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Richard Kurin

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But it is all true." —*Washington Times***



Hope Diamond

THE LEGENDARY HISTORY OF A CURSED GEM

RICHARD KURIN

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Hope Diamond: The Legendary History of a Cursed Gem

Richard Kurin : Hope Diamond: The Legendary History of a Cursed Gem before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hope Diamond: The Legendary History of a Cursed Gem:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Way too much detail for me!By David W. NesbittBeing a former jeweler and someone who loves and collects gemstones this had too much detail for even me! There was so much detail my eyes would gloss over after reading for 20 or 30 minutes.I would imagine the average person would be even more overwhelmed than I was! You might find it strange but I would have rated this HIGHER with fewer details.But since I have to rate it for what it is and not what I would preferred, I would rate this a 6.5 to 7.0 out of 10.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good bookBy georgeIt's a great book filled with lots of good information in it1 of

1 people found the following review helpful. Not quite what I expectedBy Susan SavelliSo I was hoping for color pages and images. A more up to date where is it now section, since it did address the diamond and the smithsonian institute. Great information but was not at all what I was looking for. Such a stunning piece of jewel and history deserved better than limited black and white photos, and drawings. Could have been much more. Should have lived up to its name. The only color photo is the cover page.

Since its discovery in seventeenthcentury India, the Hope diamond, a glimmering deep blue gem weighing over 45 carats, has been shrouded in mystery and steeped in intrigue. In this groundbreaking work, Dr. Richard Kurin goes beyond the speculation to reveal the truth behind a legendary stone.Kurin, a cultural anthropologist, spent more than a decade on the trail of the legendary gem. But the 'curse' that surrounds it, which Kurin puts to rest once and for all, is only one small piece of a long and lustrous story that moves between ancient religion and modern magic, royal power and class rivalry, revenge and greed. Richly illustrated, Hope Diamond works in a grand historical traditiondepicting the specific to reveal the universal.

From Publishers WeeklyIn this authoritative history of the Hope Diamond (also known as the French Blue), Kurin describes how the 112carat deep blue diamond came into the hands of Louis XIV through diamond trader Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, who in turn had bought it from an Indian mine. (Although rumors persist that Tavernier took the gem from the eye of a Hindu idol, Kurin says there's no evidence to support this actionTavernier was a respected dealer.) The diamond was recut (reducing its size by half) and kept by the French monarchy until it was stolen during the revolution. It resurfaced, unrecognizable after being cut again, in the possession of London merchant Daniel Eliason in 1812. Some years later, it came into the hands of Henry Phillip Hope, was inherited by his wife and sold to several other owners, before being donated in 1958 to the Smithsonian Institution. There its mystique is grounded by "scientific discourse" and study. During his chronicle, the author, director of the Smithsonian's national programs, describes the history of the diamond trade, how precious stones were classified, the long-circulating myth that a curse was attached to the Hope diamond and royal politics of the times, for a serious but fascinating look at cultural and gemological history. Bw photos. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.From BooklistIn sober contrast to Marian Fowler's archly written Hope (2002), Kurin's account of this celebrated gem measures its facts against the legends of its appeal. The provenance of the diamond that supposedly brings bad luck to its owner began with a French trader in India who sold it to Louis XIV. The chain of custody breaks, however, with the disappearance of the "French Blue" in the tumult of the French Revolution, a mystery Kurin carefully examines. Without endorsing the theory, Kurin surmises that the diamond was used to bribe the German general at 1792's Battle of Valmy. Two decades later, a blue diamond cut differently from the original (but proven to be such by recent tests) appeared in decorations worn by Britain's future George IV. Renamed for a purchaser, this Hope diamond has a solid chain of custody with ancillary fables of ill fate until it was finally bought by the Smithsonian Institution. Kurin's solid research is his strength in this account of the jewel's provenance and popular allure. Gilbert TaylorCopyright American Library Association. All rights reservedAbout the AuthorDr. Richard Kurin is the director of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage where he oversees the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, and other cultural heritage programs. A former Fulbright fellow with a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, he is the author of Reflections of a Culture Broker: A View from the Smithsonian. Dr. Kurin has been awarded the Smithsonian Secretary's Gold Medal for Exceptional Service and the American Folklore Society's Botkin Prize for lifetime achievement.