

PDF | Stoned: Jewelry, Obsession, and How Desire Shapes the World

by Aja Raden

"Money, power, sexual politics, and jewelry! Isn't this what makes the world go 'round? What more could I ask for in a book?" —MADONNA



NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

STONED

JEWELRY, OBSESSION,
AND HOW DESIRE
SHAPES THE WORLD

AJA RADEN

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As entertaining as it is incisive, *Stoned* is a raucous journey through the history of human desire for what is rare, and therefore precious.

What makes a stone a jewel? What makes a jewel priceless? And why do we covet beautiful things? In this brilliant account of how eight jewels shaped the course of history, jeweler and scientist Aja Raden tells an original and often startling story about our unshakeable addiction to beauty and the darker side of human desire.

What moves the world is what moves each of us: desire. Jewelry—which has long served as a stand-in for wealth and power, glamor and success—has birthed cultural movements, launched political dynasties, and started wars. Masterfully weaving together pop science and history, *Stoned* breaks history into three categories—Want, Take, and Have—and explains what the diamond on your finger has to do with the GI Bill, why green-tinted jewelry has been exalted by so many cultures, why the glass beads that bought Manhattan for the Dutch were initially considered a fair trade, and how the French Revolution started over a coveted necklace.

Studded with lively personalities and fascinating details, *Stoned* tells the remarkable story of our abiding desire for the rare and extraordinary.

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of December 2015: Most of us have probably heard the expression “diamonds are a girl’s best

friend” – but have we ever asked ourselves why? Yes, they are sparkly and beautiful, but so is cubic zirconia at a fraction of the price. Indestructable? Yet another brilliant ad campaign has been telling us for years that “diamonds are forever.” But, in fact, at around 1,400 degrees Fahrenheit a diamond will literally vanish. So what is it really that makes a diamond, an emerald, a Fabergé egg, or even glass beads so desirable? In *Stoned*, Aja Raden sifts through the psychology, neuroscience, and mythos behind the human desire for beautiful things and why we treat some objects as more precious (and therefore valuable) than others. Lest you imagine this as some boring academic tome, fear not – Raden’s cheeky attitude and fascinating anecdotes about everything from Holland’s Tulipomania to various jewel-encrusted royal scandals and dazzling legends make *Stoned* a treasure trove of fun narrative history. --*Seira Wilson*

Product Description

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