

## **Best of DMs Guild - January**

**by loottheroom - Wednesday, January 18, 2017**

<http://loottheroom.uk/best-of-dms-guild-january/>

Welcome to the first DMs Guild roundup of 2017! The purpose of these posts, as I'm sure you're aware by now, is to highlight some of the new products I've enjoyed the most over the past month, with an emphasis on shining a light on some lesser-known or less wildly popular products that I think are worth your time. You can also find my DMs Guild releases [here](#).

With this being the first post of the new year, I wanted to expand it this month to look at some of the great work from 2016 that I didn't include on any of these lists. There's new stuff here as well, but below you'll also find some DMs Guild bestsellers from the last year and other things that didn't necessarily come out this month.

If you'd like to see your DMs Guild book here, drop me an email at [chris@loottheroom.uk](mailto:chris@loottheroom.uk) and let me know about it. I can't promise I'll feature it - I'll only review products here that I genuinely love - but you've got a much better chance of me seeing it if I know about it!

So, with no further ado and in no particular order, here's January 2017's Best of DMs Guild:

[The Alchemist](#) - **Cody Faulk**

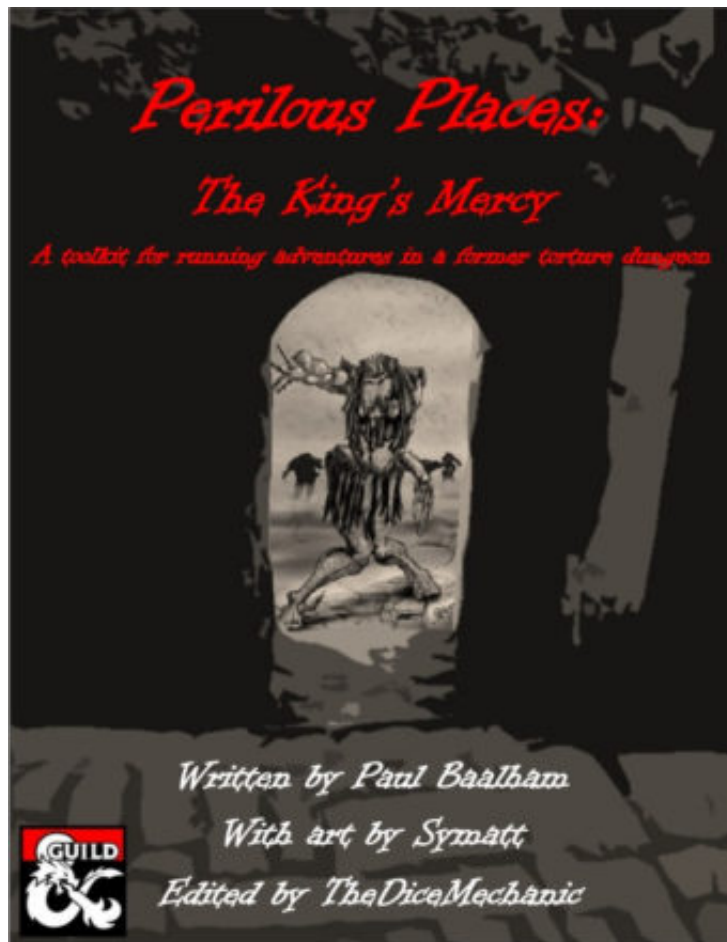


Full disclosure - Cody sent me a review copy of this product, though I was already familiar with his Fate Domain cleric and a fan of his work. Somehow I missed this one, which came to the DMs Guild in September.

This is brilliantly written - honestly, it's some of the best writing I've seen on DMs Guild - and packed full of interesting ideas. The archetypes are nice and varied - I'm a particular fan of the Mutant, which does a great job of channeling a Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde feel into D&D - and seem to be well balanced. What's most impressive about this book is the huge amount of Alchemical Esoterics that Faulk has created. It would be very easy to simply reskin existing spells, but a ton of work has gone in to giving this class unique things to do.

[The Alchemist](#) is available for \$1.95 on DMs Guild.

[Perilous Places: The King's Mercy](#) - **Paul Baalham**



If you know me at all you know I like my fiction - and my game - fairly dark (otherwise, where did [Dark Deeds](#) come from?) so I knew that this would be right up my alley as soon as I read the title. Dark and moody? Check. Alliteration? Check. Something I can use again and again? Check. Sold.

I really love products like Perilous Places. Hell, [The Wheelhouse](#) was functionally quite similar to this - a toolkit that provides DMs with everything they need to run a one-shot or an extended game in a particular location, which in this case is a prison. Where this differs from my own attempt is that it nails the theme down immediately. Where I provided a few different options for stories etc. surrounding the prison, Baalham goes all in on the torture dungeon of King Omico. The story of the surrounding area and the madness that infected it is great, and Baalham does a great job of populating his prison with hazards and encounters that ooze theme.

And speaking of theme - let's talk about the Despair Track, a mechanic included in this product to measure the effect of being in the prison on the party. It's delightfully Lovecraftian, and should provide you with a great way to keep building the mood of the place and to run a really tense, moody game. It's also trivially easy to keep track of, which means it won't get in the way of you running the rest of your game.

All of the author's proceeds will be donated to the Alzheimer's Society, which is wonderful. [It's available](#) now from DMs Guild for \$2.49.

[The Clockwork Queen](#) - M.T. Black & Remley Farr

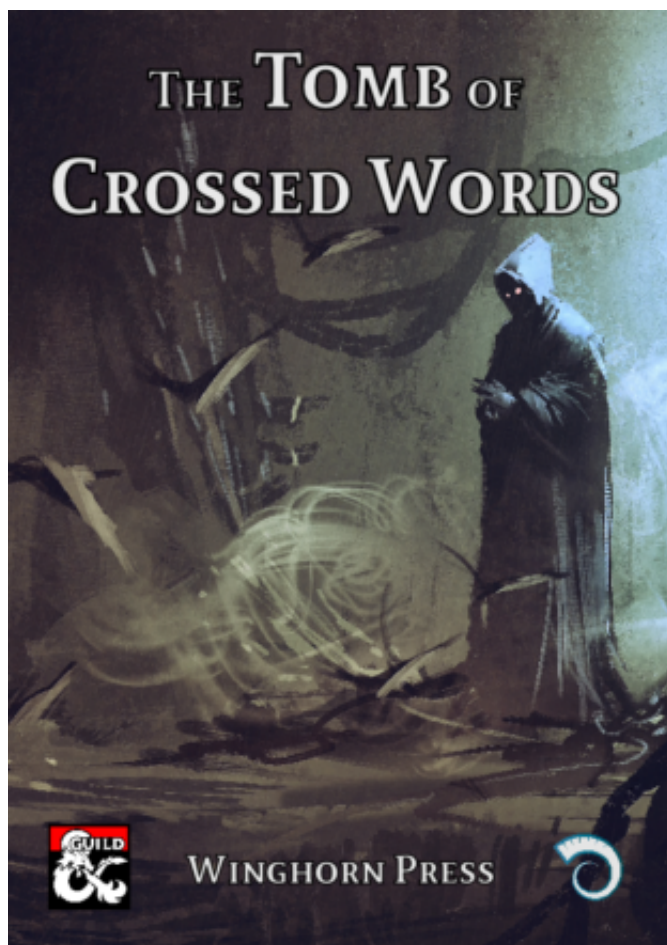


If you've spent any time on the DMs Guild at all, you've heard the name M.T. Black. He is consistently one of the best selling writers on the Guild, and for very good reason - his adventures are great. I've never featured his work before because, honestly, the point of these articles is to try and shine a light on some of the great but less popular (for whatever reason) work that is out there. But once I read this adventure I immediately wanted to run my group through it (although they're now way too high a level for it, so I'll have to do some work on it first) - and for that reason, I knew I had to include it here.

There's some really great stuff here. The relationship between the Clockwork Queen and Brynlee Silverthorn is a nice personal rivalry that could provide some great opportunities for a scheming party to engage in some duplicitous roleplaying, and the design of the Queen's tower is great. I particularly like the wandering guard robot Nimrod, and the tower is packed with great hazards and encounters that will be a real challenge to a group and fit the theme and the story of the Tower perfectly. The monsters presented mostly use stats from existing Monster Manual monsters, which means you'll be able to pick this up and play it without needing to familiarise yourself with new abilities or worry about accidentally killing your party due to poorly designed monsters, and the maps provided are simple and clear.

[The Clockwork Queen](#) is available from DMs Guild for \$1.95.

[The Tomb of Crossed Words](#) - Richard Jansen-Parkes



In the introduction to this adventure, there's a suggestion that your party's first exposure to the Tomb might be through hearing the legend from a bard as they're travelling. For that reason alone, I wanted to include this adventure on this list (and if you're not sure why that would matter to me, go and read [this](#)). Then I read on, and saw that we were dealing with a labyrinth, and I was sold.

This adventure is billed as being as much about your players using their minds as much as their characters using their might, and for that reason it might not be for every group. Plenty of the puzzles found within the Tomb *are* difficult to decode, and if your group would rather roll for things that try and figure them out themselves, they probably won't have much fun here. If they do enjoy a good puzzle, though - if you've got any obsessive sudoku players, or a Scrabble champion in your group, or something - then they're going to have a blast here. And, just in case they do get stuck, there's a really interesting mechanic built into the adventure to allow them to gain a limited number of clues.

I won't say much more about the contents of the adventure, because in talking about my favourite puzzles I'll inevitably spoil the solutions to them - just know that if you like words and puzzles and using your brain, you're going to enjoy this. It's also very well written and beautifully presented.

[The Tomb of Crossed Words](#) is available from DMs Guild for \$2.

[Letters to the Dungeon Master #1](#) - **Jacob Ryan (Perilous Prints)**





This is a really interesting idea - publishing articles like those I write here on Loot The Room, and plenty of other people write in places like [these](#), as standalone pieces on DMs Guild. There are plenty of people playing D&D who aren't aware of things like blog sites and the D&D subreddits, and bringing the conversations we're having elsewhere on the web to somewhere as central as DMs Guild is, in my opinion, a great idea.

This first article from Jacob Ryan talks about ways in which you can take the gloss and relative safety of the Forgotten Realms and start adapting it to play a game with a little bit more grit and danger, should you want to. Although this is all stuff those of use who have played for years will be aware of, there are a huge amount of new players who aren't aware of other campaign settings and worlds, and to me this seems like a really good way to introduce them to the idea that the Forgotten Realms isn't the beginning and end of D&D (and that you don't need to go as dark as Ravenloft and The Curse of Strahd to run a gritter game).

I'm interested to see what Perilous Prints choose to publish for the rest of this series, and to see whether there's actually a market for things like this on DMs Guild. It's [Pay What You Want](#), and I think you should give it a read.

[Fey Creatures: Nymphs, Pixies, and the Jabberwocky](#) - Edward Turner



D&D has always been a little lacking in fey creatures, and it's nice to see somewhere attempting to address that. This isn't just a handful of creatures, either. Take a look at what you're getting here:

- Two new naiads (one adapted from 3.5e)
- A new Nereid
- A new Oread
- The Lampad, an Underdark nymph
- Four new dryads
- A new optional feature for nymphs
- A new nymph template, the Wyrd, based on 3.5e's elemental weirds
- Four variant pixies (one adapted from 3.5)
- Two variant sprites
- A fungal variant on the Treant
- A fungal variation on the Shambling Mound (one of my favourite monsters!) with three sub-varieties
- And, of course, the CR23 Jabberwocky, in all its glory

It's clear a lot of love has gone into this product, and I'm already figuring out how to include some of these in my game (and devastated that it came out *after* I'd run my group through both a dryad encounter and a load of fungus-filled Underdark caverns). I haven't had a chance to playtest any of them at the time of writing this, but they appear to be well thought out and the CRs look right, so you shouldn't find yourself accidentally murthering your party if you decide to throw a Shambling Mold at them.

[Fey Creatures](#) is available now from DMs Guild for \$0.50.

*[EDIT: After posting this, Edward Turner let me know that he's planning a sizeable update with more pixies and sprites from 2nd edition and more fey options for the Winter Court. I'd say it's worth keeping an eye out for that!]*

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That's it for this month. Thanks to everyone who sent me review copies, even if they didn't make it into the roundup. If you've enjoyed any of these products, or those I've covered in earlier posts, don't forget to leave a rating and review for the author at DMs Guild. And if you like what I'm doing here at Loot The Room, please consider supporting me by [purchasing my products](#).

Until next time!

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