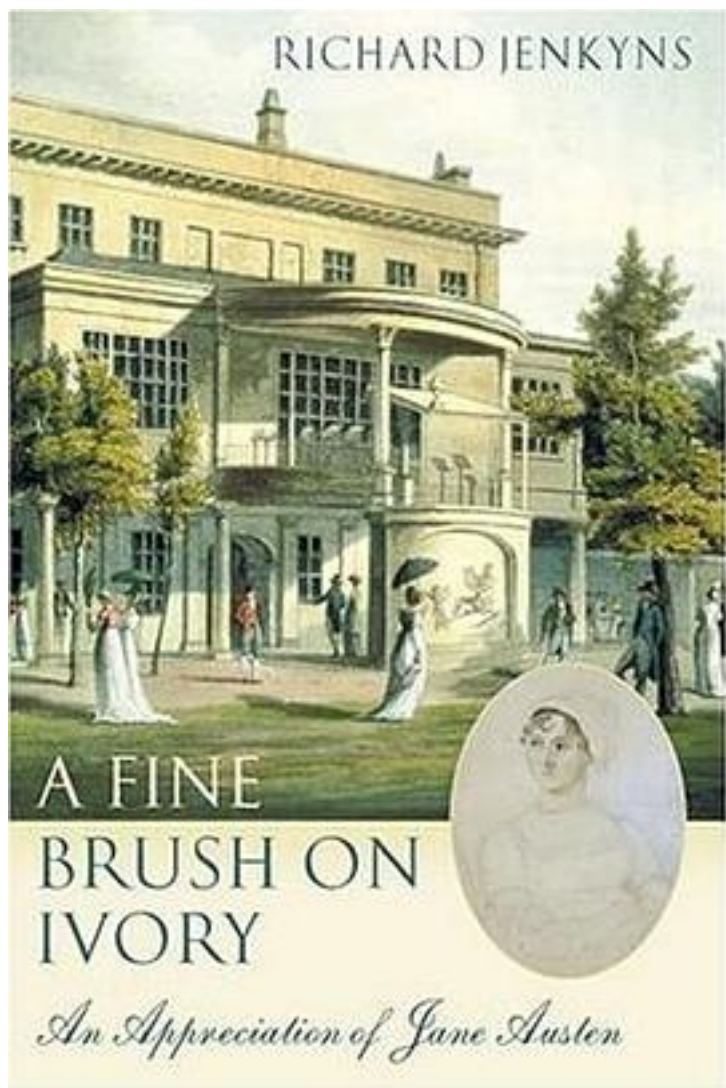


A Fine Brush on Ivory



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著者:Richard Jenkyns

出版者:Oxford University Press, USA

出版时间:2004-10-15

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780199276615

Jane Austen's work was a true triumph of the comic spirit--of deep comedy, rising from the heart of human life. In *A Fine Brush on Ivory*, Richard Jenkyns takes us on an amiable tour of Austen's fictional world, opening a window on some of the great works of world literature.

Focusing largely on *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Emma*, but with many diverting side trips to Austen's other novels, Jenkyns shines a loving light on the exquisite craftsmanship and profound moral imagination that informs her writing. Readers will find, for instance, a wonderful

discussion of characterization in Austen. Jenkyns's insight into figures such as Mr. Bennett or Mrs. Norris is brilliant--particularly his portrait of the amusing, clever, always ironic Mr. Bennett, whose humor (Jenkyns shows) arises out of a deeply unhappy and disappointing marriage. The author

pays due homage to Austen's unmatched skill with complex plotting--the beauty with which the primary plot and the various subplots are woven together--highlighting the infinite care she took to make each plot detail as natural and as plausible as possible. Perhaps most important, Jenkyns illuminates

the heart of Austen's moral imagination: she is constantly aware, throughout her works, of the nearness of evil to the comfortable social surface. She knows that the socially acceptable sins may be truly cruel and vicious, knows that society can be red in tooth and claw, and yet she allows the

pleasures of comedy and celebration to subordinate them.

Insightful and highly entertaining, *A Fine Brush on Ivory* captures the spirit and originality of Jane Austen's work. It will be a cherished keepsake or gift for her many fans.

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