

Museum of London: The Keys

“For a locked door, only opened once”

The found key of Azarus, dates back to the 12th century. It was specially made by a blacksmith at the time who worked directly for the king. The king needed a special key made, to work in pair with a secret escape hatch built into his walk-in vault. Here, the king stored all of his most precious treasures and possessions. In the event of an intrusion where his life is compromised, he is able to escape through an underground tunnel which leads to beyond the kingdom walls, where a horse is kept. The tunnel is only accessible through the hatch in the vault. Luckily, although the king never had to use the hatch for emergencies, he sometimes used it to escape unnoticed to fulfill his unGodly-like pleasures. It was such a private and precious key, only he and his blacksmith knew it existed. One stormy night, the king escaped to visit one of his mistresses. The key fell from his pocket as he began riding out of the city on a cold, wet and windy night. The key landed alongside the tracks of his horse. It was found by a messenger approaching the castle the same night to spread warning of a man who swore death upon the king for sleeping with his daughters. As the messenger approached the walls, no one was guarding the gate which was unusual. He called out if anyone was there, and the only thing he heard was his echo. He turns and travels down a thin still candle lit passage and approaches another door. With a gentle push, he gains entry to the living quarters. He is trying the key in all the doors, but it works in nothing. He is dumbfounded that a key with royal markings on it don't open any doors in the castle where the king lives. He keeps exploring, until he gets to the chamber. He walks around, and the only door left to try is the door to the vault. But, it does not open.