skills.

DISCLOSURE: Thank you to Montlake Romance via Netgalley for providing a digital ARC of *Winter Cottage* by Mary Ellen Taylor for review. All opinions expressed in this review are entirely my own personal opinions.

Please refer to my Goodreads.com profile page or the about page on sandysbookaday.wordpress.com for an explanation of my rating system. This review and others are also published on my blog sandysbookaday.wordpress.com [https://sandysbookaday.wordpress.com/...](https://sandysbookaday.wordpress.com/)

Julie says

Loved it! Look for this review on the Harlequin Junkies website in the near future.
www.harlequinjunkies.com

TheHauteBookworm says

I loved this book! I was hooked immediately! So captivated and intrigued I couldn't put the book down, reading from beginning to end in one sitting. The two main characters Lucy and Claire, generations apart, tell their stories. We visit each era and character's life simultaneously while being held to the edge of your seat needing to know the answers to the unsolved mysteries. But the story line doesn't stop there! You find you also need to know who Lucy's father is, will Claire finally reconnect with the love of her life, and the biggest question...how Claire and Lucy are connected. The author weaves the multiple story lines wonderfully. The story includes history, mysteries, tragedy, and love. It was well written and definitely worth the read!

I read an ARC of this book via Netgalley. My fair and honest review is voluntary.

Lisa Richardson says

I really enjoyed this story by Mary Ellen Taylor. I have read numerous books by Mary Burton who also writes as Mary Ellen Taylor and Ms. Burton is a must read for this reader. The author does a great job of conveying the fear, heartache and joy of the characters through multiple generations and difficult circumstances such as class differences, the onset of World War I and how the loss of a parent/s is dealt with by children of all ages from young teens to adults. This was a truly entertaining read and I will definitely be reading more of Mary Ellen Taylor's work.

Kristine says

Original review can be found at <https://kristineandterri.blogspot.com...>

** I received an advanced readers copy from Montlake Romance via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you!**

Winter Cottage was the story of different generations of people with a house in Cape Hudson in common. It weaved back and forth in time to connect the dots to present day. Lucy inherited the cottage, which was not a cottage at all, from a woman she had never met in a town she had never heard of that had a direct link to her recently deceased mother. With nowhere else to go and in the hopes of getting some answers she travelled from Nashville with her mother's dog to do just that. The cottage came with some conditions though. Lucy had to live there for at least a month and all of the money attached to it was meant only for renovations to the house. On top of that, she wasn't the only one wanting the house or land attached to it. Also, she seemed to unintentionally inherit a young girl as well.

I was all in with this book. This was the type of book that I generally always enjoy. A story with secrets that span generations that unfold to make sense of the present. I wanted to know what Lucy's connection to the past was and why she was gifted the house. The house swept me away and I was enjoying all aspects of it. In this type of story I normally enjoy the past story the most but I found myself enjoying Lucy and the present day story equally as much. I especially enjoyed her relationship with her unintentional house guest and I wanted to know why her mother left and never looked back.

The story flowed nicely and it was easy to get caught up in the plot and the setting. I found Cape Hudson and it's characters so charming and easy to like. I almost felt like I was there and experiencing everything with Lucy in the present and Beth and Claire in their respective pasts. It was no wonder that I was able to finish this book so quickly. One sitting was all it took.

This was the first book for me by Mary Ellen Taylor but judging by how much I enjoyed it, it certainly won't be the last. I very much look forward to what she comes out with next and will be sure to check out her previous work.

Joan Schulhafer says

Mary Ellen Taylor is back! Or will be at the end of August 2018. I work with Mary Ellen and have had the opportunity to read an early version. If you enjoyed Mary Ellen Taylor's previous books (The Union Street Baker, etc.) as much as I did, you won't want to miss this. It is not connected to her earlier Alexandria books, so don't expect more about the McCraes--though I miss them, too. It's a wonderful blend of disparate lives, past and present, capturing the rhythms of Virginia's eastern shore, and the push and pull of the ties that bind--the ties that make home, home. 8/10/18 NOTE: Pub day is now a little later--October 16, 2018.

Cheryl says

This is my first time reading Mary Burton's alter persona, Mary Ellen Taylor. This "softer" side of Mary is nice. A very good change from the thrillers. Although, my favorite will be the thrillers. I enjoyed this book a lot that I will have to check out other books from this persona.

The duo storylines were good. Yet, I was more partial to the past time period of 1988 and Claire. Instantly, the emotional connection that I formed with Claire was strong. Whereas; with Lucy, it took a bit longer for me to warm up to her. However, as the story progressed and I learned her story, I did feel for her. The more I read; the more invested I became in the story as well as the characters. Thus, making this an easy and quick read. Mary Ellen Taylor pens a heart warming story that will touch readers in the heart with Winter Cottage!

Carrie says

Well now, I suppose it's a good thing I took a chance on *Winter Cottage* since I had no idea that Mary Ellen Taylor is also known as Mary Burton who writes romantic suspense novels that I've read and enjoyed quite a few. Now that I'm done I can definitely see the same strong writing that pulls a reader into the story.

This story centers around Lucy Kincaid who has just lost her mother to a battle with cancer and wants to honor her mother's last wishes of returning her ashes to her hometown of Cape Hudson, Virginia. Lucy knows nothing of her mother's past or any extended family, it's only been the two of them against the world her whole life as her mother chose to leave and raise Lucy on her own.

After arriving in such a small town Lucy becomes the talk of the town as she finds out that she's been named in the will of a local resident leaving her to care for *Winter Cottage*. The home is a more of a sprawling mansion than a cottage and holds many secrets of the past, a past that also includes Lucy's family lines. The home also comes with the appealing bank account holding millions for it's upkeep so Lucy finds herself moving in and exploring her roots.

Winter Cottage is told in 3 main timelines by switching the point of view within those times. In the present of course we have Lucy but there's also a timeline with Lucy's mother in the late 80s and then another with the home's original owner in the early 1900's. This may all sound a bit confusing but it really wasn't the changes flowed wonderfully and fit well into the present of the story. Being one that loves digging into those old family secrets I quite enjoyed the tale and would definitely recommend checking it out.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.com/>

Mellie Antoinette says

A generous thank you to #netgalley and #montlakeromance for an #earc of this novel in exchange for a fair review.

“The tree branches, bent by years of bay winds, reached over the road as if they were lovers trying to clasp hands.”

I thoroughly enjoyed this story about two pasts converging in the present under the roof of a Virginia winter cottage. Reminiscent of Lauren Willig's *The Ashford Affair*, the dual timeline approach added some nice atmospherics to this cozy fiction tale of second winds, second sails and second chances.

The past may not be pleasant, but it always leads to the present. Centering around two main couples - Lucy is a firecracker to Hank's quiet fire; Claire Buchanan was a quiet beauty who fell in love with a standout guy. One town's past and present is directly impacted by their choices with a house, a vineyard and a construction gig hanging in the balance.

It was interesting how much location and birthright played a huge role in the options available to the characters. I was fascinated that almost all of the characters didn't so much follow in the footsteps of their

ancestors as they followed the footprints of geography.

I'm curious to see this author spread her wings. I'll certainly be reading more from her.

Cassie-Traveling Sister- says

Winter cottage is a beautifully written book about different generations of people with a house in cape Hudson. Lucy inherited the cottage which was not a cottage at all from a woman she had never met before . The only link she had was her recently deceased mother. With nowhere else to go she heads to the cottage to dig for answers. The cottage comes with conditions Lucy has to live there for a month and all the money is to go to renovations towards the house . It seems like she's not the only person interested in the house as well. The story was amazing and I was eagerly turning the pages and I loved so many characters in this book!
