

On August 30th 1841 William John Banks, former Tory MP, pioneer Egyptologist and renowned traveller, was caught in compromising circumstances with a guardsman in London's Green Park. Banks paid a heavy price for his moment of madness: less than two weeks later, well aware that sodomy carried the death penalty, he had fled in to exile, eventually settling in Venice. The British Government declared Banks an outlaw, a vindictive and archaic procedure, which might have enabled them to seize his house - Kingston Lacy in Dorset. It was the vicarious embellishment of that house, although it could be no more than a memory, that was to be his only enduring passion. Based on extensive research from previously undiscovered archives, this is the first ever biography of William Banks. Brilliantly written and highly readable, *The Exiled Collector* recounts Banks' dramatic life story, examines the psychology of collecting, the pain and creativity of exile and affords a revealing insight into the minds of a hypocritical ruling elite in early Victorian Britain.

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