Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

19th century letter opener

Sold

Emmett & White Ltd
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REF: 6242

Height: 20 cm (7.9")

Width: 2 cm (0.8")

Description

A 19th century silver and mother of pearl letter opener with a banded agate handle.

Letter openers, or paper knives, have evolved from simple tools to elegant desk accessories. Originating in the 18th century, they were initially practical devices designed to open envelopes without damaging contents. Early models were often made from metal or wood, reflecting the craftsmanship of the period.

By the 19th century, letter openers became more decorative, featuring intricate designs and materials such as ivory, silver, and gold. This shift mirrored the era's emphasis on refined office decor and personal style.

Throughout the 20th century, letter openers continued to evolve, incorporating modern materials and designs, while retaining their function as symbols of professionalism and sophistication. Today, they are appreciated both for their utility and as collectible artefacts of historical elegance.

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