





by William Simpson

Lords & Legends

Fabulous riches and hideous death

In the AD&D® module S2 *White Plume Mountain* (later incorporated into S1-4 *Realms of Horror*) is a map showing the environs around that fabled dungeon. Northwest of White Plume Mountain on that map is a passage that reads:

**"BEYOND TO THE LAIR OF DRAGOTHA,
THE UNDEAD DRAGON,
WHERE FABULOUS RICHES AND HIDEOUS DEATH AWAIT."**

And that was all there was in all of the AD&D game literature about Dragotha — until now.

DRAGOTHA

FREQUENCY: *Unique*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -3
MOVE: 12"/24" (MC: E)
HIT DICE: 19 (152 hp)
% IN LAIR: 99% (see below)
TREASURE TYPE: H, S, T, U, W × 2 (see below)
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 5-12/5-12/6-36
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breath weapons; spell use; disease; fear aura; creation of undead followers*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Surprised only on a 1 on 1d12; spell and psionic immunities (see below); immune to electricity; regeneration; takes half damage from edged weapons; cannot be turned by clerics*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 15%
INTELLIGENCE: *Supra-genius*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral evil*
SIZE: L (48' long)
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil/Immune to all attacks
CHANCE OF:
Speaking: 100%
Magic use: 100%
Sleeping: Nil
LEVEL/XP Value: X/30,560

Originally from the first plane of the Nine Hells, Dragotha was in life a huge, ancient, red dragon — a consort of the evil dragon queen Tiamat. Being the most powerful of Tiamat's companions, he enjoyed privileges that no other dragon could hope for. However, like all who are in league with Tiamat, he was expendable. When Dragotha murdered another dragon who threatened his position with Tiamat, the dragon queen became furious and ordered Dragotha's death. Ready to obey her will (as well as eliminate a rival), the other dragons killed Dragotha. Dragotha, however, had made plans before his death to insure that he lived forever. He had contacted an unknown deity of death who, for personal reasons, agreed to restore "life" to Dragotha's body when Dragotha died. The deity restored Dragotha, but instead of renewed life, Dragotha was placed in an eternal cursed state resembling lichdom. Dragotha was allowed to escape to the Prime Material Plane, where the deity was sure Dragotha's rage would cause massive death and destruction — which would please this evil deity, who is rumored to have been Nerull the Reaper (described in the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK™* fantasy setting booklets).

Dragotha now lives in his lair on Oerth, in the northern part of the Flanaess.

Though mention of his lair on the map in *White Plume Mountain* makes it appear that he is located near that volcano-fortress (hex T3-70 on the maps that come with the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK* fantasy setting boxed set), Dragotha's lair is actually in hex K4-58, on the edge of the Cold Marshes just north of the Howling Hills. He ventures out once every century or so to spend his fury on whomever he can find. The rest of his days are spent preparing for the day when he can challenge both Tiamat and the deity responsible for his curse. He does not venture out often, for he does not wish to draw unwanted attention. His influence across Oerth is thus small, though his ultimate plans are of mighty and merciless revenge. His lair is said to extend endlessly into the earth, and is filled with treasure and riches — but it is also said that Dragotha chooses only magical items that he can use himself, and he uses them freely if need be.

Dragotha appears to be a huge, skeletal dragon, with wings covered by a thin, clear membrane that allows flight when he flaps his wings. His eyes glow with a pale blue light, and his movements are intelligent and carefully considered most of the time. If enraged for some reason, Dragotha loses all self-control and lashes out savagely at all living beings nearby. It is said that his voice is always that of a soft, lisping whisper. Dragotha knows most of the languages of the Flanaess, and collects trivial bits of information from captives (apparently for his own curiosity) before slaying them.

While a red dragon, Dragotha was considered one of Tiamat's best fighters. He is still very capable. Dragotha attacks with his two powerful claws and his vicious bite. Any hit made by Dragotha not only does normal damage but also casts *cause disease* on living beings (a saving throw vs. spells negates this effect). Although his claws and bite are powerful, they are nothing compared to his powerful breath weapons. Because of his curse, Dragotha can use three different breath weapons, including a cone of frost similar to that of a white dragon, and a poisonous chlorine gas cloud similar to that of a green dragon. The cone of frost is 90' long with a base diameter of 30'; the gas cloud is 60' long, 40' wide, and 30' high. Each breath weapon does 152 hp damage if the victim fails his saving throw vs. breath weapon; the victim takes half damage if he makes his saving throw. Dragotha can use each of these two breath attacks two times daily.

However, sometimes Dragotha wishes to use his opponents to serve his needs. In this case, he uses his most powerful breath weapon: his dreaded *death wind*. This wind of negative energy causes all beings within range to save vs. breath weapon or die; slain humans, demi-humans, humanoids, and giantkind are then transformed into undead warriors who serve their slayer. Those who save take no physical damage, but have a -4

penalty applied to all saving throws, attacks, and ability scores (to a minimum score of 1) for 2-12 turns. Such survivors are weak from having their life force almost drained, and a second saving throw vs. spells (with wisdom bonuses applicable) must be made or else the victims are filled with *fear*, causing them to flee in terror and be unable to return to face Dragotha for 4-24 hours. This breath weapon may be used twice per day, resembles a blast of rippling black energy, and has the same dimensions as the cone of frost weapon.

A person changed by Dragotha into an undead warrior (known in legend as a *drakanman*) retains all hit dice, hit points, and strength scores, but loses all other learned skills and bonuses as well as psionic and spell-casting abilities. Each drakanman (unless magical items or armor dictate otherwise) has a base AC 7, with a bonus of -1 per level of the victim over 1st level to a limit of AC 0. (To determine the level of multiclassed characters, average the levels and round up.) Beings with less than 1 HD or of zero level simply become 1 HD drakanmen. Drakanmen (like Dragotha himself) are immune to all enchantment/charm and illusion/phantasm spells, all forms of *fear* and paralysis, poison, insanity, death-related spells, sunlight, psionic attacks, and all cold-based spells and effects. They strongly resemble zombies but gain normal reaction in

melee. Holy water does 2-8 hp damage per vial to them. Drakanmen are semi-intelligent, but they follow only Dragotha's orders, which are given in a coded language that only Dragotha speaks. They can use armor, shields, weapons, and simple magical devices — often the very ones that they used in life when they came to attack Dragotha. A *resurrection* spell can reverse this condition, if cast within seven days of the drakanman's creation; after that, only a *wish* will work (affecting only one drakanman per *wish*).

A drakanman is usually useful for 10-40 years, after which time it collapses and disintegrates; the victim cannot then be returned to life by any means. All drakanmen have a movement rate of 15". If unarmed, they strike once per round with a fist, doing 1-4 hp damage, plus any strength bonuses possessed in life.

Dragotha can control as many hit dice of warriors as he has hit points (152). Because of his powerful nature, Dragotha is aware of how close to this limit his combined force of drakanmen is, and he knows the relative power of individual drakanmen. Dragotha's control over his drakanmen allows him to select one of his individual drakanmen and see whatever that drakanman sees, though this activity cannot be performed while doing anything else. Switching to another drakanman's viewpoint takes one round. Dragotha can

still receive brief mental warnings from any one of his drakanmen at any time, if such were placed on guard duty and ordered to notify Dragotha if intruders appear. In such an event, Dragotha would receive the warning but would have to look through the drakanman's eyes to see what the problem was, as no other information but the "paging call" could be sent. The range of this mental effect is one mile. One of Dragotha's favorite tricks is to place his drakanmen in positions whereby they not only frighten away potential looters but also serve as spies.

Excess drakanmen not controlled by Dragotha (but produced by him) are given one last command by Dragotha and sent away; the command is limited to a few words, typically "Go back from whence ye came and kill all that ye see." The demigod Iuz, who rules the land south of Dragotha's lair, was rumored to have sent a hundred goblins to test his neighbor. Dragotha sent them back as 1-HD drakanmen that caused Iuz much regret.

In addition to his terrible breath weapons, Dragotha can also cast spells at the power of a 14th-level magic-user. He can cast seven first-level spells, six second, five third, four fourth, three fifth, two sixth, and one seventh. He can choose from any magic-user spells but must memorize them as any other magic-user. It is believed he already knows the spell *write* and has the permanent power to *read magic* and see *invisible objects*.

If wounded, Dragotha *regenerates* damage at the rate of 1 hp per turn. The mere sight of this monster causes all creatures within 120 yards and under 5 hit dice or levels to flee in panic. More powerful beings are allowed a saving throw vs. spells, though those with 8 hit dice or levels are immune to this effect. Living dragons who meet Dragotha immediately flee without bothering to attack, as they have heard of him and are terrified to be in the same area with him.

Dragotha has few weaknesses. Attackers may hit him with nonmagical weapons, and *holy swords* do double damage to him (edged weapons, however, do only half damage to his skeletal form). Like all undead, he is affected by holy water, which does 4-10 (2d4 + 2) hp damage to him. Dragotha, although formerly a red dragon, is now vulnerable to fire due to his undead status, taking +1 per hit dice of damage.

Because Dragotha has many guards (20-80 levels worth at any one time) and because of his innate ability to see invisible creatures (even through the eyes of a drakanman), he is rarely surprised. All of his mazelike caverns are closely watched and trapped due to his desire for privacy. If caught in a no-escape situation, Dragotha attempts to bargain his way out. This does not mean that he will serve an earthly master, however, for he has vowed to never again be placed in the role of a servant.

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