

Blood Diamonds

Aim

- To explore the action of a thriller.
- To engage students by asking them to predict what they think will happen next.

1 Write the word DIAMONDS in a box in the middle of the board and ask the students to shout out what they know about them. Write the words they give you all around the word box.

Possible answers: expensive, beautiful, ring, jewels, (South) Africa, Amsterdam, strong, shiny, carbon.

- 2 Tell them that the title of this book is *Blood Diamonds*, and ask them for suggestions about what they think it means.
- 3 Ask students if they have seen the film *Blood Diamond* (Warner Bros. film, directed by Edward Zwick, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, and nominated for 5 Academy Awards in January 2007). If so, ask them what type of film it is (e.g. thriller, spy, action, romance). Ask them to link the content of that film with this story. (There is good information on the film on Wikipedia.)

Answers: it's an action film; the film and the book are about selling diamonds for guns in Africa.

- 4 Ask them to read Extract 1, then tell you what they've understood about blood diamonds. Ask what kind of text this is (part of a newspaper article) and who the authors are (H. Kirkpatrick and A. Shepherd). Ask them why they are called 'blood diamonds'.

Answer: They are called 'blood diamonds' because money from the sale of the diamonds is used to buy guns, which kill people.

- 5 Tell students that the action focuses on the investigative journalism of Kirkpatrick and Shepherd in their search for a good front-page story. Ask students to think about what qualities a person must have to be a good investigative journalist and what this type of work involves (they may use their dictionaries). Is this a dangerous job?

Possible answers: An investigative journalist must be daring, ambitious, determined and able to think and act quickly. He/she must be curious about people and events; do research and find information; watch and follow people. Ask them to read Extracts 2 to confirm their ideas.

- 6 Tell students that Harley suspects that a man called Erik Van Delft is selling blood diamonds. Ask them to read what happens (Extract 3) and say what they think happens next.

Answer: The driver knocks him unconscious with a baseball bat.

- 7 Ask students to read Extract 3 again and answer the following questions: Where do they drive in the car? What is the place they stop like? Does Harley know Van Delft? Why does Harley say Van Delft doesn't remember meeting him? How does Harley feel and why?

Answers: close to the river in London; empty and dark; no he doesn't; because he had too much to drink; frightened, because Van Delft has a gun.

- 8 Ask students what they think about the 'blood diamonds' issue. How do they think this trade can be stopped? Ask them to write a short report on this issue for the general public, explaining the problem and suggesting what could be done.

Optional activity

1. Write the newspaper article which Kirkpatrick and Shepherd write about Erik Van Delft.
2. Find some recent news stories about 'blood diamonds' on the Internet, read them and discuss them with your classmates.

Blood Diamonds

Extract 1

Blood diamonds

by H. Kirkpatrick and A. Shepherd

Diamonds are important for a number of countries in Africa. Diamonds buy food and doctors; they give people work, and help them get money. But in some countries people buy guns with the diamonds. We call these diamonds 'blood diamonds' because many people die

from the guns. In Angola in the 1990s blood diamonds made US\$3.7 billion in five years. That money bought a lot of guns. And in Angola in the 1990s a lot of people died because of these guns. The United Nations is trying to stop blood diamonds.

Extracts 2

- 'This is all from the Internet,' she said. 'The first one is the South African story. I'm going to look again today.'
- 'This morning, I spoke to one of the people who work there [at the hotel],' said Shepherd. 'She's going to watch Van Delft for me. For a little money, of course.'
- Kirkpatrick walked down the street. He looked in the shop windows, but every two or three seconds he looked back at *Lafon Jewellery*. No one came out. He thought again about how to start a conversation with Van Delft . . . Fifteen minutes passed . . . He talked to the woman in the flower shop . . . Then the door of *Lafon Jewellery* opened and van Delft came out . . . Kirkpatrick didn't know what to say, but he felt the time was good.
- 'Harley!' said Shepherd, half shouting. 'He actually thinks you are going to buy some guns from him?' It was a kind of question.
- 'Well, don't do anything stupid!' Shepherd didn't look very happy. Sometimes Kirkpatrick wanted a story *too* much.'

Extract 3

Kirkpatrick got in the car and sat next to Van Delft.

'Drive,' said Van Delft to the man in the front. Van Delft looked at Kirkpatrick.

'Where are we going?' asked Kirkpatrick.

Van Delft smiled. 'Not far,' he said. 'Then we can have a little talk.'

They drove from St Paul's down to the river. There were always a lot of people here in the day, but at night it was very quiet. And at ten o'clock it was dark.

The car stopped.

'OK. Get out,' said Van Delft . . .

'I love London, you know. And I love Africa, too. I go there a lot.' Then he took out a gun.

'Oh no,' thought Kirkpatrick. 'Maybe this wasn't very clever.' But it was too late now.

'You know, we never met in Lagos.' Van Delft's eyes were cold.

'What are you talking about?' said Kirkpatrick. 'Of course we did, man. How do you think I know you?'

'That's a good question, Mr Kirkpatrick,' said Van Delft.

'You had a lot to drink that night, man,' said Kirkpatrick, 'and I did too, but I remember . . .'

'Stop!' said Van Delft. He put up one hand. 'Stop talking. You must think I'm stupid. I never drink too much. I never forget anything. And we did not meet. Now, I'm just telling you: don't come near me again.'

Just then Kirkpatrick heard a noise. He looked behind him but it was too late.