

FALSE HYDRA

The ideas and much of the flavor text of this homebrew came from <http://goblinpunch.blogspot.com/2014/09/false-hydra.html>.

The False Hydra is a beast many don't believe exists. It is only discussed in the pale glow around a campfire or the candle light at a child's bedside, a story meant to dissuade lying and cheating. But it is very real, and very dangerous.

Some say that they are grown from gods tears that have fallen to earth. Others say they are primordial and as ancient as the gods themselves. Still others believe they are the result of a mad wizards spell gone wrong. But it does not matter, for the effect is the same.

DESCRIPTION

The Hydra has pearl white skin and a large bulbous body with long spindly necks that twist up at impossible angles. Its heads almost resemble a horse but with vaguely human like fears with its white skin stretched tight against its deformed skull. It has neither eyes nor a nose but where its eyes should be lie two black holes, stretching into its skull. Its mouth extends away from the rest of its face with large weathered and cracked teeth, a long dry tongue flicks in and out. Its skin is covered in dirt and muck from when it burrows through the ground searching for its next prey.

SONG

While the Hydra sings no one can directly interact or remember it, but that does not mean that it is completely immune to being detected. It can be seen in mirrors and while it can cut through fey ancestry quite easily those with fey lineage have an easier time breaking through its effects with magic. Feline animals can also see through the illusion quite easily.

Even the general population is not completely immune to the song of the Hydra. While the Hydra may suppress the memories they are not erased, such as in *modify memory*. People may begin to feel a sense of anxiety when there is a disconnect between the message of the song and what they actually see. Eventually their brains will begin to revolt against the song and attempt to warn themselves of the danger they are in.

These spells can see completely or partially through the Hydra's charm, but they don't stop the charm from working after they look away. Some may require a saving throw to work and others may work without one.

Arcane Eye
Detect Evil and Good
Dispel Evil and Good
Foresight
Protection from Evil and Good
See Invisibility
True Seeing

The Hydra must end its song to eat and so puts itself at risk, to minimize the risk it often attacks people who are alone and drags them underground to eat them without risk of being discovered. If the Hydra ever drops below half its HP or takes more than 1/10 its HP in one turn it ends its song and can not start it again until returns to above half its hit points. However, if someone forces the Hydra to stop singing they have advantage on resisting the effect for one round.

EATING

The hydar absorbs the basic memories of whatever it eats and as it grows

AGING

The more the Hydra consumes the stronger and larger it becomes, the more heads it grows. Depending on how much it eats and how long it has been alive a different stat block should be used, up to DM discussion. While a young hydra might be a walk in the park an adult hydra strikes fear into even the most seasoned adventures.

YOUNG FALSE HYDRA

At this point the hydra has only recently hatched and begun to consume. It may only eat animals such as livestock and stray cats and dogs but it is still dangerous and will eat humanoid too if it gets the chance. It still only has one head and two arms that can emerge from the soil on the same spot, extending around 5ft up into the air. However, even if its body is small its hunger remains enormous.

ADOLESCENT FALSE HYDRA

At this point in the hydra's life it is now consuming the general population of whatever town it is in. It may have between 2 and 4 heads that now can stretch out of the soil like eyes on a potato. It has grown more confident and reckless with its powers, consuming people that are more likely to cause problems if they are gone. Any adventures would start to notice strange occurrences throughout the local area

STRANGE OCCURRENCES

1d6 Occurrence

- 1 All but one candle is lit in the lampposts on the main street. No one can remember who lights them.
- 2 The town beggars normal spot is vacant leaving a thin blanket and a had with a few copper pieces in it.
- 3 Someone seems to run into something no one can see and then absentmindedly walks around it.
- 4 Bells rang the day before at this time, why not now?
- 5 Two fighting cats in a back alley way simultaneously start to hiss as something and then run away.
- 6 A vendors stall or a store lies unattended, people avoid going into it.

The general population would begin to feel a sense of unease as their minds desperately try to break from the hydra's charm. They may act emotionally when confronted with places and objects that were owned or frequented by their lost families, neighbors, or friend.

At this point the Hydra would most likely live in the sewers or naturally occurring tunnels beneath the town, it would also start to carve its own series of intricate, maze like tunnels and catacombs for its home. They would most likely have access points in sewers, cellars, or abandoned homes.

MATURE FALSE HYDRA

By this stage the Hydra is nearly as large and terrifying as it will ever get, but still lacks a 7th head. By this point a sense of anxiety and paranoia should have swept the entire town as the population's brains revolt against the control, attempting to warn themselves of the danger. They find it painful to reminisce and so avoid it, their memories become deformed and twisted, identities become muddled as the cognitive dissonance and contradictory memories pile up. Friends' faces seem subtly deformed and people experience huge swings in mood from one moment to the next. Role on the warnings table for ways a PC or NPC may try to warn themselves of their impending danger.

WARNINGS

1d6 Warning

- 1 They wake up with a cryptic warning carved into their chest and skin under their fingernails.
- 2 Reading what they wrote they find a sentence they don't remember writing begging them to leave town.
- 3 They speak the name of people eaten by the hydra when referring to someone else.
- 4 Their hand begins to act on its own at times, sometimes grabbing weapons and pointing vigorously.
- 5 They have a dream of faceless people, and in the darkness a creature with dark holes for eyes.
- 6 They start humming songs from their childhood but can't remember the lyrics.

By this point the heads of the Hydra extend tens, if not hundreds of feet into the air, singing and swaying to an invisible breeze. The Hydra has grown so many heads it no longer needs to end its song to eat and has almost free pickings of anyone it wants. It has also excavated large amounts of earth beneath the town and has also made a cavern deep beneath the earth where it will eventually grow into an adult.

ADULT FALSE HYDRA

Before the Hydra enters its final stage of life it pulls all its heads underground and enters a sleep-like state. For a short period its song ends and people may begin to remember who they have forgotten. During this time it is vulnerable to being remembered and attacked and so will make a lair underground where it can rest while doing so. Once this is done the Hydra grows its seventh head and broadcasts a permanent dominant person for a mile in every direction. PCs must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or be under the Hydra's control. If they succeed then the Hydra will use its new minions to attempt to kill what it can not control.

At this point the Hydra is still hungry but has become so engorged that it can no longer move on its own. It will command its minions to dig it out from its subterranean lair, eating as it goes and force them to slowly drag it to the next town. This will eventually become unsustainable however as it can neither force its minions to hunt for food (as this would let them leave ear shot) or continuously move its body (as it will eventually become too large to move).

Eventually the Hydra will starve to death, wailing and singing as the last ounces of life leave its body

YOUNG FALSE HYDRA

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 50 (11d8)
Speed Burrow 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	17 (+4)

Medium aberration, chaotic evil

Resistances psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, blinded, prone
Skills Perception +2
Languages None
Senses Tremorsense 30ft.
Challenge 4

Wail. When a creature that hits the Hydra with a melee attack is within 5ft. of the creature it takes 1d4 psychic damage.

Grapple. If the Hydra succeeds on a bite attack it can chose to grapple the creature instead of dealing damage if it is a size equal to or smaller than it.

Song. If a creature is hostile to the Hydra when it begins its song the creature make a Wisdom saving throw DC 14. On a failure the creature drops out of combat, on a success the creature has disadvantage on all attacks against the hydra and must repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns if the song has not stopped.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage

Song. The hydra can end or start its song as an action

REACTIONS

Shriek. *Reaction to being hit with a melee attack:* The Hydra sings its song giving it a +5 to AC

ADOLESCENT FALSE HYDRA

Large aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 130 (26d10)
Speed Burrow 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)

Resistances psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, blinded, prone
Skills Perception +3
Languages None
Senses Tremorsense 60ft.
Challenge 5

Wail. When a creature that hits the Hydra with a melee attack is within 5ft. of the creature it takes 2d4 psychic damage.

Grapple. If the Hydra succeeds on a bite attack it can chose to grapple the creature instead of dealing damage if it is a size equal to or smaller than it.

Song. If a creature is hostile to the Hydra when it begins its song the creature make a Wisdom saving throw DC 15. On a failure the creature drops out of combat, on a success the creature has disadvantage on all attacks against the hydra and must repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns if the song has not stopped.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hydra can make two attacks with any combination of the *Bite* or *Claw* attacks

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit* 9 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit* 11 (1d10 + 6) slashing damage

Song. The hydra can end or start its song as an action

MATURE FALSE HYDRA

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 160 (24d12)

Speed Heads/Arms Burrow 60ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)

Huge aberration, chaotic evil

Resistances psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, blinded, prone

Skills Perception +3

Languages Language of town it resides in

Senses Tremorsense 120ft.

Challenge 7

Wail. When a creature that hits the Hydra with a melee attack is within 5ft. of the creature it takes 3d4 psychic damage.

Grapple. If the Hydra succeeds on a bite attack it can chose to grapple the creature instead of dealing damage if it is a size equal to or smaller than it.

Song. If a creature is hostile to the Hydra when it begins its song the creature make a Wisdom saving throw DC 16. On a failure the creature drops out of combat, on a success the creature has disadvantage on all attacks against the hydra and must repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns if the song has not stopped.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hydra can make three attacks with any combination of the *Bite* or *Claw* attacks

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 13 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 12 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage

Song. The hydra can end or start its song as an action

REACTIONS

Shriek. *Reaction to being hit with a melee attack:* The Hydra sings its song giving it a +5 to AC

ADULT FALSE HYDRA

Gargantuan aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 250 (24d12)

Speed ---

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)

Resistances psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, blinded, prone

Skills Perception +3

Languages Any language something it has eaten knows

Senses Tremorsense 120ft.

Challenge 12

Wail. When a creature that hits the Hydra with a melee attack is within 5ft. of the creature it takes 3d4 psychic damage.

Grapple. If the Hydra succeeds on a bite attack it can chose to grapple the creature instead of dealing damage if it is a size equal to or smaller than it.

Song. If a creature is hostile to the Hydra when it begins its song the creature make a Wisdom saving throw DC 16. On a failure the creature drops out of combat, on a success the creature has disadvantage on all attacks against the hydra and must repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns if the song has not stopped.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hydra can make three attacks with any combination of the *Bite* or *Claw* attacks

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 13 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 12 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage

Song. The hydra can end or start its song as an action