

The Hope Diamond



—a legacy of doom

For 300 years, tragedy has plagued this exquisite gem; now that it's a national treasure, has its sinister heritage ended?

by Jack Pitman

AS AMERICANS, each of us has fallen heir to a multimillion-dollar diamond—or, if you're the gloomy kind, fallen heir to a centuries-old curse.

The Hope diamond, which has a past as breath-taking as its beauty and monetary value, recently passed into possession of the nation through a chain of events strangely prosaic for such a storied stone.

Wrapped in butcher's paper, the 44½-carat oval jewel was taken via the New York subway to a general post office by a shipping clerk employed by Harry Winston, internationally known gem deal-



Mrs. Harry Winston presents fabulous Hope diamond to Smithsonian Institution official.

er. The four-pound package—one-quarter pound of it priceless jewel—was insured for \$1 million.

The following day, an unimpressed postman delivered the registered packet to Dr. Leonard Carmichael, secretary of the Federally operated Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C. A brief speech was made, some hands were shaken, and the latest and dullest chapter of a fiction-like history closed.

But the romance and adventure linked with the Hope diamond are as impossible to becloud as its shimmering lights and



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