

'The Adventures of the Regent' video transcription

Indian instruments play. We see the Golconda Fort in India and the entrance to a precious stone mine. Slaves walk out carrying baskets of stones on their head. Inside the mine, we see them digging with picks.

[Narrator]

India, the region of Golconda, in 1698: in the imperial diamond mines, hundreds of slaves are at work looking for precious stones. Suddenly...

[Slave]

Oh!

[Narrator]

...one of them makes an extraordinary find.

[Slave]

You're going to make my fortune...!

The slave cuts his leg, hides the diamond in the wound and rips his clothing to tie a makeshift bandage.

[Slave]

He whispers:

Nobody around? Be brave now... No one will think of looking for you here.

And then screams:

Owww! My leg! I'm wounded!

Another slave helps him walk out in front of the foreman, who wears a turban.

[Narrator]

The injured slave is taken to the infirmary—a ramshackle building watched over by a guard.

Lying down in the infirmary, the slave looks up.

[Slave]

A hole in the roof...?

He climbs onto the roof and escapes into the jungle. Drums beat to the pace of him walking.

[Narrator]

He escapes, and after walking for several days, he finally reaches the coast.

On the seashore, we see a small sailing boat. The slave, carrying a bundle over his shoulder, waves to the sailor.

[Slave]

Hey, you! Sailor! Take me to Madras. I'll pay you well.

He shows the sailor the diamond, who sneers as he looks at the precious stone with desire.

[Sailor]

Off we go.

The boat sets off.

Night falls. The slave is asleep on deck. We see the sailor's shadow approaching with an arm raised.

[Slave]

What are you d...?

The sailor throws the slave overboard.

[Slave]

Arrgghhh...!

We see the sailor's silhouette on the boat in the moonlight. He sneers and holds the diamond before his eyes in triumph.

The boat arrives at the port of Madras, where we see large ships, a fort, people strolling by and two mahouts riding elephants.

[Narrator]

In Madras, the sailor looks for buyers.

The sailor follows a porter. He heads over to the stand of a jewelry merchant who has a big moustache and wears a turban and is talking to another merchant.

[Sailor]

Do you buy precious stones? I have something to show you.

The jewelry merchant's eyes spring wide open.

[Jewelry merchant]

Magnificent! Very well; it's a deal!

The two merchants wearing turbans are in the office of the Governor of Madras, who sits at his desk and wears a wig.

[Narrator]

The merchants sell the diamond to the Governor of Madras. His name is Thomas Pitt.

We see Thomas Pitt in a street in London.

[Narrator]

He takes it to London, and has the 426-carat stone re-cut.

A jeweler, wearing magnifying glasses, examines the diamond by candlelight. As the stone is cut, it gets smaller.

[Narrator]

It produces a flawless diamond of 140 carats—no doubt the biggest diamond in the world, but also the most difficult to sell.

Thomas Pitt shows the diamond to a rich couple, to cardinals (who we see rejecting the offer) and finally to Louis XIV, who looks upset and also refuses the offer.

[Narrator]

It's far too expensive, even for Louis XIV!

We see the diamond in its casket.

[Narrator]

Finally, in 1717, after many vain attempts, Thomas Pitt manages to sell it to Philip of Orleans, Regent of France, for the mind-boggling sum of 2 million pounds.

Philippe d'Orléans sits at his desk. He wears a large wig, embroidered clothing and a lace jabot.

[Narrator]

It becomes known as the "Regent,"

A bishop places the crown on the head of the young King Louis XV. The Regent diamond sparkles at the front.

[Narrator]

and is set in the coronation crown of the young king Louis XV.

We hear gun fire and see the Bastille fortress. Pieces of furniture arrive on wagons at the royal store.

[Narrator]

During the Revolution, the crown jewels are put in the royal furniture store for safekeeping. One night, thieves break into the building.

[Thief]

Look, a safe! What's inside?

The thief uses an axe to break the safe.

[Thief]

Diamonds! They must be the crown jewels!

[Other thief]

And that must be the Regent!

[All the thieves]

We're rich!

[Narrator]

The storerooms are so poorly guarded that the thieves enjoy a candle-lit dinner before leaving!

Policemen enter a house in Paris.

[Narrator]

One year later, the burglars are traced to their hide-out—the attic of a house in a suburb of Paris.

They hadn't managed to sell the "Regent." It was found hidden in a beam.

We see the Regent being passed from hand to hand.

[Narrator]

After the Revolution, the diamond became the favorite ornament of rulers including Napoleon, Louis XVIII, Charles X and Empress Eugenie, the wife of Napoleon III.

Discovered by a slave and worn by kings, this fabulous jewel now dazzles the millions who visit the Louvre every year.

The video ends with a close up of the real Regent diamond.