

Focus on Freeport #1: Falthar's Curios

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A d20 System Freeport Location

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Falthar's Curios is an out-of-the-way little shop in the Merchant District. Located on a street near the Warehouse District, the shop is wedged in between the Laughing Lady inn and a merchant's townhouse. Obscured in the shadows of two larger buildings, Falthar's Curios is easy to miss. A closer look shows the name of the place carved into the door in thirty odd languages. This is the first clue that the shop may contain more than pickled basilisk eyes.

Falthar

Falthar's family has tilled the soil for uncounted generations. Every once in a while, a footloose scion would leave the homestead in search of adventure. One such soul was Eli, Falthar's grandmother. She became a swordswoman of some repute, and her travels eventually led her to the planes. She returned home unexpectedly, heavy with child, and soon after bore an angelic little boy, Rodric.

Eli raised her son for the next several years, but found life around the farm as boring as she remembered it. She left Rodric in the care of her parents and went off again in search of her old companions. She returned home periodically, to tell tales of her adventures and shower her family with gifts. When Rodric was ten, however, Eli stopped coming home. No word of her fate ever reached the farm.

Rodric proved unlike his mother in almost every way. He loved the farm, and only left it when forced by circumstance. He felt he had a duty to his family, so he stayed at home and did his part. He married a local girl and had four children. The third of these was named Falthar. It was soon apparent who was the inheritor of Eli's spirit.

Falthar was a precocious child, the question why always ready at his lips. He did his work as requested but his eyes were always fixed on the horizon. Rodric stubbornly kept the youngster on the farm for as long as he could, but eventually he agreed to send the boy to a temple school in the local town. There he came to the attention of the wizard Thiril, who took him on as an apprentice.

Falthar was a gifted student, and took to magic easily. When he had read every book in Thiril's library and learned all the magic she could teach, Falthar took to the road. Like his grandmother, he had many adventures. Unlike her, he found that he preferred knowledge to constant life and death situations. After ten years of travel, including a stint on the planes in search of his grandmother's fate, Falthar was ready to cease his roaming. He had been to Freeport many times, and decided it was an ideal place to set up shop. He would have ready access to the Temple of the God of Knowledge, and all manner of exotic people and goods passed through the port.

Falthar opened his shop fifteen years ago. It took him awhile to build up a real clientele, but he had enough money from his adventuring days to keep him going. After a couple of years, he earned a reputation as an expert identifier of magic items. He not

only teased out an item's powers; he also discovered its history and prominent owners. These skills ensured that a plethora of magic items passed through Falthar's hands, and the wizard delighted in learning the story of each one.

Word on the Street

Characters in Freeport can hear about Falthar's Curios in any number of ways. Should the PCs ever try to find a purchaser for old tomes, or minor magic items, they'll likely be sent in Falthar's direction. He is also well known at the Temple of the God of Knowledge, where he can be found at off-hours doing research and consulting with the clerics. In rare cases, Falthar may actually seek out the PCs. He has many contacts in Freeport, and may be tipped off about items in the PCs' possession.

The Shop

Falthar's Curios is only 15 feet wide, but it's a good 50 feet long. It almost seems that the building was an afterthought, crammed between two existing structures with little regard for functionality. Falthar has made it work though. The front room is stuffed with curiosities, from floor to rafters. Here customers can find many exotic and colorful items, but none of magical power.

The front room is the domain of Nell, an aspiring bard whose been working for Falthar for several years. Red haired and lithe, Nell dominates the small room with her chirpy voice and authoritative harangues. She can tell you what bird the rare feathers came from, or why those fruits only grow in the shadows of a volcano, or how that ethereal marauder was turned to stone. In short, Nell is the public face of Falthar's Curios. She deals with the average cityfolk, and feels out those who have legitimate business with Falthar.

Behind the counter at the far end of the Front Room, there is a sliding door that leads into Falthar's workroom. This is where the wizard can be found most of the time, working magic and doing research. He keeps magic items that he's currently working on in an iron trunk that's bolted to the floor (and arcane locked for additional protection). In addition to a desk and numerous shelves of reference works, the room is littered with lenses, measuring devices, scales and the like. Scorch marks on the ceiling indicate that accidents have been known to happen here.

A narrow staircase leads from the workroom to the second floor. The entirety of this floor is given over to Falthar's quarters and private library. The windows here are barred just in case. Most thieves know to keep away from wizards, but Falthar prefers to be safe. After Nell leaves each evening, Falthar casts an alarm spell in the Front Room. Falthar will thus be alerted if anyone breaks into the downstairs while he's asleep.

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The back corner of the upstairs is the living area, with a small but comfortable bed and table for eating. Falthar doesn't have the time or facilities to cook for himself, so he usually sends Nell to fetch him food from the Laughing Lady next door.

The rest of the room is given over to Falthar's passions: magic and knowledge. He keeps volumes of journals and notebooks, as well as tomes collected from all over the world (and a few from beyond). Of particular note is a bureau with 30 thin drawers. Each drawer contains a minor magic item in a felt lined box, and a scroll describing its history.

Services

Falthar provides two levels of service for his customers. For those who want quick and dirty answers, he casts spells for a fee. His most popular spells are identify and locate object. He charges a little more than the going rate for this service, because he prefers to delve into the history of the items he studies. He gets a little patronizing with adventures that want to know what an item can do instead of what it has done.

Rates do not include the cost of spell components. Identify spells thus cost 190 gp (90 gp plus 100 gp for the required pearl).

Falthar prefers to have items left with him. He can then dig in and do some real research. In this case Falthar does not charge per spell, instead charging an inclusive fee based on the length of research. His usual rate is 200 gp a week. For that amount, he'll tease out magical abilities and put together a report on the item's history and notable owners. Most items take no longer than a week for him to research. Particularly ancient or famous items may occupy the Loremaster for a month or more.

Falthar also purchases exotic and magical items. He pays a sliding scale, depending on how interesting an item is. He'll thus pay less than the going rate for some items, but considerably more for others.

Spell Level Rate

Spell Level	Cost
1 st level	90 gp
2 nd level	180 gp
3 rd level	270 gp
4 th level	360 gp

Adventure Hooks

PCs have several good reasons to frequent Falthar's Curios. They can get magic items identified, or sell extraneous loot. DMs can also center adventures on the shop or its proprietor. Below are a few ideas:

1. Falthar's Curios is burglarized. If the PCs are on friendly terms, he may hire them to get back some of the missing items. He may loan the PCs some unusual items to carry out his mission. This may be a routine thievery or something more sinister. One thing is for sure; it took more than luck to break through Falthar's magical defenses.

- Falthar receives word that his grandmother may yet be alive on the planes. He could either ask the PCs to accompany him (the planes are not a place one should go alone), or ask a PC wizard to run the shop for him. The first option is more appropriate for mid to high level characters, while the second could be a fun low level adventure.
- Falthar's research turns up reference to a lost artifact. He recruits the PCs to find it. His offer is tempting: the PCs can keep the item if he studies it for one year first. He also offers to pay all expenses for the expedition.
- The celestial blood in Falthar's veins is more important than anyone guessed. His very existence threatens a scheme agents of Hell are hatching in Freeport. The PCs find themselves swept up in events as the forces of Good and Evil clash on the streets.

Falthar & Nell

Falthar, male Aasimar Diviner 5/Loremaster 3: HD 8d4+16; HP42; Init: 0; Spd 30 ft.; AC: 14 (ring of protection +2, amulet of natural armor +2); Atk melee +3 (1d6-1/quarterstaff); AL NG; SV Fort +4 (+1 Wiz, +1 Loremaster, +2 Con), Ref +3 (+1 Wiz, +1 Loremaster, +1 Avoidance), Will +10 (+4 Wiz, +3 Loremaster, +3 Wis); Str 8, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 12

Skills: Alchemy +6, Appraise +7, Concentration +4, Decipher Script +8, Gather Information +4, Knowledge (Arcana +16, Geography +6, History +8, Local +10, Nature +6, The Planes +14), Scry +6, Spellcraft +8, Use Magic Device +5

Feats & Class Abilities: Brew Potion, Extend Spell, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge Arcana); Loremaster Secrets—Avoidance, Instant Mastery; Special Qualities—Acid, cold, and electricity resistance 5, light once per day

Spells: These are Falthar's typical spell choices. Feel free to provide him with other specialized spells. 0-Level—*arcane mark, detect magic, detect poison, mage hand, resistance, read magic*; 1st Level—*Alarm Comp. Languages Identify Magic Missile Tenser's floating disc*; 2nd Level—*arcane lock, detect thoughts, locate object, knock*; 3rd Level—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, hold person, secret page, tongues*; 4th Level—*minor globe of invulnerability, Rary's mnemonic enhancer, scrying*

Magic Items: amulet of natural armor +2, brooch of shielding, candle of truth, dispel magic wand (53 charges), goggles of minute seeing, ring of mind shielding, ring of protection +2

Nell, female Human Bard 2: HD 2d6+2; HP 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (leather armor +2, Dex +2); Atk melee +3 (1d6+1/rapier); AL NG; SV: Fort +1, Ref +5, Wil +2; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 15

Feats & Class Abilities: Dodge, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills: Appraise +4, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (Arcana +4, History +3, Local +5), Listen +2, Sense Motive +3

Spells Prepared: This is a typical sampling. 0-Level—*daze, detect magic, light, mending, open/close, read magic*; 1st Level—*charm person, grease, silent image*

Magic Items: rapier +1

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