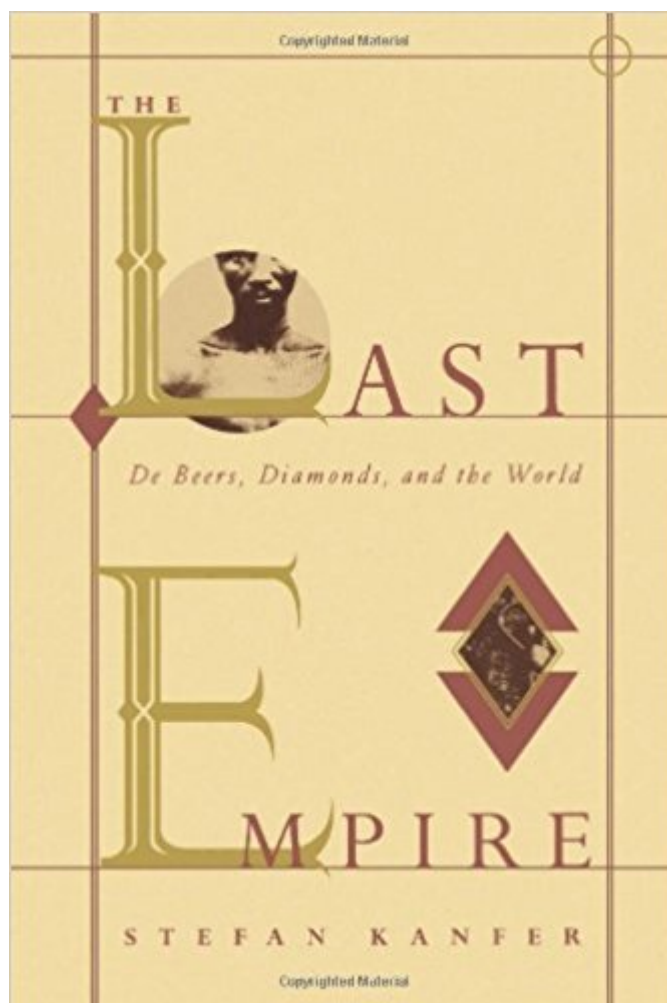


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The Last Empire: De Beers, Diamonds, And The World



Synopsis

"Timely corporate history--as exciting and poignant as any good tale of derring-do against great odds by all-too-flawed giants. " - Kirkus Reviews
With a scholar's precision and a novelist's eye, Stefan Kanfer tells the inside story of De Beers Consolidated Mines - from the nineteenth century diamond rush that transformed Johannes De Beer's humble South African farm into an exotic klondike, to the Oppenheims' shadow empire that has achieved unmatched global reach.

Book Information

Paperback: 416 pages

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Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 16 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Kanfer (A Summer World), a writer and editor at Time , focuses more clearly on history than on analysis in this chronicle of the South African-based De Beers diamond empire. He stylishly recounts tales of 19th-century South Africa, where such arresting characters as Barney Barnato and Cecil Rhodes made fortunes on the frontier. He describes the founding of De Beers's sibling, the Anglo-American Corp., and the quirky, powerful Oppenheimer family at its helm. Kanfer offers an adequate, but not probing, analysis of De Beers's alliances with South Africa's enemies, and the cartel's currently diminishing prospects due to the political situations in Angola and Russia.

Conspicuously missing are both a description of the important role De Beers and Anglo have played over the past two years during South Africa's protracted negotiations toward democracy, and a consideration of how they might fare under a new government. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The next time you hear that a "diamond is forever," you may wish to read this history of the De

Beers diamond empire and its later absorption under the Oppenheimers by the Anglo-American Corporation. From its opening depiction of the grim diamond fields, this is the story of cutthroat capitalists, the economic and racial development of South Africa, and a multinational corporation that controls virtually the world's entire diamond and gold trade. Kanfer is a Time magazine journalist with a flair for spinning a very good tale that should appeal to general readers, especially history buffs. Not a dry, scholarly tome, this book provides more compelling reading than most fiction.- Paul H. Thomas, Hoover Institution Lib. , Stanford, Cal. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Beginning at the very start of diamond discovery in Africa, this book takes the reader along the process that made DeBeers the cartel it is today, controlling 90% of the diamonds on the market. Although it is entirely factual, it is not a boring textbook-style read. It is a wonderfully-written story about the people involved in the diamond industry from its very roots to what it has become today. It leaves out no detail of the violence, abuse, and dishonesty that brought DeBeers to the forefront of the diamond market. A fantastic read.

I found the first hundred pages difficult reading. I think the book was well researched and contained some very interesting personalities. The subject matter was not of particular interest to me. I most likely would not read it if it were not a book club selection.

Very interesting and well written. Filled with surprising and fun stuff. A must for anyone interested in Diamonds and their history!

The reading is a bit dry.....

A compelling history of the discovery of diamonds in South Africa and the events leading up to the powerful cartel of DeBeers who controlled most of the world's diamond distribution for a hundred years

I really enjoyed this book and recommend it regularly to friends and family. It is not an easy read, but it is a worthwhile one, if you are interested in business dynamics across unique industries and non-fiction. Where some of the other reviewers have suggested that the book falls flat either in terms of information or entertainment, I believe The Last Empire strikes this balance quite well,

especially with regard to the biopic portions of the book, devoted to the most important early pioneers of the diamond trade in South Africa.

A very informative book that gives a very clear background as to what Black South Africans are up against in South Africa. Social and political apartheid has been "Pushed Back". The economic apartheid is very much in place, and Mandela did not fight hard enough to even place a dent into it. Where is the land reform, where is the much needed housing development, when shall the shanties be replaced by livable permanent housing...?!?!? That Is The Question!!!

This book arrived in good condition and explains what the World Wars and any Intelligence/ War activity has been about for the European Narcotics Terrorists and Gay & Entertainment Community.

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