

The Imperial Crown of America

This particular artifact enjoys a certain reputation in the occult underworld. After all, seldom do you see a vicious practical joke presented in such an expensive, if not actively obscenely extravagant, style. The Crown itself clearly owes its conceptional design to the infamous works of Robert Chambers: it is a diadem of beaten gold with multiple faceted diamonds, with inlaid carvings that suggests tentacles, seaweed, the tattered silk of a pallid and faceless King... you know the drill. It's really made out of gold, by the way, and those are real diamonds. Which means that the thing is ridiculously heavy, but never mind that right now.

The mystical effects of the Imperial Crown of America are even more interesting, though. The Crown has two powers. First, anybody who looks at it (via mundane or esoteric means) will find it dreadful, in the 'full of dread' sense of the word. Anybody who wears it will appear to be dangerous, in an ominous and powerful sort of way. Anybody who wears it even once is immune to that effect, but putting on the Crown imposes a feeling of unlimited puissance and destiny on the wearer. Said feeling is also dreadful, but in an enthralling and decadently pleasant

fashion that can make the wearer sound like a lunatic on opium, if he's not careful.

And that's it. Other than those two features, the Imperial Crown of America has all the magical mojo of a boring piece of string. And people have analyzed this magic item! The gold alone is worth tens of thousands of dollars; the diamonds, collectively, are probably worth about a million. Surely Nobody spends that kind of money -- which doesn't even take into account the high costs of enchantment -- just to confuse their magical peers, surely. But that's what seems to have happened.

Currently, the Crown is being displayed (suitably mostly-shielded) at a fairly discreet museum for the true occult. Every so often, it disappears. And every so often, it comes back, typically after having been taken off of the giggling head of a freshly-broken madman. This would concern the occult world more if it weren't for the fact that most of the madmen typically turn out to have deserved it. It's all very, well, strange. And that's a word that the occult underworld doesn't use lightly.

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