

MEDUSA

Hunted as monsters with no thought given to their nature or origin, medusas are some of the most underestimated and misunderstood creatures. Many people fear medusas for their monstrous appearance and ability to turn others to stone, but few realize the truth. Each of these monstrosities was once a humanoid, cursed and transformed for defying a god. But while some medusas embrace wickedness, many simply fight for their lives against those who threaten them through their ignorance.

Cursed for Defiance

When a powerful mortal defies a god for good or for ill, agents of that deity might curse them to live as a medusa. The offender's skin and eyes become reptilian, and a nest of black venomous snakes replaces their hair. When the medusa wishes, beams from their eyes can slowly petrify others to stone.

Followers of the gods who impose this punishment spread terrifying myths about medusas, causing mortals to attack and shun them. This often drives medusas into solitude, or to places haunted by creatures who don't judge them based on mere appearance and horror stories. Many medusas plot ways to break their curse, searching for lost healing rituals or secrets to use against the gods who cursed them. Others embrace their new gifts, building stone gardens of the aggressors who foolishly hunted or harmed them.

Petrification

Petrification can take a character out of the game permanently. If you want to give the heroes a chance to recover an ally petrified after an encounter with a medusa, you can let them use the **Find a Cure** downtime project in *Draw Steel: Heroes* to discover an ancient ritual that can return a petrified creature to life. Alternatively, a medusa might have the power to reverse the state of a petrified victim if left alive, or there might be a temple nearby with a priest who knows how to cure petrification ... for a price.

Serpentine Reflexes

While the medusa's stone gaze is legendary, they can move, strike, and evade as swiftly as a snake, even briefly manifesting scaled wings to dart through the chaos. This enhanced dexterity makes them difficult to pin down. Their petrifying gaze allows them to attack at range as necessary, but they're equally deadly in melee, where they have the full advantage of their snakes and the enervating venom pulsing through each snake's set of needlelike fangs.

Baleful Magic

Medusas have many means to defend themselves, even aside from their petrifying stare. They slow enemies down, weaken them, and can even temporarily charm and control them once petrifying magic takes root in their veins. These reclusive beings are no stranger to being outnumbered and overwhelmed. All they have in their power to gain leverage over their opponents, they wield ruthlessly.

Stone Gardens

Medusas often reside in stone gardens filled with statues of those who previously tried to slay them. This not only allows them to slip between their statues, hide, and then strike, but it also allows them to command the battle while in their lairs, shattering statues to harm others. Evil medusas sometimes slowly reverse the petrification of their victims one limb at a time to feed on them, creating grotesque mausoleums of the crumbling dead for unwitting adventurers to wander into.

Lifting the Curse

Agents of the deity who ordered a medusa's curse can sometimes be convinced to lift the punishment, usually in response to the medusa undertaking an impossible task in the god's name or making a threat that can't be ignored. Some sages claim that ancient rituals can undo the curse, but these lost secrets are often hidden by wrathful divine servants—and performing such a ritual might entail great sacrifice.

Medusa Languages

Medusas can speak any language they knew before they were cursed. Many of them speak Caelian, and others have learned the languages of monsters and creatures they dwell near. Additionally, tales tell of some medusas who speak the original form of Khamish.

Medusa Malice

Malice Features

At the start of a medusa's turn, you can spend Malice to activate one of the following features.

- Wakening Glare** 2d10 + 4 **4 Malice**
 Magic, Ranged, Strike
 Ranged 10
 Main action
 One creature
 ≤11 6 damage; weakened (EoT)
 12-16 10 damage; weakened (EoT)
 17+ 12 damage; weakened (save ends)

- Solo Action** **5 Malice**
 The medusa takes an additional main action on their turn. They can use this feature even if they are dazed.

- Ssstop and Lisssten** 2d10 + 4 **5 Malice**
 Magic, Ranged
 Ranged 10
 Main action
 Three creatures
 ≤11 1<2 the target is charmed
 12-16 1<3 the target is charmed
 17+ 1<4 the target is charmed
Effect: At a time of the medusa's choosing, a charmed creature moves up to their speed and makes a free strike against an enemy of the medusa's choice as a free triggered action. The creature is then no longer charmed.

- Shatter Victims** **7 Malice**
 The medusa causes three stone statues within 10 squares of them to each shatter in a 2-cube explosion. Each enemy in one of those areas makes a **Might test**. An enemy restrained or slowed by the medusa's Petrify ability has a double bane on the test.
 ≤11 12 damage; vertical push 3; bleeding (save ends)
 12-16 10 damage; vertical push 3
 17+ 6 damage

Medusa

Accursed, Humanoid, Medusa

Level 5 Solo
EV 84**1M****Size****10****Speed****420****Stamina****5****Stability****8****Free Strike****Immunity:** —
Movement: —**Weakness:** —**M**ight +2 **A**gility +4 **R**eason 0 **I**ntuition 0 **P**resence 0**Solo Monster****End Effect:** At the end of each of their turns, the medusa can take 10 damage to end one effect on them that can be ended by a saving throw. This damage can't be reduced in any way.**Solo Turns:** The medusa can take two turns each round. They can't take turns consecutively.**Snake Bites** 2d10 + 4
Melee, Strike, Weapon
Melee 1**Signature Ability**

Main action

Two creatures or objects

≤11 11 damage; **M<2** slowed (save ends)**12-16** 16 damage; **M<3** slowed (save ends)**17+** 19 damage; **M<4** slowed (save ends)**Damning Gaze** 2d10 + 4
Magic, Ranged, Strike
Ranged 10**Signature Ability**

Main action

Two creatures or objects

≤11 11 damage; push 3**12-16** 16 damage; push 5**17+** 19 damage; push 7**3 Malice:** The medusa targets two additional creatures or objects.**Petrify** 2d10 + 4
Area, Magic
3 burst**5 Malice**

Main action

Each enemy in the area

≤11 **M<2** restrained (save ends)**12-16** **M<3** restrained (save ends)**17+** Slowed (save ends); or if **M<4** restrained (save ends)**Effect:** A target with cover reduces the potency by 1, while a slowed target increases the potency by 1. A target restrained this way magically begins to turn to stone, and a target who ends two consecutive turns restrained this way is petrified.**Nimble Escape**

Self

Maneuver

Self

Effect: The medusa shifts up to 3 squares and can attempt to hide even if observed.**Venomous Spit** 2d10 + 4
Melee
Melee 1**2 Malice**

Triggered action

The triggering creature

Trigger: A creature within distance deals damage to the medusa.**≤11** 13 acid damage**12-16** 18 acid damage**17+** 22 acid damage**Cunning Edge**

The medusa gains an edge on power rolls against any creature who is restrained or slowed by Petrify.

Many Peering Eyes

The medusa can't be flanked.

Mass Petrify
Magic, Ranged
Ranged 50**Villain Action 1**

Each enemy

Effect: The medusa can use Petrify against each target without spending Malice. A target who doesn't have cover increases the potency by 1.**Serpent Wings**

Self

Villain Action 2

Self

Effect: The medusa temporarily manifests wings and flies up to their speed without provoking opportunity attacks. During or after this movement, they can use Snake Bites and Damning Gaze once each.**Stone Puppets**Area, Magic
10 burst**Villain Action 3**

Special

Effect: As a free triggered action, each stone statue and creature restrained or slowed by Petrify within distance moves up to their speed and uses a signature ability that gains an edge, targeting an enemy of the medusa's choice. A stone statue without its own statistics has speed 5 and uses the medusa's free strike.