

Breaker of Chains - A Postmortem

by loottheroom - Wednesday, December 13, 2017

<http://loottheroom.uk/breaker-of-chains-a-postmortem/>

You may remember a series of articles I wrote a few months ago, in which I took some random roll tables and turned them into an adventure published on DMs Guild, and put together with a minimal budget. (That adventure was [Breaker of Chains](#), if you don't remember it.)

In one of [the articles in that series](#) I talked at length about pricing, and set out my aims for the adventure as far as how much I wanted to earn from it and how many copies I wanted to sell. I won't reiterate everything I said in that post - go and read it if you're interested - but some of the main points were that I was aiming for a Silver bestseller, and that even with Patreon money subsidising the adventure, I'd need to sell 250 copies at \$1.95 to get paid what I consider a pro rate for RPG writing. I also questioned whether I deserve to be paid a pro rate if I can't guarantee 250 sales of something.

So, *Breaker of Chains* was released on September 5th. How did it do? Let's take a look:

Dungeon Masters Guild	Breaker of Chains: An Adventure for Levels 6-8	124	\$344.80	50.00%	\$172.40
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As of writing this (on Sunday 11th December, a few days before you'll be reading it and just over 3 months since the adventure was released) *Breaker of Chains* has sold 124 copies, and made me \$172.40 (or \$253.89, if you include the Patreon money for September - but that didn't directly pay for the adventure, and not everybody is running a Patreon campaign, so let's not dwell on that). But that's not the full story.

At launch, I priced the adventure at \$1.95, and hammered Twitter and Facebook heavily. In the first 24 hours I sold 19 copies of the adventure. After the first 48 hours it had sold a total of 28 copies - already slowing down once it was gone from the first page of DMs Guild and initial hype had died away) and it reached #17 in the DMs Guild Bestsellers chart.

Two days after launch, I raised the price to \$2.95. I have no quantifiable way to say what effect this had on sales - all I know is that after the first week I had sold 55 copies, and it was still hovering around #17 in the charts.

Sales continued fairly steadily for the next week as I continued to promote it, and there was a little spike in the middle of October when *Jungle Goodies* was released, but I don't have any way to show you that because the way I track my sales clearly isn't good enough.

Really this post should be something of a "what I learned from this process" post, but I'm honestly not sure if I'm capable of writing that. I don't have enough data to draw on at this point; I've only just started tracking sales stats, and I only have one adventure on DMs Guild that's for sale for actual money, so there's no real comparisons to be drawn from any of this.

At this point, sales have slowed to a trickle. This month the adventure has sold a lowly 2 copies, just 3 months after it first went on sale. Part of that is that I haven't been promoting it at all - I've released two other products since *Breaker* came out, and I also took a solid month off in which I spent minimal time online.

In going back and reading through the series of articles that I wrote while writing the adventure, I noticed that in [this post](#) I'd stated that I'd be ecstatic if *Breaker* became a Copper bestseller in the first week, but that I wasn't expecting it to. It did end up hitting that goal, and I was indeed ecstatic. But where it took just 7 days to become a Copper bestseller - which is ~50 sales - it took a total of 53 days to double those sales and hit Silver. This is the power of being on the front page, and I can't help but wondering how the adventure would have done had I priced it at \$2.95 immediately so that it peaked higher than #17 in the charts.

Really, all I can do at this point is treat this as a baseline for future adventure releases. This is what I now know I can realistically aim for with a short adventure priced at \$2.95. Anything better than this is growth and improvement; anything worse is to be scrutinised closely. Of course, there's always an element of luck in any release, but in beginning to track how my releases go I'm hoping that I can take steps to mitigate that element in future.

It's clear that the goal of 250 copies is still fairly out of reach for me, which is fine. At the time of writing this, my best-selling product is still *Trinkets*, which is on 236 sales after 15 months on DMs Guild. I did quite a substantial update to it earlier this year, which made for a nice spike in sales, and my work is mostly all Silver bestsellers now, but I've got a long way to go.

My goal for next year is to release at least 3 more adventures. I'd like to aim for 6, but I'm wary of taking on too much again. A thirdly (which sounds so much weirder than *quarterly*, and is much less obvious in its meaning) adventure release seems like a nice straightforward goal. Then, this time next year, I might have a little bit more data to work with.

I'm particularly interested in seeing how bundles do compared to individual products, and while I'm nowhere near releasing an adventure bundle yet, I do wonder how a *Trinkets* bundle would do. The problem I have is that I really hate the idea of simply repackaging already-existing work; I like to add more value whenever possible, so I'll have to think about how to do that with a bundle type of product.

And that's really all I have to say about publishing to DMs Guild for the time being. I'll occasionally revisit these types of post in the future as and when I feel I have something more to add to the topic, but for now, thanks for reading.



The unholy is about to be awakened.

BREAKER OF CHAINS

Now Available on DMs Guild!

A D&D 5E ADVENTURE PRESENTED BY LOOT THE ROOM

DMs GUILD

LOOT THE ROOM

The advertisement features a central image of a character in chains, with the title 'BREAKER OF CHAINS' in large, stylized white letters. Below the title, it says 'Now Available on DMs Guild!'. On the left is a smaller version of the cover art. On the right is the DMs Guild logo and the Loot The Room logo. The background is a dark, textured brown.

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