



A Rush of Dreamers: Being the Remarkable Story of Norton I, Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico

John Cech

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This delightful fictional account brings to life one of the most colorful eccentrics in America's history-- Based on the true story of San Franciscan Joshua Norton, who proclaimed himself Emperor of the United States in 1859 and ruled until his death in 1880 For over a century, Joshua Norton has been one of America's most celebrated eccentrics. Lured to San Francisco in 1849 by the easy money to be made in the Gold Rush, Norton made a fortune as a merchant and real estate speculator, lost it all on a wild scheme to corner the California rice market, disappeared for several years, and then reemerged in 1859, declaring himself Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico. Norton took his responsibilities seriously, inspecting construction sites, checking up on bus timetables, issuing currency (bearing his picture of course), and keeping in touch with the life of the city. The people of San Francisco adored him. They treated him to free lunches and drinks wherever he went and paid to replace his wardrobe -- a mixed bag of army and navy uniforms, outlandish hats, and elaborate walking sticks -- whenever needed. When he died in 1880, Norton's funeral was attended by 10,000 loyal subjects. This lively novel resurrects him once again for history and literary buffs: Norton I, neighbor to Mark Twain, real or imaginary confidant to the likes of President Lincoln, Russia's Czar, and many others. It also recreates the violent, chaotic world of the Gold Rush and the mud-filled streets of the "instant city" of San Francisco.

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