

LEVELED BOOK • P

I Am the Hope Diamond



Written by Heather Lynne Banks

www.readinga-z.com

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The Hope Diamond in its setting (main); the actual size of the Hope Diamond (inset)



Who I Am

Maybe you have heard of me. I am the famous Hope Diamond.

I know **diamonds** can't talk, but I'm no ordinary diamond. I live in the center of a **pendant**, which hangs from a diamond necklace. Sixteen other diamonds circle around me, but I think they are tiny.

The small diamonds are clear, like pieces of glass. Most diamonds are almost clear. But me, I am deep blue, like the ocean. I am full of **mystery**, too. No one knows everything about my past, not even me. But I do like to tell my story. So let me tell you about the parts I remember. How much of my story you believe is up to you.

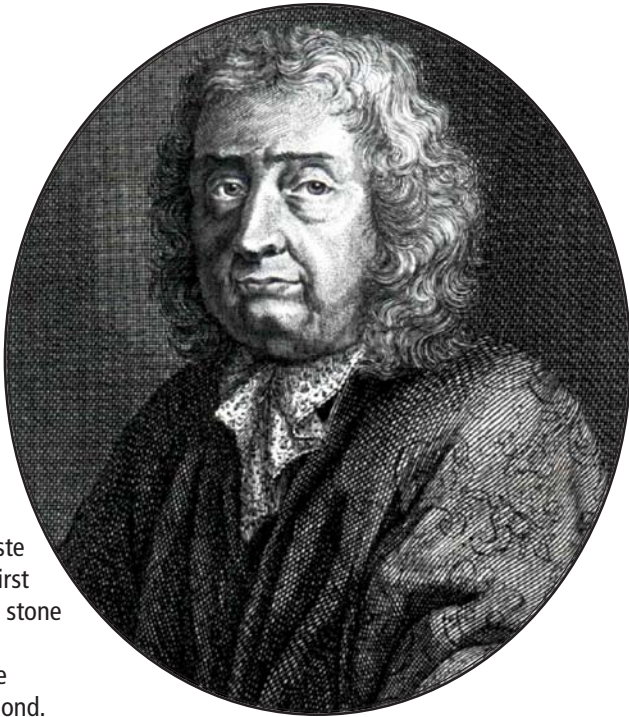


Diamonds come in many shapes, sizes, and colors, but large colored diamonds are rare.

My Early Years

I do not remember much about when I was younger, and you'll find out why very soon. I have learned about my past by listening to people. This is what I've heard them say about me . . .

It took many, many years for me to form underground. People first found me in a diamond mine in India.



A French merchant, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, first bought the stone that would become the Hope Diamond.



Word Wise

In ancient times, seeds from a carob tree were used to see how much a diamond weighed. Most carob seeds are the same size and weight. Over time, the word "carob" turned into "carat."

They knew I was special right away. I was deep blue, of course, and weighed more than 100 **carats**. That's lighter than five nickels, but it is heavy for a diamond. Many diamonds used in rings today weigh about one carat.

Back then it was good enough to be blue and big. After many years, some people wanted me to be a different shape. They thought it would make me even more amazing.



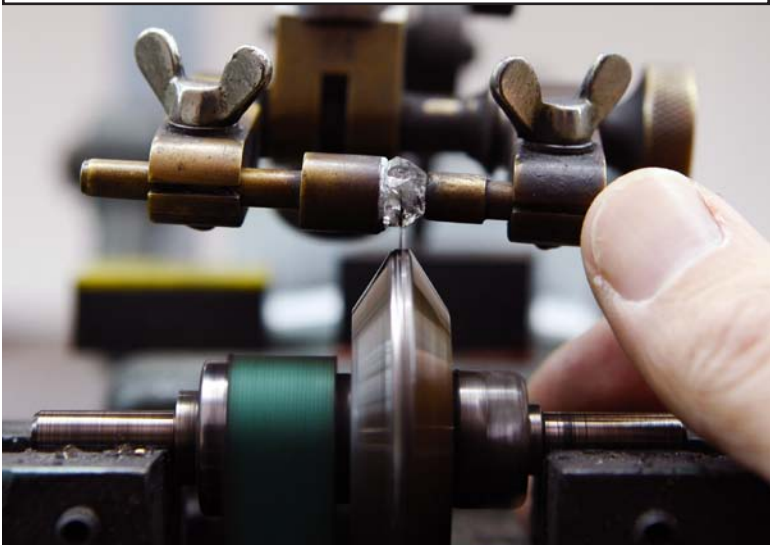
King Louis XIV

In 1668, I was sold to the king of France. Then I was cut in a special way to give me many facets, or faces. My new **facets** made me brighter and improved my shine. If the cutting hurt, I can't remember because that part of my memory was cut off. In the end, I was a little heavier than 67 carats, a loss of about one-third of my weight. I also had a new name: Blue Diamond of the Crown.

I liked my royal life in France. Many kings wore me over the course of a century. Then, in 1792, I was stolen! I was scared. The good news was that I was found in England. The bad news was that I had been cut again. I weighed about 45 carats, or less than half my original weight. I was down to about the size of a quarter. Other diamonds were still jealous of me, but I felt small.

Do You Know?

Only other diamonds can cut diamonds. Diamonds are the hardest natural materials on Earth.



Smaller and Smarter

I have weighed about 45 carats for almost 200 years. I remember when a



Henry Philip Hope

man named Henry Philip Hope bought me. He lived in England, and he is why I am called the Hope Diamond. He owned many colored diamonds, but I was one of his favorites. He had me **set**, or placed,

in a pin that could be worn. I was usually kept in a drawer, but I felt safe.

I stayed in the Hope family for years after Mr. Hope died. In 1901, I was sold and sent to New York. Then I was sold and sold again. After a time, I was back in France!

Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid II bought the Hope Diamond in 1908, but sold it just one year later.



Do You Know?

Diamonds are sold based on the four Cs:

- Carat: weight
- Color: most are colorless, or nearly colorless. Diamonds with colors such as blue, pink, yellow, brown, red, or green, are rare.
- Cut: the shape of a diamond's straight edges
- Clarity: clear or cloudy

This time while I was in France, I did not live with a king. I lived with Mr. Cartier, who sold **jewels**. A customer of Mr. Cartier's named Mrs. McLean saw me when she was visiting France. She said she did not like me. My feelings were hurt!



Mr. Cartier believed Mrs. McLean would buy me, though. He took me to New York and set me in a new necklace. Then he showed me to her again, and she wanted me. I had never looked better!

Evalyn McLean wears the Hope Diamond, which is now set in a necklace, in 1914.

Sometimes, Mrs. McLean thought I was her lucky charm. Other times, she thought I was bad luck. But she wore me a lot, and I liked that. I liked to be out and about.

Evalyn McLean
wears the Hope
Diamond in 1934.



Mrs. McLean kept me until she died. Then I was sold again, to Harry Winston, in 1949, who taught me that I was not the most important thing. For years, he and I traveled together. We raised money for **charities**, and I was glad to help.

Blue, but Hopeful

In 1958, Mr. Winston gave me to the Smithsonian Institution. It is a **museum** in Washington, D.C., and it is where I still live.



A tourist admires the Hope Diamond in its case housed in the Harry Winston Gallery at the Smithsonian.

People from around the world come to see me. They talk about how beautiful I am. Some of them say I give people bad luck. If only they could hear me! I'd tell them I'm the

one with bad luck. After all, I am locked away in a museum.

I have taken four vacations since I moved into the museum. I went back to France, down to South Africa, and went twice to New York. The people here keep me clean and protect me. But I am still blue, and I'm not talking about my color. I want to go to parties. I want kings to wear me again. Even though I am feeling down, I think these things might happen again someday. They don't call me the "Hope" Diamond for nothing.



Glossary

carats	units of weight for diamonds and other jewels (p. 7)
charities	organizations that help people who need it (p. 13)
diamonds	the hardest known natural materials, formed by great heat and pressure underground (p. 4)
facets	the faces, or sides, that are made when a stone is cut (p. 8)
jewels	stones with a high value or price that are used as decoration (p. 12)
museum	a building used to store and show objects important to history, science, or art (p. 14)
mystery	something that is unknown or difficult to explain (p. 5)
pendant	an object or ornament that hangs from a necklace (p. 4)
set	to place or mount a jewel in a certain way that is meant to be pleasing to look at (p. 10)

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