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**TITLE:** Cullinan Diamond  
**META DESCRIPTION:**   
**META KEYWORDS:   
H1**Cullinan Diamond,  **H2**Contents, Discovery and early history[edit], Diamonds cut from the Cullinan[edit], See also[edit], Further reading[edit], References[edit], Bibliography[edit], External links[edit], Navigation menu,  **BOLD/STRONG:** Cullinan Diamond, ^, a, b, ^, a, b, c, d, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, a, b, c, a, b, ^, ^, ^, a, b, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, a, b, c, d, e, f, g, ^, 2, ^, a, b, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, ^, a, b, ^, ^, a, b, ^, ^, 2, 99, 42, 354,  **Italic: :** Diamond: A Journey to the Heart of an Obsession, Famous Diamonds, Important Diamonds of the World, a, b, a, b, c, d, a, b, c, a, b, Measuring Worth, MeasuringWorth, The Sydney Morning Herald, a, b, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Time, a, b, c, d, e, f, g, Gem & Jewellery News, Royal Collection Trust, a, b, MeasuringWorth, Measuring Worth, Royal Collection Trust, a, b, a, b, Famous Diamonds, The Larousse Encyclopedia of Precious Gems, Diamonds and Clay, Diamonds, The Book of Diamonds, The Queen's Jewels, Jewellery History Today, Diamond: A Journey to the Heart of an Obsession, Geological Magazine, Thomas Major Cullinan: A Biography, The Crown Jewels, The Diamond World, King Edward VII: A Biography, Dictionary of Gems and Gemology, The Tower of London: 900 Years of English History, The Crown Jewels, Scientific American, Gems & Gemology, Our Fascinating Earth, Science, Mineralogical Magazine, Curtana, Lily Font,  **TEXT:** Largest rough diamond ever discovered  
  
The Cullinan Diamond is the largest gem-quality rough diamond ever found,[2] weighing 3,106.75 carats (621.35 g) (21.9 ounces), (1.37 pounds) discovered at the Premier No.2 mine in Cullinan, South Africa, on 26 January 1905. It was named after Thomas Cullinan, the owner of the mine. In April 1905, it was put on sale in London, but despite considerable interest, it was still unsold after two years. In 1907, the Transvaal Colony government bought the Cullinan and Prime Minister Louis Botha presented it to Edward VII, King of the United Kingdom, who had it cut by Joseph Asscher & Co. in Amsterdam.  
  
Cullinan produced stones of various cuts and sizes, the largest of which is named Cullinan I or the Great Star of Africa, and at 530.4 carats (106.08 g) (3.74 ounces) it is the largest clear cut diamond in the world. The stone is mounted in the head of the Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross. The second-largest is Cullinan II or the Second Star of Africa, weighing 317.4 carats (63.48 g), mounted in the Imperial State Crown. Both are part of the Crown Jewels. Seven other major diamonds, weighing a total of 208.29 carats (41.66 g), are privately owned by Elizabeth II, who inherited them from her grandmother, Queen Mary, in 1953. The Queen also owns minor brilliants and a set of unpolished fragments.  
  
Discovery and early history [ edit ]  
  
Wells and the diamond  
  
The Cullinan is estimated to have formed in Earth's mantle transition zone at a depth of 410–660 km (255–410 miles) and reached the surface 1.18 billion years ago.[3] It was found 5.5 metres (18 ft) below the surface at Premier Mine in Cullinan, Transvaal Colony, by Frederick Wells, surface manager at the mine, on 26 January 1905. It was approximately 10.1 centimetres (4.0 in) long, 6.35 centimetres (2.50 in) wide, 5.9 centimetres (2.3 in) deep, and weighed 3,106 carats (621.2 grams).[4] Newspapers called it the "Cullinan Diamond", a reference to Sir Thomas Cullinan, who opened the mine in 1902.[5] It was three times the size of the Excelsior Diamond, found in 1893 at Jagersfontein Mine, weighing 972 carats (194.4 g). Four of its eight surfaces were smooth, indicating that it once had been part of a much larger stone broken up by natural forces. It had a blue-white hue and contained a small pocket of air, which at certain angles produced a rainbow, or Newton's rings.[6]  
  
Shortly after its discovery, Cullinan went on public display at the Standard Bank in Johannesburg, where it was seen by an estimated 8,000–9,000 visitors. In April 1905, the rough gem was deposited with Premier Mining Co.'s London sales agent, S. Neumann & Co.[7] Due to its immense value, detectives were assigned to a steamboat that was rumoured to be carrying the stone, and a parcel was ceremoniously locked in the captain's safe and guarded on the entire journey. It was a diversionary tactic – the stone on that ship was fake, meant to attract those who would be interested in stealing it. Cullinan was sent to the United Kingdom in a plain box via registered post.[8] On arriving in London, it was conveyed to Buckingham Palace for inspection by King Edward VII. Although it drew considerable interest from potential buyers, Cullinan went unsold for two years.[4]  
  
Presentation to Edward VII [ edit ]  
  
Transvaal Prime Minister, Louis Botha, suggested buying the diamond for Edward VII as "a token of the loyalty and attachment of the people of the Transvaal to His Majesty's throne and person".[9] In August 1907, a vote was held in the Legislative Council[10] on the Cullinan's fate, and a motion authorising the purchase was carried by 42 votes in favour to 19 against. Initially, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, then British Prime Minister, advised the king to decline the offer, but he later decided to let Edward VII choose whether or not to accept the gift.[11] Eventually, he was persuaded by Winston Churchill, then Colonial Under-Secretary. For his trouble, Churchill was sent a replica, which he enjoyed showing off to guests on a silver plate.[12] The Transvaal Colony government bought the diamond on 17 October 1907 for £150,000,[13] which adjusted for pound-sterling inflation is equivalent to £16 million in 2019.[14] Due to a 60% tax on mining profits, the Treasury received some of its money back from the Premier Diamond Mining Company.[15]  
  
The diamond was presented to the king at Sandringham House by Agent-General of the colony, Sir Richard Solomon, on 9 November 1907 – his sixty-sixth birthday – in the presence of a large party of guests, including the Queen of Sweden, the Queen of Spain, the Duke of Westminster and Lord Revelstoke.[16] The king asked his colonial secretary, Lord Elgin, to announce that he accepted the gift "for myself and my successors" and that he would ensure "this great and unique diamond be kept and preserved among the historic jewels which form the heirlooms of the Crown".[12]  
  
Cutting process [ edit ]  
  
Joseph Asscher making the split  
  
The king chose Joseph Asscher & Co. of Amsterdam to cleave and polish the rough stone into brilliant gems of various cuts and sizes. Abraham Asscher collected it from the Colonial Office in London on 23 January 1908.[17] He returned to the Netherlands by train and ferry with the diamond in his coat pocket.[13] Meanwhile, to much fanfare, a Royal Navy ship carried an empty box across the North Sea, again throwing off potential thieves. Even the captain had no idea that his "precious" cargo was a decoy.[18]  
  
On 10 February 1908, the rough stone was split in half by Joseph Asscher at his diamond-cutting factory in Amsterdam.[19] At the time, technology had not yet evolved to guarantee the quality of modern standards, and cutting the diamond was difficult and risky. After weeks of planning, an incision 0.5 inches (1.3 cm) deep was made to enable Asscher to cleave the diamond in one blow. Making the incision alone took four days, and a steel knife broke on the first attempt,[4] but a second knife was fitted into the groove and split it clean in two along one of four possible cleavage planes.[20] In all, splitting and cutting the diamond took eight months, with three people working 14 hours per day to complete the task.[4]  
  
"The tale is told of Joseph Asscher, the greatest cleaver of the day," wrote Matthew Hart in his book Diamond: A Journey to the Heart of an Obsession (2002), "that when he prepared to cleave the largest diamond ever known … he had a doctor and nurse standing by and when he finally struck the diamond … he fainted dead away".[21] Lord Ian Balfour, in his book Famous Diamonds (2009), dispels the fainting story, suggesting it was more likely Joseph would have celebrated, opening a bottle of champagne.[17] When Joseph's nephew Louis heard the story, he exclaimed "No Asscher would ever faint over any operation on any diamond".[22]  
  
Nine largest stones split from the rough Cullinan diamond  
  
Diamonds cut from the Cullinan [ edit ]  
  
Cullinan produced 9 major stones of 1,055.89 carats (211.178 g) in total,[23] plus 96 minor brilliants and some unpolished fragments weighing 19.5 carats (3.90 g).[24] All but the two largest stones – Cullinans I and II – remained in Amsterdam by arrangement as the fee for Asscher's services,[25] until the South African government bought them (except Cullinan VI, which Edward VII had purchased and given to his wife Queen Alexandra in 1907), and the High Commissioner for Southern Africa presented them to Queen Mary on 28 June 1910.[12] Mary also inherited Cullinan VI from Alexandra, and she left all her Cullinan diamonds to her granddaughter Elizabeth II in 1953.[26] Cullinans I and II are part of the Crown Jewels,[2] which belong to the Queen in right of the Crown.[27]  
  
Asscher sold the minor stones to the South African government, which distributed them to Queen Mary; Louis Botha, then prime minister of South Africa; the diamond merchants Arthur and Alexander Levy, who supervised the cutting of Cullinan;[28] and Jacob Romijn (later Romyn), who co-founded the first trade union in the diamond industry.[29] Some were set by Mary into a long platinum chain, which Elizabeth has never worn in public, saying that "it gets in the soup".[30] In the 1960s, two minor Cullinan diamonds owned by Louis Botha's heirs were analysed at the De Beers laboratory in Johannesburg and found to be completely free of nitrogen or any other impurities.[31] Cullinans I and II were examined in the 1980s by gemologists at the Tower of London and both graded as colourless type IIa.[32]  
  
Cullinan I [ edit ]  
  
The nine major stones. Top: Cullinans II, I, and III. Bottom: Cullinans VIII, VI, IV, V, VII and IX.  
  
Cullinan I, or the Great Star of Africa, is a pendeloque-cut brilliant weighing 530.2 carats (106.04 g) and has 74 facets.[33] It is set at the top of the Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross which had to be redesigned in 1910 to accommodate it. Cullinan I was surpassed as the world's largest cut diamond of any colour by the 545.67-carat (109.134 g) brown Golden Jubilee Diamond in 1992,[34] but is still the largest clear cut diamond in the world.[35] In terms of clarity, it has a few tiny cleavages and a small patch of graining. The 5.89 cm × 4.54 cm × 2.77 cm (2.32 in × 1.79 in × 1.09 in) diamond is fitted with loops and can be taken out of its setting to be worn as a pendant suspended from Cullinan II to make a brooch.[36] Queen Mary, wife of George V, often wore it like this.[37] In 1908, the stone was valued at US$2.5 million (equivalent to US$52 million in 2020)[38]– two and a half times the rough Cullinan's estimated value.[39]  
  
Cullinan II [ edit ]  
  
Cullinan II, or the Second Star of Africa, is a cushion-cut brilliant with 66 facets weighing 317.4 carats (63.48 g) set in the front of the Imperial State Crown,[33] below the Black Prince's Ruby (a large spinel).[40] It measures 4.54 cm × 4.08 cm × 2.42 cm (1.79 in × 1.61 in × 0.95 in). The diamond has a number of tiny flaws, scratches on the table facet, and a small chip at the girdle. Like Cullinan I, it is held in place by a yellow gold enclosure, which is screwed onto the crown.[36]  
  
Cullinan III [ edit ]  
  
Cullinan III, or the Lesser Star of Africa, is pear-cut and weighs 94.4 carats (18.88 g).[33] In 1911, Queen Mary, wife and queen consort of George V, had it set in the top cross pattée of a crown that she personally bought for her coronation.[41] In 1912, the Delhi Durbar Tiara, worn the previous year by Mary instead of a crown at the Delhi Durbar, where her husband wore the Imperial Crown of India, was also adapted to take Cullinans III and IV.[42] In 1914, Cullinan III was permanently replaced on the crown by a crystal model. Today, it is most frequently worn in combination with Cullinan IV by Elizabeth II as a brooch. In total, the brooch is 6.5 cm (2.6 in) long and 2.4 cm (0.94 in) wide.[43] Cullinan III has also been used as a pendant on the Coronation Necklace, where it occasionally replaced the 22.4-carat (4.48 g) Lahore Diamond.[44][45]  
  
Cullinan IV [ edit ]  
  
Queen Mary wearing Cullinans I and II as a brooch on her chest, III as a pendant on the Coronation Necklace , and IV in the base of her crown, below the Koh-i-Noor  
  
Cullinan IV, also referred to as a Lesser Star of Africa, is square-cut and weighs 63.6 carats (12.72 g).[33] It was also set in the base of Queen Mary's Crown but was removed in 1914. On 25 March 1958, while she and Prince Philip were on a state visit to the Netherlands, Queen Elizabeth II revealed that Cullinan III and IV are known in her family as "Granny's Chips". They visited the Asscher Diamond Company, where Cullinan had been cut 50 years earlier. It was the first time the Queen had worn the brooch publicly. During her visit, she unpinned the brooch and offered it for examination to Louis Asscher, nephew of Joseph Asscher, who split the rough diamond. Aged 84, he was deeply moved that the Queen had brought the diamonds with her, knowing how much it would mean to him seeing them again after so many years.[46]  
  
Cullinan V [ edit ]  
  
Cullinan V is an 18.8-carat (3.76 g) heart-shaped diamond set in the centre of a platinum brooch that formed a part of the stomacher made for Queen Mary to wear at the Delhi Durbar in 1911. The brooch was designed to show off Cullinan V and is pavé-set with a border of smaller diamonds. It can be suspended from the VIII brooch and can be used to suspend the VII pendant. It was often worn like this by Mary.[44]  
  
Cullinan VI [ edit ]  
  
Cullinan VI is marquise-cut and weighs 11.5 carats (2.30 g).[33] It hangs from the brooch containing Cullinan VIII and forming part of the stomacher of the Delhi Durbar parure. Cullinan VI along with VIII can also be fitted together to make yet another brooch, surrounded by some 96 smaller diamonds. The design was created around the same time that the Cullinan V heart-shaped brooch was designed, both having a similar shape.[47]  
  
Cullinan VII [ edit ]  
  
Cullinan VII is also marquise-cut and weighs 8.8 carats (1.76 g).[33] It was originally given by Edward VII to his wife and consort Queen Alexandra. After his death she gave the jewel to Queen Mary, who had it set as a pendant hanging from the diamond-and-emerald Delhi Durbar necklace, part of the parure.[48]  
  
Cullinan VIII [ edit ]  
  
Cullinan VIII is an oblong-cut diamond weighing 6.8 carats (1.36 g).[33] It is set in the centre of a brooch forming part of the stomacher of the Delhi Durbar parure. Together with Cullinan VI it forms a brooch.[47]  
  
Cullinan IX [ edit ]  
  
Cullinan IX is smallest of the principal diamonds to be obtained from the rough Cullinan. It is a pendeloque or stepped pear-cut stone, weighs 4.39 carats (0.878 g), and is set in a platinum ring known as the Cullinan IX Ring.[49]  
  
See also [ edit ]  
  
  
  
  
  
Further reading [ edit ]  
  
Shipley, Robert M. (1941) Important Diamonds of the World, pp. 15-16. Gemological Institute of America, USA, Vol. 3, No. 10 (Summer 1941)  
  
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https://www.rct.uk/collection/themes/trails/the-crown-jewels/the-cullinan-diamond  
  
**TITLE:** The Cullinan Diamond  
**META DESCRIPTION:** Stones cut from the largest diamond ever found have been included in the Crown Jewels  
**META KEYWORDS:   
H1**The Cullinan Diamond,  **H2  
BOLD/STRONG:   
Italic: :   
TEXT:** Incorporated into the Crown Jewels are stones cut from the magnificent Cullinan Diamond – the largest diamond ever found.  
  
The stone was discovered near Pretoria in South Africa on 26 January 1905, and is named after the chairman of the mining company, Thomas Cullinan. In its uncut state, it weighed 3,106 metric carats and boasted a size of 10.1 x 6.35 x 5.9 cm. This scale, coupled with its extraordinary blue-white colour and exceptional clarity, made it the most celebrated diamond in the world.  
  
In 1907 the Cullinan was presented to King Edward VII by the Government of the Transvaal. It was a symbolic gesture intended to heal the rift between Britain and South Africa following the Boer War. After initial hesitation, the King accepted the gift on the recommendation of the British Government. The stone was taken under heavy police escort to Sandringham, and formally presented on the King's 66th birthday.  
  
Cutting this extraordinary diamond posed a considerable challenge. The stone was dispatched to the leading diamond cutters of the day, Asschers of Amsterdam, where experts spent weeks considering the best method for splitting it. It took four days to prepare the groove for the cleaving knife, and the very first blow broke the knife rather than the diamond. Finally, on 10 February 1908, Joseph Asscher split the stone into two. Over the next eight months, three men worked for 14 hours a day to cut and polish nine large stones from the original diamond. Each of these stones was given a number from I to IX, and today they are still referred to in this way. 97 small brilliants and some unpolished fragments were also created.  
  
After King Edward's death in 1910, King George V had Cullinan I and II set in the Sovereign's Sceptre and Imperial State Crown respectively. Both these stones are still in the regalia today. The remaining numbered diamonds were kept by Asschers as payment for their work. Cullinan VI and VIII were later brought privately by King Edward VII as a gift for Queen Alexandra, and the others were acquired by the South African Government and given to Queen Mary in 1910, in memory of the Inauguration of the Union. They were bequeathed to Her Majesty The Queen in 1953.  
  
Click on the objects below to read more about how Cullinan I and II were incorporated into the Crown Jewels. Stones III-IX today form part of The Queen's personal jewellery and are not shown here.

https://www.thecourtjeweller.com/2022/01/the-queens-cullinan-diamonds.html  
  
**TITLE:** The Queen’s Cullinan Diamonds  
**META DESCRIPTION:**   
**META KEYWORDS:   
H1**The Queen’s Cullinan Diamonds,  **H2  
BOLD/STRONG:** The Cullinan I, The Cullinan II, The Cullinan III and IV, The Cullinan V, The Cullinan VI and VIII, The Cullinan VII, The Cullinan IX,  **Italic: :** Related,  **TEXT:** Today in 1905, the Cullinan Diamond was discovered in South Africa. To celebrate the remarkable discovery, we’re looking today at the way that the Queen continues to wear the diamonds cut from the massive gemstone. From crown jewels to personal pieces, these are the Queen’s Cullinan Diamonds.  
  
The diamond was found at the Premier No. 2 mine in Cullinan, South Africa. The superintendent of the mine, Frederick Wells, spotted the enormous stone by chance while on his rounds. Caroline de Guitaut of the Royal Collection described the moment: “So incredible was its discovery that the moment it was found at the Premier Mine it was thrown out of the window of the mine manager’s office because it was thought to be a worthless crystal.” Wells is pictured above holding the immense stone. The rough diamond measured at more than 3000 carats and weighed more than a pound. It was the biggest diamond that had ever been discovered.  
  
South Africa was still a part of the British empire when the diamond was discovered, and the colonial government purchased it. They wanted to bestow the enormous stone on the reigning king, Edward VII. At first, he didn’t want to accept—there had also been some disagreement about whether to offer it to him in the first place—but after a bit of convincing (by a young Winston Churchill, of all people), he finally agreed to take it.  
  
It took a bit of wrangling to get the Cullinan from Africa to London, but once it made it to British shores, it was given to Bertie on his birthday in November 1907. The diamond was sent to the Asschers in the Netherlands to be cut. After a process of eight months, they produced nine major diamonds and 96 small brilliants from the original diamond.  
  
Here’s a look at the nine major diamonds cut from the original Cullinan stone. I’ve spiced up this old illustration of the diamond with some labels for you—you’re welcome! In the top row, you’ll see the three biggest diamonds. From left to right: the Cullinan II, the Cullinan I, and the Cullinan III. And on the bottom row are the six smaller stones: The Cullinan VIII, the Cullinan VI, the Cullinan IV, the Cullinan V, the Cullinan VII, and the Cullinan IX. The individual diamonds had slightly different chains of ownership. (You can read more about that in this article.) Today, the Cullinan I and Cullinan II stones are part of the crown jewels, while the seven remaining diamonds are set in the Queen’s personal jewelry. While Queen Mary loved to play with the various configurations of the Cullinans, the Queen has worn them in the same way for essentially her entire reign. Below, I’ll discuss the placement of each of the stones as they’re used and worn today.  
  
The Cullinan I The largest of the Cullinans is the magnificent Cullinan I, which is also called “the Great Star of Africa.” The pear-shaped stone measures at an astonishing 530.2 carats. It is part of the British crown jewels, set in the Sovereign’s Sceptre. Above, the Queen holds the sceptre for a portrait taken during her coronation in June 1953.  
  
The Cullinan II The Cullinan II, a 317.4-carat cushion-shaped diamond, is often called “the Second Star of Africa.” Like the Cullinan I, it’s part of the British crown jewels. The diamond is set in the front of the Imperial State Crown, below the Black Prince’s Ruby. Above, the Queen wears the crown (with Queen Victoria’s Pearl Drop Earrings and her Golden Jubilee Necklace) during the State Opening of Parliament in November 2004.  
  
The Cullinan III and IV The Cullinan III, a 94.4-carat pear-shaped diamond, and the Cullinan IV, a 63.6-carat cushion-shaped diamond, are set together in an impressive brooch. The Queen has jokingly called this piece “Granny’s Chips,” because she inherited it from her grandmother, Queen Mary, and the diamonds are downright enormous. Above, the Queen wears the brooch for a service celebrating her Diamond Jubilee in June 2012.  
  
The Cullinan V This intricate brooch features the Cullinan V, an 18.8-carat heart-shaped diamond, in its center. The Queen clearly loves this brooch, and she has worn it frequently during her entire 70 year reign. Here, she wears the jewel in October 2018 for the wedding of her granddaughter, Princess Eugenie of York, in Windsor.  
  
The Cullinan VI and VIII The design of the Cullinan V Brooch is mimicked in the top portion of this brooch as well. The top stone in this brooch is the Cullinan VIII, a 6.8-carat cushion-cut diamond. The pendant is the Cullinan VI, an 11.5-carat marquise-cut diamond. Here, the Queen wears the brooch for a reception at Windsor Castle in April 2019.  
  
The Cullinan IX And finally, the Cullinan IX, a 4.4-carat pear-shaped diamond, is set in a ring. The Queen doesn’t wear the ring particularly often, and some of the best images showing her wearing it (on her right hand) come from a portrait session with the famed photographer Yousuf Karsh in 1984. She also wore the Cullinan III and IV Brooch for the same set of images.

https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/worlds-largest-diamond-found  
  
**TITLE:** World’s largest diamond found  
**META DESCRIPTION:** At the Premier Mine in Pretoria, South Africa, the 1.33 pound, 3,106-carat diamond "Cullinan" is discovered during a routine inspection by the mine’s superintendent. It was the largest diamond ever found.  
**META KEYWORDS:** January 25,Africa,1905,Topics, **H1**World’s largest diamond found,  **H2**THIS DAY IN HISTORY, Citation Information, FACT CHECK: We strive for accuracy and fairness. But if you see something that doesn't look right, click here to contact us! HISTORY reviews and updates its content regularly to ensure it is complete and accurate., ALSO ON THIS DAY, American becomes first non-Japanese to achieve highest rank in sumo wrestling, First Winter Olympics, Chairman Mao’s widow sentenced to death, Russia activates its nuclear command systems for the first time, Charles Manson and his followers convicted of murder, Thailand declares war on the United States and England, President Kennedy holds first live television news conference, Paul McCartney is released from a Tokyo jail and deported from Japan, Scottish poet Robert Burns is born, First Emmy Awards ceremony, Israeli sub vanishes, BTK killer sends message, First national memorial is ordered by Congress, Formal commission is established on the League of Nations,  **BOLD/STRONG:** HISTORY, FACT CHECK:,  **Italic: :** Ad Choices, Advertise, Closed Captioning, Copyright Policy, Corporate Information, Employment Opportunities, FAQ/Contact Us, Privacy Notice, Terms of Use, TV Parental Guidelines, RSS Feeds, Accessibility Support, Privacy Settings, We strive for accuracy and fairness. But if you see something that doesn't look right, click here to contact us! HISTORY reviews and updates its content regularly to ensure it is complete and accurate., ...read more, ...read more, ...read more, ...read more, ...read more, ...read more, ...read more, ...read more, ...read more, ...read more, ...read more, ...read more, ...read more, ...read more,  **TEXT:** On January 25, 1905, at the Premier Mine in Pretoria, South Africa, a 3,106-carat diamond is discovered during a routine inspection by the mine’s superintendent. Weighing 1.33 pounds, and christened the “Cullinan,” it was the largest diamond ever found.  
  
Frederick Wells was 18 feet below the earth’s surface when he spotted a flash of starlight embedded in the wall just above him. His discovery was presented that same afternoon to Sir Thomas Cullinan, who owned the mine. Cullinan then sold the diamond to the Transvaal provincial government, which presented the stone to Britain’s King Edward VII as a birthday gift. Worried that the diamond might be stolen in transit from Africa to London, Edward arranged to send a phony diamond aboard a steamer ship loaded with detectives as a diversionary tactic. While the decoy slowly made its way from Africa on the ship, the Cullinan was sent to England in a plain box.  
  
Edward entrusted the cutting of the Cullinan to Joseph Asscher, head of the Asscher Diamond Company of Amsterdam. Asscher, who had cut the famous Excelsior Diamond, a 971-carat diamond found in 1893, studied the stone for six months before attempting the cut. On his first attempt, the steel blade broke, with no effect on the diamond. On the second attempt, the diamond shattered exactly as planned; Asscher then supposedly fainted from nervous exhaustion.  
  
The Cullinan was later cut into nine large stones and about 100 smaller ones, valued at millions of dollars all told. The largest stone is called the “Star of Africa I,” or “Cullinan I,” and at 530 carats, it is the largest-cut fine-quality colorless diamond in the world. The second largest stone, the “Star of Africa II” or “Cullinan II,” is 317 carats. Both of these stones, as well as the “Cullinan III,” are on display in the Tower of London with Britain’s other crown jewels; the Cullinan I is mounted in the British Sovereign’s Royal Scepter, while the Cullinan II sits in the Imperial State Crown.