

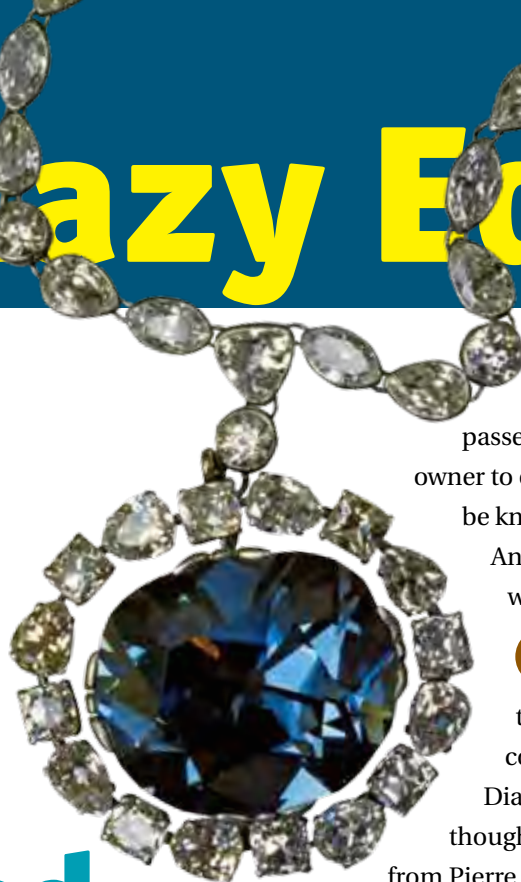
The Lazy Editor

The Curse of the Hope Diamond

Does one touch of this famous jewel mean certain doom? **BY JENNIFER DIGNAN**

DIRECTIONS: Read the following article, which contains many terrible mistakes. Then follow the prompts in the box on p. 31.

- 1 In 1642, a French jeweler named Jean-Baptiste Tavernier was visiting an ancient temple in India. His gaze fell upon an enormous blue diamond glittering on the forehead of a statue of a Hindu goddess. Tavernier's eyes darted around the room. It is empty. He pried the gem from the statue, slipped it into his pocket, and hastily makes his exit.
- 2 Soon afterward, Tavernier is torn apart and eaten by wild dogs.



- 3 As for the magnificent blue diamond, it passed, through the centuries, from owner to owner. Eventually, it came to be known as the Hope Diamond. And it brings misfortune to all who touched it.
- 4 Good story, isn't it? Evalyn and Ned McLean, the wealthy young American couple who bought the Hope Diamond in 1911, certainly thought so, and they heard the story from Pierre Cartier, the French jeweler who sold them the diamond for \$180,000 (equal to about \$4.3 million today), and Cartier, he more or less made the story up.
- 5 Nevertheless, *The New York Times* reported that the McLeans had purchased a diamond said to bring "ill-luck to its possessors" and then other newspapers repeated the story, with each writer adding new and more-fantastic details, and before long, it was common knowledge that the Hope Diamond was cursed.
- 6 The idea of the curse was not entirely Cartier's. Stories about cursed diamonds, in general, were quite popular at the time. Between 1908 and 1910, several newspaper articles linked the Hope Diamond to murder, suicide, madness, financial ruin—all sorts of tragedies. These articles were packed with errors and flat-out fabrications, but they were certainly entertaining!

WE LOVE THIS STORY. TOO BAD WE COULDN'T BE BOTHERED TO EDIT IT! WILL YOU FIX IT FOR US?



7 Is there any truth to the legend of the Hope Diamond? Well, Tavernier *did* get it in India. But he did not steal it; he bought it. And though the cause of his death—in 1689, at the age of 84—is unknown, there is no evidence that wild dog’s were involved. To be sure, though, bad things happened to some of the diamond’s owners. King Louis XVI of France and his wife, Marie Antoinette, who owned the jewel during the French Revolution, were beheaded. Bad luck indeed! And the English nobleman Lord Francis Hope, who owned the diamond through the late 1800s, lost his fortune and was divorced by his wife.

8 As for the McLeans. Their young son was killed in a car accident. Then they ran out of money. Then their marriage fell apart. Then Ned was sent to a mental institution. Where he died at the age of 50. Many people blamed these events on the Hope Diamond, but not Evalyn. She always took the story of the curse as just that: a story.

9 Today, the Hope Diamond is on display at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. When the museum acquired the diamond in 1958, it received many letters of protest. One group of concerned citizens told the museum it was tempting fate to have anything to do with the “ghastly gem.” They probably weren’t surprised to learn that postal carrier James Todd suffered a series of unfortunate events after he delivered the diamond to the museum: His leg was crushed by a truck, his wife died of a heart attack, his dog strangled itself on its leash, and his house burned down! Nevertheless, the walnut-size blue diamond has been the museum’s star attraction. Since it arrived. It draws more than 6 million tourists each year. That doesn’t seem like much of a curse at all, now does it? ●

FIND IT/FIX IT

DIRECTIONS: Can you find the following errors in the article and fix them? Write the answers on your own paper.

PARAGRAPHS 1, 2 & 3: Verb tenses that shift without reason can confuse the reader. Please fix four verb-tense errors (and watch out for wild dogs).

PARAGRAPHS 4 & 5: Know who’s suffering from ill-luck? Anyone who reads these rambling sentences. Break these paragraphs into shorter sentences, won’t you?

PARAGRAPHS 6 & 7: Bad luck shall befall all those who use apostrophes unnecessarily! Remember, an apostrophe should appear before an *s* at the end of a word only to show possession or to form a contraction. Find and fix three apostrophe-*s* mistakes.

PARAGRAPHS 8 & 9: Reading a fragment, or incomplete sentence, is like walking into a brick wall: The action stops abruptly. Please fix three fragments by adding words or combining them with nearby sentences.

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