



The Writing Master

Kitty Burns Florey

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Set in 1856 in the thriving city of New Haven, Connecticut, Kitty Burns Florey's *The Writing Master* is a contemporary Victorian novel that begins with one fateful letter and ends with another. It tells the story of a summer in the life of a young man named Charles Cooper, a teacher of writing – a penman – at a time when a fast, legible script was indispensable for a gentleman, and the gloriously embellished script of a master of the art was held in deep respect.

Charles's anguished attempts to come to terms with the tragic accident that killed his wife and baby son are complicated by Lily Prescott, his sometime student – an unconventional woman with a shady past and an uncertain future that she is trying her calculating best to improve. When a brutal murder takes place just outside the city, Charles – as an expert penman – becomes involved in its solution, along with Harold Milgrim, an amateur detective in the mold of Poe's C. Auguste Dupin. The consequences of his involvement are both unexpected and far-reaching.

Strongly influenced by the author's love of nineteenth-century fiction and her immersion in New England history – and inspired by her 2009 nonfiction book, *Script and Scribble: The Rise and Fall of Handwriting* – *The Writing Master* meticulously evokes another age, one of sooty railroad journeys, extravagantly inconvenient clothing, strict social codes, and severe penalties for their transgression – as well as the timeless passions and aspirations of a cast of memorable characters.

About the Author:

Kitty Burns Florey (www.kittyburnsflorey.com) is the author of *Script and Scribble: The Rise and Fall of Handwriting* and *Sister Bernadette's Barking Dog: The Quirky History and Lost Art of Diagramming Sentences*. She is also the author of ten works of fiction, most recently *The Writing Master*, a historical novel set in Connecticut in 1856. A veteran copy editor, she has written many short stories and essays. Her New York Times blog on the writing process can be found here:

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/26/a-picture-of-language/?ref=opinion>

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