The Miniaturist

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whim and fancy their work and their play no less than the mystic and religious and ceremonial side of that life which was indeed an inseparable part of it the whole worked in as with a kind of embroidery of the pen and brush with the most exquisite sense of decorative beauty temples and tombs have been man s biggest books but with the development of individual life as well as religious ritual and the necessity of records he felt the need of something more familiar companionable and portable and having in the course of time invented the stylus and the pen and tried his hand upon papyrus palm leaf and parchment he wrote his records or his thoughts and pictured or symbolized them at first upon scrolls and rolls and tablets or later enshrined them in bound books with all the beauty that the art of writing could command enriched and emphasized with the pictorial and ornamental commentary in colours and gold the illuminator makes his borders and initial letters branch and bud and put forth leaves and flowers spreading luxuriantly up and down the margin of his vellum pages beautiful even as the scribe left them like a living growth while the miniaturist makes the letter itself the shrine of some delicate saint or a vision of some act of mercy or martyrdom while the careless world plays hide and seek through the labyrinthine borders as the seasons follow each other through the kalendar and the peasant ploughs and sows and reaps and threshes out the corn while gay knights tourney in the lists or with ladies in their quaint attire follow the spotted deer through the greenwood about walter crane the author in his early lady of shalott the artist had shown his preoccupation with unity of design in book illustration by printing in the words of the poem himself in the view that this union of the calligrapher s and the decorator s art was one secret of the beauty of the old illuminated books crane was elected a member of the institute of painters in water colours in 1882 resigning in 1886 two years later he became an associate of the water colour society 1888 he was an examiner for the science and art department at the south kensington museum now the victoria albert museum director of design at the manchester municipal school 1894 art director of reading college 1896 and in 1898 for a short time principal of the royal college of art

amsterdam 1686 la diciottenne petronella nella oortman discendente di una nobile famiglia caduta in rovina arrivata in citta per iniziare una nuova vita come moglie dell'illustre mercante johannes brandt ma i brandt sono molto diversi da quello che si aspettava nella amarin l'indisgelida cognata a fare le veci del fratello durante i numerosi viaggi di lavoro che lo tengono lontano da casa johannes quando presente evita accuratamente di dormire con nella arrivando persi respingere la ragazza che tenta di sedurlo l'unica attenzione che johannes le riserva uno si dono la miniatura della loro casa e l'invito ad arredarla straniera in casa sua nella non si perde d

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animo e si rivolge all unico miniaturista che trova ad amsterdam la ragazza rimane affascinata da questa enigmatica figura che sembra sfuggirle continuamente anche se tra loro si costruisce un d i a l o g o s e m p r e p i p f i t t o s e n z a p a r o l e m a inspiegabilmente raccontano i misteri di casa brandt amore e tradimento rancori e ossessioni desiderio e sete di ricchezza s incontrano tra i canali di amsterdam nel folgorante romanzo d esordio di jessie burton un best seller da oltre un milione di copie tradotto in oltre trentacinque paesi

in the miniaturists barbara browning explores her attraction to tininess and the stories of those who share it interweaving autobiography with research on unexpected topics and letting her voracious curiosity guide her browning offers a series of charming short essays that plumb what it means to ponder the minuscule she is as entranced by early twentieth century entomologist william morton wheeler who imagined corresponding with termites as she is by frances glessner lee the mother of forensic science who built intricate dollhouses to solve crimes whether examining honey i shrunk the kids the schoenhut toy piano dynasty portrait miniatures diminutive handwriting or jonathan swift s and lewis carroll s preoccupation with tiny people browning shows how a preoccupation with all things tiny can belie an attempt to grasp vast even cosmic realities

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