

The Mysterious Delhi Purple

The Delhi Purple sapphire is not a sapphire at all. It is an amethyst. But someone called it a sapphire, and the name stuck.

The origin of the Delhi Purple is mysterious. No one knows where it was first found. It was once in the Temple of Indra in Kanpur, India. It was part of an altar honoring the Hindu god of war and weather.

A British soldier stole the Delhi Purple from the temple in 1857. The soldier, Colonel Ferris, brought it back to England. He lost all of his money. Many people in his family got sick.

Colonel Ferris wanted to get rid of the mysterious, cursed gem. In 1890 he gave it to Edward Heron-Allen. Edward was a scientist and writer. As soon as he accepted the gift from the colonel, he started having bad luck.

Edward passed the Delhi Purple to his friends. They also had bad luck. One friend, a singer, lost her voice. The friends gave the stone back to Edward. No cursed gems for them!

Edward was afraid of the stone's mysterious powers. He threw it in the river, but it was returned to him again. So he locked it in a box. He put that box inside six more boxes. He surrounded the boxes with good luck charms.

After he died in 1943, Edward's daughter gave the Delhi Purple to the Natural History Museum in London. She also gave them a letter that her father



had written. It warned people about the curse of the diamond and told them not to touch it.

The Delhi Purple sapphire is still on display in the museum. Is it still bad luck? No one knows. But if so, there might be a way to break the curse.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Who is Indra?
 - a. A British soldier
 - b. The Hindu god of war and weather
 - c. A scientist and writer
 - d. Edward's Daughter

2. Where did Edward keep the diamond?
 - a. Inside a box
 - b. Inside six boxes
 - c. Inside seven boxes
 - d. In a museum

3. Why is the origin of the gem mysterious?
 - a. Because no one knows where it was first found
 - b. Because it was in a temple
 - c. Because it was stolen
 - d. Because it was called by the wrong name

4. How might someone break the curse?
 - a. Throw it in the river
 - b. Give it to a friend
 - c. Return it to the temple
 - d. Call it an amethyst

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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