

# Norton's Key

Location: on the western cliff top of Alcatraz Island, San Francisco, California.

Description: it's the standard sword-in-the-stone setup; the Key is a battered old Union Cavalry saber and the stone it's stuck in is a giant hunk of benitoite. A plaque on the stone says, in English and Spanish: *Whosoever pulls me from this stone will be the True Chatelan of the Emperor of the United States and the Protector of Mexico*. The site absolutely reeks of civic-flavored magic.

People know about Norton's Key, of course. It's been around for about thirty years, and it's stoutly resisted both mundane and esoteric methods of shifting it for most of that time (people just gave up trying around 2005 or so). It's probably the best-known secret magical artifact in the USA; there's nothing stopping anybody from hearing about it, but invariably folks just kind of **ignore** Norton's Key. It doesn't even seem to promote obsessive interest among actual magicians, and 'true' magicians are invariably vulnerable to becoming obsessed.

But does it *work*? Nobody knows, but Norton's Key definitely radiates the right kind of civic-based magic. Detailed tests are impossible as long as the Sword is in the Stone, obviously, but the general outline suggests that somebody who bears Norton's Key will have access to all sorts of esoterically-granted abilities. Mostly support abilities, too; the Key wouldn't give any benefits in war or diplomacy, but it's apparently virtually perfect at logistics and administration.

As a weapon, the key is an old cavalry saber. The blade is dull (and it will turn out that it cannot be sharpened); but the Key itself is a fairly standard flavor of everyday indestructibility. Somebody could use it in a fight, then -- but that's not what the Key is really for.

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