



BOOK RELEASE

Perfecting Kathryn Kuitenbrouwer

"You watch my boys. They bite."

In the dirt and scrub of New Mexico, a beautiful and confused woman follows a hell map into a nest of betrayal and murder. Her lover, Curtis, is only days behind, desperate to reclaim the gun she has found and return Martha to their commune in Ontario.

For over 30 years, Curtis has massaged his father's religion of domination and manipulation of the weak into a pacific, redeeming cult of love. He is a prophet with a message for the people he chooses to redeem. Yet, the influence of his dragon lord father seeps into Curtis's messages and actions, corrupting the meaning of love and sex, feeding off women and children.

Martha seeks the truth about Curtis, and she knows it is somewhere down the Mormon Hope Trail leading to his childhood home in Pecos, New Mexico. As Martha seeks truth as a means to redemption, Curtis's father Hollis, tormented and cruel, lingers in a care home and waits to reclaim his boy. Hollis is patient; his reach is deep, and his evil strong, controlling his two families — wife, children, mistress, and bastards.

More than thirty years before the novel begins, Hollis ordered his sons, Curtis and Aubie, to rob a series of convenience stores and gas stations, until one of the store owners recognized them. Afraid that his other son, Edgar, would try to protect 16-year-old Aubie by fingering Hollis and Curtis, Hollis ordered Curtis to kill Edgar to protect the rest of the family. Curtis fled to Canada, pretending to be a draft dodger to the young, idealistic people he met as soon as he arrived and with whom he built the Family.

Woven into this narrative is the story of Corporal Michael Dama, a soldier of fortune whose covert job it is to clean up after various American military actions. On the side, he collects gun rugs woven by Afghan women, glorifying violence and telling the story of the wars that have plagued their region. He sends these rugs to Aubie to hold onto or sell.

As Martha seeks the answers to painful mysteries about truth, forgiveness, and the nature of debt, a powerful showdown is brewing between two prodigal sons that will crack the firmament of heaven wide.

KATHRYN KUITENBROUWER'S visceral writing has inspired comparisons with Alice Munro, Richard Ford, and Flannery O'Connor. Her powerhouse debut novel, *The Nettle Spinner*, was received with much fanfare. Critics described it as "beautifully conceived," "seductively strange," and "astonishing." *The Nettle Spinner* was a finalist for the 2006 *Amazon.ca/Books in Canada First Novel Award* 2006 and *January Magazine* Best Books of 2005. Her story collection

Way Up garnered a 2004 *Danuta Gleed Award 3*, and was praised as "some of the most impressive examples of new Canadian fiction in recent memory." Kuitenbrouwer's stories have appeared in numerous periodicals, including *Smoke*, *Prism International*, *Blood & Aphorisms*, *Prairie Fire*, and *Descant*. She has also written for *The Globe & Mail*, *The Toronto Star*, *The National Post*, *Books In Canada*, *Maisonneuve Magazine*, *The Literary Review of Canada*, where she was fiction editor, and she is the former magazine editor for bookninja.com. She teaches creative writing at the University of Toronto's School for Continuing Studies and is also teaching a newly designed on-line course through the *New York Times* Knowledge Network in affiliation with The University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies. Kathryn Kuitenbrouwer lives in Toronto.

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