



Diamond: The History of a Cold-blooded Love Affair

Matthew Hart

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The history of man's love affair with a completely useless gem. Diamonds are almost completely useless but prized above all other gems. Historically they have attracted crimes of passion and awful cold-blooded efficiency, have bedazzled the greatest filmstars and the most opulent courts, and provided the incentive for adventure, destruction and greed on a monumental scale. No one company is more identified with diamonds than the South African-based De Beers. Until the collapse of the Iron Curtain they controlled the diamond market. After the collapse, they still controlled it - once they had bought up most of the diamonds emerging from the former Soviet Union. They are secretive, discreet and very, very powerful. A strike in Northern Canada could hardly seem to trouble them. Except that it prefigured a diamond rush in a territory over which they had no influence by prospectors they did not own. And the strike promised enormous riches. Here is the true story of the strike that upset the diamond kings, and with it the history of the world's most acclaimed diamonds, the process by which they are cut, fashioned, smuggled and stolen, the legends and superstitions that are attached to them, the characters who comprise the great diamond prospectors and, above all, of the shadowy hand of De Beers for whom diamonds are forever.

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