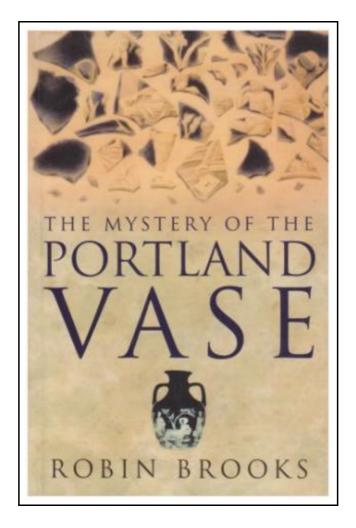
Mystery of the Portland Vase



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MYSTERY OF THE PORTLAND VASE



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Gerald Duckworth & Co Ltd, London, 2005. Paperback. Book Condition: BRAND NEW. A history of the Portland Vase, one of the most treasured objects in the British Museum's collection. Now available in paperback In 1845 a young man from Dublin who had been, by his own admission, 'indulging in intemperance the week before' walked into the British Museum and headed for Room Ten, where the Portland Vase sat on a pedestal under a thick, glass case. He waited until the attendant, who was responsible for two rooms, had strolled next door, then he picked up a handy lump of basalt - a fragment of a monument from the ancient city of Persepolis - and hurried it at the glass case. The vase that had survived nearly two thousand years was smashed into two hundred pieces. Painstakingly reconstructed and now back on display as one of the British Museum's most treasured objects, the Portland Vase enjoys a fascinating story. It has passed through the hands of a remarkable cast of characters - rich and poor, titled and plebeian, famous and obscure. Among its owners were Flaminio Vacca (the tomb robber, cum budding archaeologist), the Princess of Palestrina (the notorious gambling addict), Sir William Hamilton (the famous cuckold), Josiah Wedgwood (genius of ceramics), and Horace Walpole (wit and dilettante). The Duchess of Portland dropped it but it didn't break. Robin Brooks recreates the lengthy travels and the powerful influence of this unique piece of art, which has long been an inspiration for artists, poets and historians, together with engaging portraits of the eccentric individuals through whose hands it has passed. Rich in anecdotes and characters. Brooks balances his potted biographies and history adroitly and entertainingly' - Sunday Telegraph 'A mysterious and beautiful object has found a skilful and enchanting biographer. A fascinating and...



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