

Head Games

A 5E-compatible mini-adventure for 4th-level characters



Although she studied many forms of magic none captured the fascination of a certain halfling wizard more than the school of enchantment. Already adept at using her charming demeanor, Lellian saw charming spells as a way to reap the rewards of adventuring without getting her hands dirty. Unfortunately she failed to consider the full consequences of her actions and they've followed her right into the middle of her hometown!

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GM INTRODUCTION

This adventure can take place in any small town of close-knit citizens and although its challenges work best for PCs with a knack for diplomacy, those who prefer a more direct approach can still save the day.

Background

In her youth the halfling Lellian thrilled to accounts of glittering treasures unearthed by adventurers but was too lazy to ever take such risks herself. Typically able to use puppy dog eyes to get whatever she wanted, the slothful girl surprised locals in her community when she showed promise as a student of wizardly magic. For Lellian the study of magic was just a ticket to Easy Street and her aptitude for enchantment magic made it all too simple to appropriate some of the wealth recently won by successful adventurers—all without ever having to climb into a dank dungeon. She never considered what her targets might do when her spells wore off, however, and now finds there may be a price for her ill-gotten gains after all...

Overview

While in town the PCs are drawn into a ruckus caused by a rampaging orc chasing after a frightened halfling. The party discover that the halfling (Lellian) used a charm person spell to force the orc on a dangerous treasure-hunting expedition without giving him any rewards in return. In short order the adventurers realize that she has most of the locals in the area wrapped around her finger and that they'll do their utmost to defend her from any harm. Lellian has also charmed the hobgoblin priest Dymna—who



plans to repay the trickster in blood if the PCs can't convince her to give up the halfling after she's been taken hostage. After that canny adventurers might be able to convince the enchanter to take a less malevolent path, or if they're unlucky, themselves marked as potential patsies for one of her ruses in future.

Character Hooks

The PCs need only be in a small town as either visitors or residents for this adventure—they may be enjoying some downtime together, meeting a contact, or actively seeking work. When the party are near the market square Lellian dashes through to start off Head Games.

SCENE 1: HARRIED HALFLING

A peaceful day at the market suddenly becomes a scene of mass confusion as a frightened halfling dashes into view with an angry orc hot on her trail.

The PCs become aware of danger as the halfling **Lellian** sprints into view, shouting, "Orc! Orc! Rampaging orc!" Sure enough, an angry orc **veteran** named Gharak follows in hot pursuit. Gharak begins the scene 30 feet behind Lellian and targets her with attacks until somebody gets in his way (at which point he shifts his attention to them). The halfling hides behind some crates at the earliest opportunity. If the party choose to remain out of combat, Lellian stops just long enough to cast *charm person* on one of the adventurers, hoping to force their aid.

Townfolk scatter as soon as a fight breaks out, but four **guards** arrive in 2d6 rounds and try to kill Gharak if the PCs haven't defeated him or calmed him down by then.

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Lellian

Small humanoid (lightfoot halfling), chaotic neutral wizard (enchanter) 4

Armor Class 15 (*mage armor*)

Hit Points 18 (4d6+4)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws INT +5, WIS +2

Skills Arcana +5, Deception +5, Insight +2, Persuasion +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Halfling

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Arcane Recovery. Once per day when Lellian finishes a short rest, she can choose expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level that is equal to or less than 2nd level.

Brave. Lellian has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Halfling Nimbleness. Lellian can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than her.

Lucky. When Lellian rolls a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, she can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Naturally Stealthy. Lellian can attempt to hide when obscured by a creature that is Medium size or larger.

Spellcasting. Lellian is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Lellian has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mage hand, poison spray, prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots, 2 remaining): *charm person, detect magic, mage armor, sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, knock, suggestion*

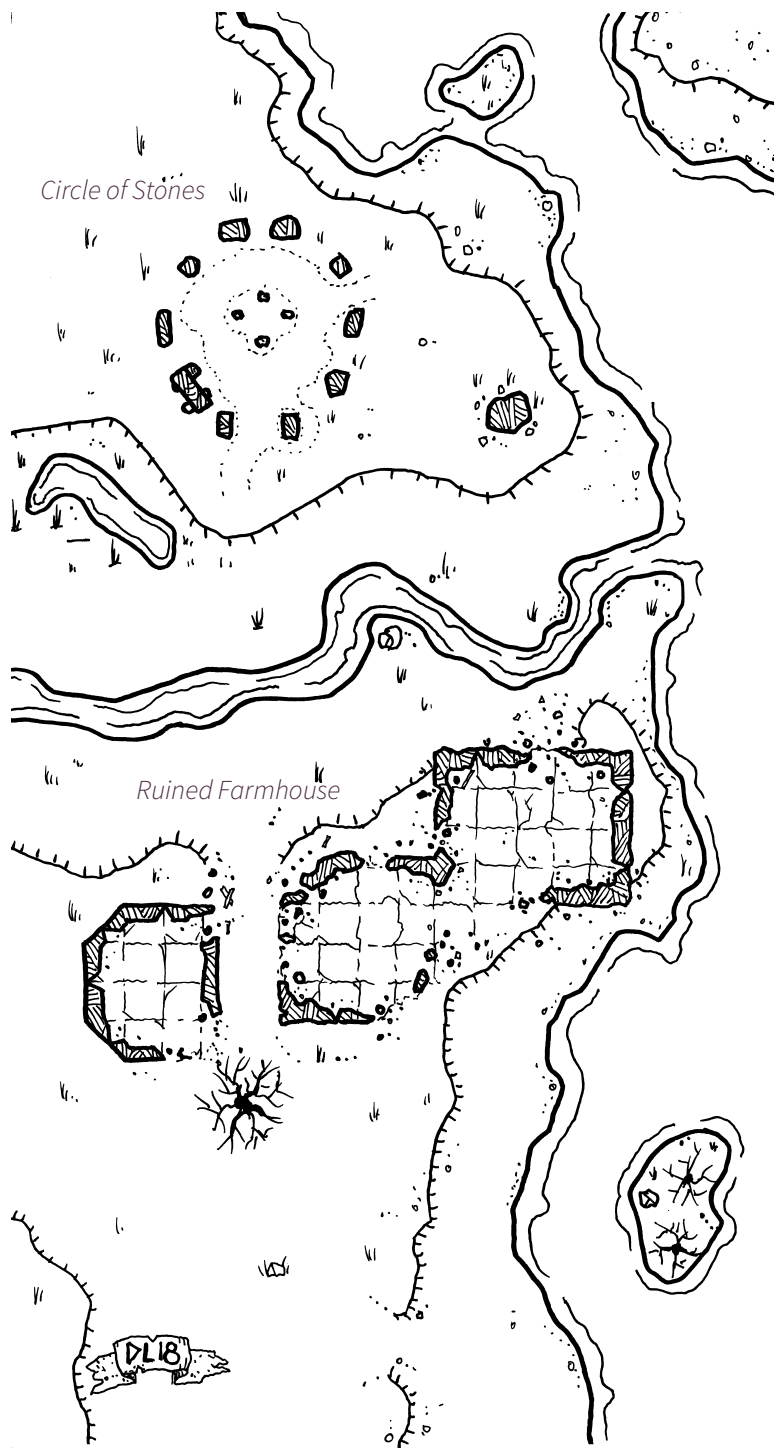
ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature.

Hit: 1 (1d4–1) piercing damage.

Hypnotism. Lellian chooses one creature adjacent to her and if it's able to either hear or see her, it must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the target is charmed to Lellian, incapacitated, has a speed of 0, and is obviously distracted. This effect lasts until the end of her next turn, or an additional

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round if Lellian uses an action to extend the duration. It also ends if the target is damaged, Lellian moves more than 5 feet away from the target, or if the target is unable to hear or see her. Once a target has successfully resisted Lellian's Hypnotism or been affected by it, she can't use it against that target until she finishes a long rest.

SCENE 2: A TANGLE OF TALES

When the scene calms down the townsfolk try to make sense of what happened. If Gharak died in battle most of them happily chalk the matter up to a single orc marauder and go about their day. Lellian produces a large violet garnet worth 200 gp to pay for the damage caused by the attack—a suspiciously large amount that far exceeds the cost of any lost wares—prompting widespread cheers and a gaggle of people offering the halfling gifts for her generosity.

If the PCs stopped Gharak peacefully or investigate the matter, they discover the other side to this story:

Gharak claims that Lellian tricked him and two other orcs into infiltrating an owlbear lair to recover some treasure left behind by the beast's victims. Only he survived the battle, left destitute less than an hour later after giving the halfling all his hard-won treasure. Eventually figuring out that she had used "mind magic" against him, he set out for revenge.

If asked to give her account of events, **Lellian starts with a tall tale** of her hunting for a mythical fruit called a wenderberry. She claims to have heard a nearby dryad calling for help—a dryad under attack from Gharak, who robbed her of her fairy gold. She stole the gold back from the orc and swears that she planned to bring it to the fey if she can find her again. That she already gave some of the treasure away to fix up the damaged market doesn't seem to occur to Lellian until after the story is spun.

Naturally, Gharak's story is closer to the truth, yet none of the townsfolk seem to believe that "their Lellian" could be a thief.

Gharak's Fate

If Gharak lives, the townsfolk insist that he be jailed for causing a ruckus. PCs who seek to protect the orc can convince the community to let him go in peace with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a success, Gharak chooses to cut his losses, leaving with his life and freedom.

Lellian's Tall Tales

PCs who don't believe Lellian's story can press her to learn the truth. For each time a PC succeeds at a DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) or Charisma (Persua-

sion) check, Lellian drops one lie from her tale: first her claim that she was seeking wenderberries, then the presence of the dryad, and finally admits that her magic led to the loss of life. After revealing the truth she offers the PCs 5 platinum each to keep quiet.

Every time a PC fails a check to get Lellian to open up, 1d4 townsfolk notice the scene and keep an eye on the group from afar. When the party have drawn 10 or more commoners' attention in this way, they call for guards to intervene and escort the halfling to safety.

SCENE 3: HOSTAGE SITUATION

The problems caused by Lellian's mind games come to a head later in the day when an panicked merchant rushes into town. His caravan was attacked by hobgoblins that captured his companions and plan to start executing hostages unless "that halfling hedge wizard" turns herself over to them. The hobgoblins currently hold the hostages on a plateau overlooking a ruined farm north of town. An emergency meeting of the town council determines that the situation calls for stealth or subterfuge and results in an offer of 100 gold to the PCs if they can deal with the threat without the loss of life.

The Hobgoblins' Tale

Dymna is the leader of the hobgoblin band and is another unfortunate victim of Lellian's magic. While under the influence of *charm person* she led her troops in a raid of a bugbear tomb before giving the treasure they found to their new "friend." Even if the enchanter hadn't already spent most of the treasure, the fiercely proud Dymna would not seek its return—this is a matter of personal honor to her now and she wants payment in blood.

Lellian's Part

The halfling attends the emergency meeting of the town council but starts to leave when the PCs accept the job. If the adventurers do not attend the meeting but take the job later they find Lellian at the market square hiring bodyguards to protect her from "those hobgoblin brutes." The enchanter denies that she charmed anybody, claiming that she doesn't know

why the mercenaries gave her so much treasure as a gift. If pressed (as above) she admits to using a *charm person* spell but shows no remorse—in her view she acted as any clever person would.

Handling the Hobgoblins

Dymna's party remains at the plateau until dawn and if the PCs haven't put a plan into action by then the town council sends out the guard to handle the matter. This ultimately leads to the death of the hostages. The hostage-takers include 10 **hobgoblins** and Dymna (a hobgoblin **priest**). The hostages consist of 4 human **commoners**, each bound, gagged, and prone next to a hobgoblin. The bound hostages sit at the center of the circle of stones, surrounded by Dymna and 6 of her hobgoblins. The other 4 hobgoblins lurk within the ruined farmhouse, remaining hidden until firing longbows when called to act. If the mercenaries in the ruins spot the PCs approaching, one of them blows a signal horn to warn Dymna of their approach. The PCs have many potential strategies at their disposal, some of which are detailed below.

Frontal Assault: If the PCs come looking for a fight the hobgoblins in the farmhouse fire warning shots when the party approaches within 120 feet. If the adventurers ignore the warning, one of the hobgoblins signals Dymna to start killing hostages. She waits until the PCs can see her, then has a hobgoblin execute a hostage each round until the PCs either retreat or surrender.

Stealth: The plateau offers sparse cover and PCs who approach via stealth can attempt a Dexterity (Stealth) check opposed by the hobgoblins' passive Perception of 10. On a success, they can get within 30 feet of the ruined farmhouse before the mercenaries become aware of their presence. Adventurers who take the extra time to circle around to the north can make a DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check to get within 30 feet of the north side of the plateau before Dymna

notices them. Regardless of how successfully the party approaches, one hobgoblin each round attempts to kill or use a hostage for leverage once combat breaks out.

Negotiation: Dymna parleys from a distance of 120 feet, allowing a PC to approach as close as 30 feet with a successful DC 13 Charisma (Deception) or Charisma (Persuasion) check. Unfortunately she gives up very little in negotiations—she wants Lellian's head and nothing else.

Turning Over Lellian: Lellian refuses to leave town. PCs that try to force the issue can make a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check to frighten her into coming with them, or a DC 15 Charisma (Deception) or Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince her that she'll be kept safe. Adventurers that have the halfling in hand (or somebody suitably disguised as the enchanter) are allowed within 30 feet of the hostages. Dymna then releases them in exchange for Lellian, whom she plans to execute immediately. Should the halfling die, a furious town council cancels any reward.

CONCLUSION

By the end of this mini-adventure the PCs have either witnessed the horrifying effects of frivolous magic use or stopped much unnecessary bloodshed. If the PCs stop Dymna from killing any merchants and keep Lellian alive, the halfling gives each PC an art object worth 25 gp—although it may be best not to ask how she got these gifts.

Even after all that has happened, Lellian still has enchantment magic at her disposal and a community that enables her. Persuasive PCs who take the time to set her on a better path might get her to realize the harm she has done or manage to scare her straight. On the other hand, an adventurer Lellian identifies as an easy mark might become the target of her next *charm person* spell, leading the party to an unexpected treasure hunt one day. 🧙