**The story of the Koh I noor diamond**

**Section 1 1830**

My name is Koh i noor which means mountain of light. I am called that because when you left me to the light, the shafts of the sun glitter and shift, reflecting my brightness and glory this way and that.(Lift up the fake diamond to the light). Do you not think I am beautiful? Am I not desirable? Am I not worth dying for? Am I not worth killing for? Many have thought so.  
There are many stories about me. Some tell how men dug me up from the earth, hundreds of years ago, deep in the mines of southern India (*display slide two – a* *satellite photograph of the Indian subcontinent and indicate roughly* *the southern part* *of the subcontinent*). It is said I was polished and set in the eye of the statue of a goddess. Some say I was stolen from the statue in a war and taken to the great northern city of Delhi (*indicate the location* *roughly on slide two*). There I was kept locked in the treasury of the city, handed down from sultan to sultan, from emperor to emperor, until they placed me in a Peacock throne like this one for everyone to admire my beauty (and the good taste of my royal  master.)(*display slide 3 an image of a later Peacock throne of the Mughal Emperors of India*).

But in 1739 the Peacock throne was stolen in a war and after a while I was taken to Afghanistan, north-west of India, a country of snowy mountains and fierce tribes (*display slide four,* *a photograph of Afghan* *mountains*).  
It's kings displayed me on their turbans (*display slide five, a portrait of an Afghan ruler displaying the Koh i* *noor diamond in his turban* ) Can you not see me? Does not your gaze fall on me? Do I not outshine the head of this foolish king?

Then in 1830 I returned to India. The Afghans lost a war to this man, a ruler called Ranjit Singh (*display slide six,* *a portrait of Ranjit Singh*). Now he was an owner worthy of me.(*display slide seven, the Koh i noor in its original Indian setting*) He was powerful and rich. He defended his kingdom of Punjab well.(*display slide eight, a map of the Sikh kingdom or empire in 1839*) He came from the religion of the Sikhs who believe in one God. They worship in their Golden Temple in Amritsar (*display slide nine, a contemporary image of the Sikh Golden Temple* *in Amritsar with a turbaned Sikh man bathing in the* *waters that surround it*). Their warriors know how to defend themselves. This one is bathing in the holy water near to the temple wearing a blue turban.

Ranjit Singh's Army, the Khalsa  had well-made weapons (*display slide ten showing a Sikh sword of the nineteenth century*.) This is a Sikh sword called a tolwar. Ranjit Singh made many cannons so that his enemies would be afraid to attack him (*display slide eleven showing* *a drawing of a* *Sikh cannon*). His soldiers were well trained by the best European and American advisors. But as well as being powerful, Ranjit Singh was wise. He made friends with the British East India Company (*display slide twelve, the flag of the British East India Company*) whose power was growing in India. The British already controlled a worldwide empire, protected by a large navy of powerful ships. Their factories produced goods that the British sold around the world.(*display slide thirteen, showing a British East India mecrchant*) The merchants and traders of the British East India Company wanted to increase their power and riches by taking over more and more Indian kingdoms. On this map of 1765 (*display slide fifteen, a British map showing the extent of British territory in the subcontinent in 1765*) ,they only controlled the pink areas. By 1805 they controlled more (*display slide sixteen, a British map showing the extent of British territory in the subcontinent in 1805* ) and by 1837 even more (*display slide seventeen, a British map showing the extent of British territory in the subcontinent in 1837*.)

This mechanical toy of an Indian tiger mauling an English soldier was made for a brave Indian ruler called Tipoo Sultan who resisted the British but even he was defeated by them in the end. It was wise for Ranjit Singh (*display slide eighteen, the portrait* of *Ranjit Singh*) to make friends with the British for while he was their friend, the British did not want to attack him and they knew that his army was strong and powerful. They could not take it for granted that they would win if they fought him.

**Section 2 1852**

1852 In 1839, old Ranjit Singh died. The Sikhs quarrelled about what should happen to their Kingdom. The new king, a 10-year-old boy called Duleep Singh and his advisors could not control the Sikh army, the Khalsa. Some of the Sikhs wanted to fight the British. Some of the British wanted to take over the Sikh kingdom of Punjab. They fought each other in two wars (*display slide nineteen, a painting showing fighting during the Anglo-Sikh wars*). In one battle, the British nearly lost. They talked about surrendering. (*display slide twenty, a British engraving showing British officers on the first night of the battle of Ferozeshah in* *Dec 1845* ) But the Sikhs lost both wars in the end. In 1849 the British took over Punjab. Duleep Singh (*display slide twenty one, a photograph of the young, deposed* *Maharajah of Punjab, Duleep Singh*) lost his throne and was sent to live in Britain.

The British admired the courage of the Sikh soldiers they had fought against. In 1851 some Sikh soldiers from Ranjit Singh`s old army agreed to fight for the British.(*display slide twenty two, a photograph showing Sikh recruits in British service*). They were encouraged to follow the customs of their religion.(*display slide twenty three, a close up of the diamond*)

But what about me? The most precious treasure of the Sikh kingdom! I was stolen again, this time by the British. What do you think? They gave me to their queen, Victoria (*display slide twenty four, a photograph of Queen Victoria in 1845*). I was pleased to be owned by a rich ruler again even though she was only a woman, rather pale and ugly and didn`t have power in her own kingdom. But the British themselves were really powerful. They kept on adding kingdoms like Punjab to their growing empire.(*display Slide Twenty Five, a British map showing the extent of British territory in the subcontinent in 1857*) More and more goods were sold from their factories around the world. Britain was the richest and most powerful country in the world. To celebrate all thisthe British held a great exhibition in London in 1851. (*display slide twenty six, a British painting showing the official opening of the Great* *Exhibition*) I was put on display for all the crowds to admire (*display slide twenty seven, a drawing of the diamond on display at the Great Exhibition*). But they said I was dull, they said the light didn't shine off me. No- one has said this about me before. It really hurt my feelings. I who have been the pride of sultans, emperors and kings- dull! So what happened was that the  Queen`s husband Prince Albert (*display slide twenty eight, a portrait of Prince Alber*t) had me taken out of my Indian setting and cut down to size. That way they said that I would shine and glitter more in the light. I did but then Albert put me in a broach for the Queen to wear. How I missed the heat of India and the splendour of Ranjit Singh's court.

**Section 3 1857** (*display slide twenty nine, a British map* *showing the extent of British territory in the subcontinent in 1857*) So while I stayed in the Queens broach, hidden from view, the British were in real trouble in India. In 1856 some of the Indian soldiers known as sepoys (*display slide thirty, a nineteenth century picture of an Indian sepoy from one of the armies of the British East India Company*) who served the British and helped them keep control, rebelled. Lots of people were killed, including women and children. It really looked like the British might lose control of India. If that happened then what would become of the rest of the British Empire? Would the British lose power to other great European countries like France or Russia? They were desperate for loyal Indian soldiers to help them out. The British turned to their old enemies - the Sikhs. Some Sikh soldiers already fought for the British in India.(*display slide thirty one , a photograph of Sikh soldiers recruited by the British to form a regiment originayl founded in* *1856*). They stayed loyal when many other soldiers rebelled. This impressed the British and they recruited even more Sikhs. The Sikh soldiers fought well and bravely. They had their pride back. But could the British defeat the rebels? What might happen to their Sikh soldiers if the British lost?

**Section 4 1902** (*display slide thirty two, a photograph of Queen Alexandra from the 1902 coronation, showing the Koh I noor diamond in her crown*.) Look can you see me in this photograph? Yes,yes there are I am, shining brightly in the Queen`s crown. No, not Queen Victoria, she died last year in 1901. The British decided to put me in the crown of their new king`s wife, Queen Alexandra. It shows how important they think India is to the British. For Queen Alexandra is also Empress of India, because her husband is Emperor. You see way back in 1857, the British did defeat their rebel soldiers and other Indians, with the help of their loyal Sikh soldiers. After that British were very careful which Indian men they chose as soldiers. They decided to only pick men from the peoples of northern India who they thought were born fighters. This included Sikhs from Punjab. As the British Empire continued to grow, Sikhs served in different wars, in 1860 in China (*display slide thirty three showing Sikh soldiers in the Second Opium war in China*), in 1867-68 in Abyssinia in Africa (*display slide thirty four showing Sikh soldiers in Abyssinia*), in Afghanistan in 1878 to 1880 (*display slide thirty four showing Sikh soldiers during the Second Anglo-Afghan War of 1978-1880*) in Africa in 1882 (*display slide thirty five of Bengal* *Lancers in Egypt*)) and 1884 (*display slide thirty six, of* *Indian soldiers in Sudan)*.In 1897 21 Sikh soldiers died defending a fort on India`s frontiers fighting over 7,000 enemies (*display slide thirty seven, showing the ruins of* *the fort*) while in 1900 Sikh soldiers also fought for Britain in China again (*display slide thirty eight, showing Indian soldiers in Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion*) But although the British Empire is now very powerful in India (*display slide thirty nine, a map of the British Indian Empire in 1909* ) and is the largest empire in the world (*display slide forty ,a map of the British Empire as a whole in 1898* ) Britain is not as powerful as it used to be.(*Display slide forty one, a map of the USA in the later nineteenth century with the stars and stripes flag in use in 1900)* The United States of America is growing and its factories are selling goods around the world.(*display slide forty two, a map of the German Empire between* *1871 and 1914 with its flag*). In Europe Germany is now a united Empire with a powerful army. Like American factories, German factories are selling goods around the world. Germany also wants to build a navy like Britain`s. Between 1899- 1902 it took Britain three long years to defeat its enemies in south Africa (*display slide forty three, a photograph of Boer soldiers in a trench who fought to defend their independence against the British* *between 1899 and 1902*)). The British looked weak there. What will happen to Britain's power? What will happen to the Sikh soldiers who serve the British?