

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:17,118

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

2

00:00:17,118 --> 00:00:21,638

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations, but not necessarily

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00:00:21,638 --> 00:00:28,637

the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

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00:00:28,637 --> 00:00:35,037

One and a half million dollars worth of diamonds at Cutter's wholesale level.

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00:00:35,037 --> 00:00:40,597

If you were to try and carry a million and a half dollars worth of gold, you would have

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00:00:40,597 --> 00:00:45,397

to have a carload to carry it away.

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00:00:45,397 --> 00:00:50,476

This could be put into a small cigarette package.

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00:00:50,476 --> 00:00:57,116

Throughout the ages diamonds have inspired poets and smugglers, gentlemen and thieves.

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00:00:57,116 --> 00:01:04,076

The diamond is most precious of all gems and may be the most dangerous to possess.

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00:01:04,076 --> 00:01:15,515

For many diamonds are said to carry a curse.

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00:01:15,515 --> 00:01:26,395

There is on earth a stone more brilliant than the sun, a symbol of love everlasting,

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00:01:26,395 --> 00:01:34,834

an icy crystal holding the seeds of betrayal.

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00:01:34,834 --> 00:01:46,993

The diamond is a paradox whose beauty veils a black heart.

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00:01:46,993 --> 00:01:53,073

From the days of ancient sorcerers and mystics, when magic was a blend of trickery and alchemy,

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00:01:53,073 --> 00:02:05,392

diamonds were considered the source of mysterious powers.

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00:02:05,392 --> 00:02:13,392

Many believed that diamond dust could neutralize the strongest poison, guard against insanity,

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00:02:13,392 --> 00:02:32,911

turn off evil spirits and weave an unbreakable spell.

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00:02:32,911 --> 00:02:38,751

Diamonds were used from everything to cure colds to sterility.

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00:02:38,751 --> 00:02:46,950

The interesting fact is that in 1532, Pope Clement VII died from an overdose of diamonds.

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00:02:46,950 --> 00:02:53,310

His doctors at that time subscribed him to take spoonfuls of diamond dust.

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00:02:53,310 --> 00:02:57,990

After his 14th spoonful, he died.

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00:02:57,990 --> 00:03:02,970

Diamonds have often summoned tragedy, not good fortune.

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00:03:02,970 --> 00:03:09,929

Is there such a thing as a diamond curse?

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00:03:09,929 --> 00:03:15,369

Diamonds were first discovered in India, and there the greatest diamond curse might have

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00:03:15,369 --> 00:03:18,729

been born.

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00:03:18,729 --> 00:03:24,048

In the 17th century, a diamond merchant named Jean Tavernier heard tales of a legendary

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00:03:24,048 --> 00:03:28,248

diamond of deep blue.

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00:03:28,248 --> 00:03:39,648

Stories told of an ancient statue guarded by priests of the god Ramasita.

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00:03:39,648 --> 00:03:44,607

It was said that whoever desecrated the sacred blue diamond would set an ancient curse in

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00:03:44,607 --> 00:03:55,127

motion.

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00:03:55,127 --> 00:04:02,926

Years later, Tavernier would be torn apart by wild dogs.

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00:04:02,926 --> 00:04:08,086

The world's greatest blue diamond would come to be associated with kings.

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00:04:08,086 --> 00:04:29,125

The French courted Versailles would be next to fall under its influence.

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00:04:29,125 --> 00:04:34,245

King Louis XIV wore it as a symbol of the monarchy.

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00:04:34,245 --> 00:04:38,125

He died from smallpox.

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00:04:38,125 --> 00:04:46,964

Louis XVI wore it and lost his head in the French Revolution.

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00:04:46,964 --> 00:04:51,964

Three years after that revolution, the blue diamond was stolen in the most spectacular

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00:04:51,964 --> 00:04:55,564

jewel theft in history.

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00:04:55,564 --> 00:04:59,883

In search of cameras, recreate the story.

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00:05:00,003 --> 00:05:05,483

Teddy thieves discovered an open lock and slipped into a museum warehouse where the French crown

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00:05:05,483 --> 00:05:17,603

jewels had been stored.

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00:05:17,603 --> 00:05:21,102

They told friends about the gems they had found.

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00:05:21,102 --> 00:05:25,002

Night after night, they were able to return unnoticed.

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00:05:25,122 --> 00:05:31,322

Paris was still in social turmoil following the revolution.

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00:05:31,322 --> 00:05:36,962

The loot consisted of every personal possession of Louis XVI and his queen.

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00:05:36,962 --> 00:05:37,962

Everything.

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00:05:37,962 --> 00:05:41,961

Statues, pictures, furs, as well as jewelry.

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00:05:56,001 --> 00:06:04,160

By the eighth night, the hit-and-run raids had turned into a boisterous party, and the

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00:06:04,160 --> 00:06:15,600

jewel theft became an act of revolutionary defiance.

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00:06:15,600 --> 00:06:19,559

Outside, the people of France were cold and hungry.

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00:06:19,559 --> 00:06:28,559

But inside the warehouse, the robbers celebrated with a beggar's banquet.

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00:06:28,559 --> 00:06:41,038

By the time the theft was discovered, the burglars were long gone.

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00:06:41,038 --> 00:06:53,878

Some of the jewels were later recovered, buried under a tree, but not the great blue diamond.

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00:06:53,878 --> 00:07:01,597

Spain was believed to be the next stop on the diamond's journey.

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00:07:01,597 --> 00:07:06,557

Seven years after the robbery, the artist Goya painted a portrait of the Spanish queen Maria

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00:07:06,557 --> 00:07:11,357

Luisa, wearing what may have been the French blue diamond.

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00:07:11,357 --> 00:07:19,516

Soon afterwards, she was forced to abdicate and flee the country.

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00:07:19,516 --> 00:07:28,716

In 1830, a 45-carat diamond of the same deep blue appeared in London.

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00:07:28,876 --> 00:07:42,395

Henry Philip Hope purchased it for \$90,000.

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00:07:42,395 --> 00:07:47,355

Was this the missing stone from the French crown jewels stolen from the forehead of an

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00:07:47,355 --> 00:07:50,515

Indian idol?

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00:07:50,515 --> 00:07:55,194

Curator of gems at the Smithsonian Institution, Paul Desotel.

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00:07:56,154 --> 00:08:00,714

There's no question in my mind that the hope diamond, as we know it now, is what's

64

00:08:00,714 --> 00:08:02,234

left of the French blue.

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00:08:02,234 --> 00:08:06,594

Now, I can't say that with any kind of proof, or certainly because there is no proof in

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00:08:06,594 --> 00:08:08,594

existence that we're aware of.

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00:08:08,594 --> 00:08:13,673

However, too many coincidences involved.

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00:08:13,673 --> 00:08:16,113

Was the curse still operative?

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00:08:16,113 --> 00:08:18,713

Henry Philip Hope died childless.

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00:08:18,713 --> 00:08:24,113

The diamond passed on to his nephew, whose wife ran off with another man.

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00:08:24,113 --> 00:08:28,953

The Hope portion was dissipated, and the last of the hopes died bankrupt.

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00:08:28,953 --> 00:08:33,232

The blue diamond was put up for sale in 1901.

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00:08:33,232 --> 00:08:38,512

According to legend, many of us fell under its sinister influence.

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00:08:38,512 --> 00:08:44,592

The Greek broker who bought it fell off a cliff and died.

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00:08:44,592 --> 00:08:47,712

A Follies-Bergère star wore the Hope.

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00:08:47,712 --> 00:08:54,071

Her fate was sealed by a jealous lover.

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00:08:54,071 --> 00:09:01,711

The next owner was a Turkish sultan whose reign was cut short by revolution.

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00:09:01,711 --> 00:09:10,151

In 1910, Evelyn Walsh McLean purchased the Hope diamond.

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00:09:10,151 --> 00:09:15,750

When told of the curse, Mrs. McLean replied that unlucky things always brought her good

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00:09:15,750 --> 00:09:17,750

luck.

81

00:09:17,750 --> 00:09:23,470

A personal experience from Beatrice Burley-Myerson.

82

00:09:24,390 --> 00:09:27,670

My father was assistant secretary of state.

83

00:09:27,670 --> 00:09:33,789

One night after going to dinner at the Mexican Embassy, we went on to a party at Evelyn Walsh

84

00:09:33,789 --> 00:09:34,789

McLean.

85

00:09:34,789 --> 00:09:42,309

Mrs. McLean came up to us and suggested that I like to wear the Hope diamond.

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00:09:42,309 --> 00:09:48,709

I think she was trying to do something nice for a very small girl at her party.

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00:09:48,709 --> 00:09:53,308

She put it around my neck and I was very taken with the color of the diamond.

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00:09:53,308 --> 00:09:55,068

I just wore it for a few minutes.

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00:09:55,068 --> 00:09:58,468

I'm sure she was not trying to curse me.

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00:09:58,468 --> 00:10:01,268

I don't know what she felt about it for herself.

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00:10:01,268 --> 00:10:06,388

I know that she was a very unhappy woman.

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00:10:06,388 --> 00:10:10,507

Did Evelyn McLean believe the diamond she wore carried an evil curse?

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00:10:10,507 --> 00:10:12,787

Yes, she sincerely believed in the curse.

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00:10:12,787 --> 00:10:18,747

As a matter of fact, Evelyn at one time took the Hope diamond to St. Patrick's Church,

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00:10:18,747 --> 00:10:21,147

the local church here, to have it exercised.

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00:10:21,147 --> 00:10:24,187

And to please her, it was done.

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00:10:24,187 --> 00:10:29,346

Nevertheless, Mrs. McLean's life was plagued by tragedy.

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00:10:29,346 --> 00:10:33,826

Shortly after she purchased the Hope, her young son was struck and killed by a speeding

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00:10:33,826 --> 00:10:37,306

car.

100

00:10:37,306 --> 00:10:43,746

Mr. McLean was implicated in the teapot dome scandal.

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00:10:43,746 --> 00:10:50,825

His business and personal life in ruins, Edward McLean died in a mental institution.

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00:10:50,825 --> 00:10:58,425

In 1946, Mrs. McLean's daughter took her own life.

103

00:10:58,425 --> 00:11:03,665

Evelyn Walsh McLean died the following year.

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00:11:03,665 --> 00:11:07,704

Mrs. McLean continued to wear the Hope until her death.

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00:11:07,704 --> 00:11:11,744

In her autobiography are these words.

106

00:11:11,744 --> 00:11:18,304

What happened to us all was just about as tragic as if each one, instead of only I,

107

00:11:18,304 --> 00:11:22,344

had worn a talisman of evil.

108

00:11:22,344 --> 00:11:30,423

An ancient curse from an angry god?

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00:11:31,423 --> 00:11:42,583

For three centuries, the infamous blue diamond has left behind it a trail of tragedy.

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00:11:42,583 --> 00:11:47,302

The Hope is not the only diamond associated with a curse.

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00:11:47,302 --> 00:11:53,342

A fabulous necklace of diamonds cast the shadow of scandal and doubt on a royal house, and

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00:11:53,342 --> 00:11:58,262

may have helped trigger a revolution.

113

00:11:58,262 --> 00:12:06,141

The ancients believed that stars could fall from the skies and shine on earth as diamonds.

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00:12:06,141 --> 00:12:16,341

It is ironic that the rarest gem is forged from the most common element on earth, carbon.

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00:12:16,341 --> 00:12:21,941

Over millions of years, intense heat and pressure transformed the carbon into a crystal unique

116

00:12:21,941 --> 00:12:24,461

in all of nature.

117

00:12:24,461 --> 00:12:25,460

Paul Desertel

118

00:12:25,740 --> 00:12:29,340

One thing that makes a diamond different from anything that exists on the earth is that

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00:12:29,340 --> 00:12:30,340

it's hard.

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00:12:30,340 --> 00:12:36,300

It is the hardest thing known that transcends everything else that can be said of that diamond.

121

00:12:36,300 --> 00:12:40,660

It's because of that that everything else has come about.

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00:12:40,660 --> 00:12:44,059

The name diamond, by the way, means indestructible.

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00:12:44,059 --> 00:12:47,739

People thought they were, and they had special mystical significance.

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00:12:47,739 --> 00:12:52,379

Diamonds were prized by the mogul amperors and by very early potentates.

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00:12:52,379 --> 00:12:59,539

They were not valued so much for themselves as for what they could do or what they represented.

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00:12:59,539 --> 00:13:03,658

In ancient India, one diamond symbolized power.

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00:13:03,658 --> 00:13:11,058

It was the coup d'etat cursed with a 600-year history of bloodshed.

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00:13:11,058 --> 00:13:16,338

Legend held that whoever owned this diamond would rule the world.

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00:13:16,338 --> 00:13:22,937

In 1739, a powerful Persian Shah conquered India and eagerly looked forward to possessing

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00:13:22,937 --> 00:13:24,457

the coup aneur.

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00:13:24,457 --> 00:13:31,297

The defeated emperor kept his social position, for royalty was always royalty, regardless

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00:13:31,297 --> 00:13:36,137

of a war's outcome.

133

00:13:36,137 --> 00:13:44,056

The conquering Persian Shah would uphold this royal code.

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00:13:44,056 --> 00:13:50,016

Having been guaranteed personal safety, the emperor had hidden the diamond in his turban,

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00:13:50,016 --> 00:13:55,296

believing his mysterious power would help him regain his throne.

136

00:13:55,296 --> 00:14:01,975

Meanwhile, the Shah had ransacked the city, searching for the coup aneur.

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00:14:01,975 --> 00:14:21,614

Successful, he convinced servants in the emperor's court to spy.

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00:14:21,614 --> 00:14:26,534

The conqueror learned where the diamond was hidden, but he had to devise a plan that would

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00:14:26,534 --> 00:14:30,014

not violate the emperor's royal status.

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00:14:30,014 --> 00:14:35,734

With clever strategy, the Shah proposed a formal truce to the emperor and arranged a

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00:14:35,734 --> 00:14:38,294

public ceremony.

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00:14:38,294 --> 00:14:48,053

An exchange of turbans was a rarely used but traditional gesture of peace.

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00:14:48,053 --> 00:15:11,372

The emperor realized he had been trapped, but he could not refuse.

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00:15:11,372 --> 00:15:16,652

When the British annexed India, the coup aneur would change hands for the last time, for

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00:15:16,652 --> 00:15:24,811

it was to be set in the English crown jewels.

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00:15:24,811 --> 00:15:29,531

Throughout the ages, the lust for diamonds has inspired men and women to the most ruthless

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00:15:29,531 --> 00:15:31,531

of acts.

148

00:15:31,531 --> 00:15:36,851

Indeed, it has been written that the history of diamonds is a chronicle of treachery and

149

00:15:36,851 --> 00:15:38,890

deceit.

150

00:15:38,890 --> 00:15:45,530

Can it be only coincidence that diamonds are so often associated with violence and evil?

151

00:15:45,530 --> 00:15:58,769

Perhaps in the diamonds exquisite beauty, we see the dark reflection of our own designs.

152

00:15:58,769 --> 00:16:03,329

Rarely have diamonds so greatly influenced the course of history as in the story of the

153

00:16:03,329 --> 00:16:05,849

Queen's necklace.

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00:16:05,849 --> 00:16:11,969

Two jewelers to the French court of King Louis XVI designed a magnificent necklace of diamonds

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00:16:11,969 --> 00:16:17,048

gathered from all around the world.

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00:16:17,048 --> 00:16:29,528

Only a queen would wear such jewels and only a king could afford them.

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00:16:29,528 --> 00:16:36,247

The jewelers hoped King Louis would buy the diamond necklace for his queen Marie Antoinette.

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00:16:36,247 --> 00:16:41,367

Their timing was poor.

159

00:16:41,567 --> 00:16:43,327

France was in turmoil.

160

00:16:43,327 --> 00:16:53,687

Louis and Marie could not risk such extravagance.

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00:16:53,687 --> 00:16:58,446

The diamond necklace caught the eye of the Queen's lady in waiting, the ambitious Countess

162

00:16:58,446 --> 00:16:59,766

Lamotte.

163

00:16:59,766 --> 00:17:08,726

What happened next set off a scandal that rocked France to its very foundation.

164

00:17:08,726 --> 00:17:16,365

The Countess had risen from poverty through her marriage to a wealthy Count.

165

00:17:16,365 --> 00:17:23,845

Together, they hatched a plot to swindle the jewelers and take the necklace.

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00:17:23,845 --> 00:17:28,405

The Countess would pretend that the Queen had instructed her to arrange a secret purchase

167

00:17:28,405 --> 00:17:37,724

of the necklace.

168

00:17:37,724 --> 00:17:48,924

She had no difficulty persuading the jewelers that she was acting on behalf of the Queen.

169

00:17:48,924 --> 00:18:03,603

A meeting was arranged for the stroke of midnight.

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00:18:03,603 --> 00:18:11,523

When the Countess came disguised as the Queen, the jewelers relinquished the stunning necklace.

171

00:18:11,523 --> 00:18:14,442

The swindle was complete.

172

00:18:14,442 --> 00:18:23,322

Diamond necklace affair, what it did was to bring into the open the frivolity and the

173

00:18:23,322 --> 00:18:28,002

extravagance and the life of the court of Versailles.

174

00:18:28,002 --> 00:18:29,002

It's very interesting.

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00:18:29,002 --> 00:18:33,681

Professor at the University of Southern California, Dr. A. Lloyd Moot.

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00:18:33,681 --> 00:18:38,121

The diamond incident is probably the most spectacular of all the events of the court

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00:18:38,121 --> 00:18:42,521

during this period of time in the image of people.

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00:18:42,521 --> 00:18:46,481

It's a glamorous event.

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00:18:46,481 --> 00:18:48,921

It has cloak and dagger elements.

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00:18:48,921 --> 00:18:52,120

It has love elements, scandalous elements.

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00:18:52,120 --> 00:18:57,640

In the sense that we have a dramatic event which in itself does not create the French

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00:18:58,240 --> 00:19:00,760

revolution, no one in that can create something like that.

183

00:19:00,760 --> 00:19:17,559

But it does crystallize opinion for and against, in this case largely against an entire regime.

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00:19:17,559 --> 00:19:21,799

Years later, Napoleon would write that the diamond necklace was the trigger that set

185

00:19:21,799 --> 00:19:31,238

off the French revolution.

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00:19:31,238 --> 00:19:36,638

When the jewelers presented their bill to King Louis, he naturally refused to pay.

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00:19:36,638 --> 00:19:41,318

It might all have ended there if he hadn't made a fateful error.

188

00:19:41,318 --> 00:19:45,078

He insisted the courts publicly try the villains.

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00:19:45,078 --> 00:19:53,637

By calling attention to the necklace, Louis helped cause his own downfall.

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00:19:53,637 --> 00:19:56,837

And what happened to the necklace itself?

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00:19:56,837 --> 00:20:02,637

It disappeared from the French court forever.

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00:20:02,637 --> 00:20:06,277

The diamonds were broken down and sold separately.

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00:20:06,277 --> 00:20:11,836

Today, they are once again scattered throughout the world.

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00:20:11,836 --> 00:20:18,836

They wonder what curse, if any, they have cast upon their new owners.

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00:20:18,836 --> 00:20:31,635

In 1958, the United States established its first national collection of gems.

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00:20:31,635 --> 00:20:37,475

It is housed at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

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00:20:37,475 --> 00:20:45,195

Today, the undisputed star of that collection is the Hope Diamond.

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00:20:45,195 --> 00:20:51,034

Curator Paul Desotel adds an unexpected chapter to the Hope's recent history.

199

00:20:51,034 --> 00:20:54,594

It has brought only good luck to the national collection.

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00:20:54,594 --> 00:20:58,034

It's a remarkable thing and people come from all over the country to see it.

201

00:20:58,034 --> 00:21:03,194

As a matter of fact, when I say people, I mean lots of people, millions of people.

202

00:21:03,634 --> 00:21:07,473

I can't blame them. It is a fantastic story.

203

00:21:07,473 --> 00:21:13,473

Perhaps the ancient gods have been appeased and have at last withdrawn the diamond curse.