Nothing out of the ordinary

I created this adventure with a group of four players who are at level five in mind. However, as the DM you have the flexibility to adapt the adventure to suit the needs and strengths of your particular party. Unlike typical dungeon-crawling experiences, this adventure emphasizes intricate social dilemmas and engaging combat scenarios that will challenge the party's creativity and problem-solving skills.
(this product contains open-game content)

The plot

The party is hired by the peculiar and corrupt nobles of a town to deal with a group of bandits who have been causing trouble. However, the party soon discovers that the nobles are actually doppelgangers who have taken on the identities of the previous rulers. The bandits, who are actually a Robin Hood-esque group, approach the party and ask them to disrupt a party that the nobles are hosting so that the bandits can rob the rich attendees and give to the poor. The party must then choose to either aid the doppelgangers or expose them and help the villagers of Rustwater.

The ride to Rustwater

You are all seated in the back of a sturdy caravan, making your way toward the quaint village of Rustwater. The air is chilly, and the sun is barely peeking over the horizon. The group of nobles who hired you didn't disclose much about the task, but you expect the pay to be modest.

(the players can use this time to introduce their characters if they haven't already)

The town of Rustwater

As you step out onto the dusty ground, you take a moment to survey your surroundings. The village of Rustwater appears even poorer than you had initially anticipated. The ramshackle houses are in disrepair, with crumbling walls and leaky roofs. The villagers you see are dressed in tattered, dirty clothing, and their faces bear the marks of poverty and hardship. The stench of human waste and rotting food wafts through the air, assaulting your senses and making you feel ill at ease.

In the center of town, there is a well with a man leaning against it, watching you as you pass by. To your right, the general store, which appears to be the only shop in the village. To your left, there is a tavern with a few patrons milling about outside, and a small church with a bell tower rising above it. In addition to the general store, tavern, and church, there is a large building at the end of town that stands out from the rest. It is well-maintained and appears much more expensive than the surrounding buildings. Here live the nobles that hired the party.

With a DC 15 perception roll:
The player realises that there are almost no shops in town beyond the large general store at the center. It's unusual for a village to have so few businesses,

especially when it's situated along a major trade route.

NPC: Hudson stout

> As your party approaches the well in the center of town, you notice a man sitting in front of it. He holds a worn and half-broken mug in his right hand, while his left arm hangs uselessly at his side. His eyes meet yours and he calls out, "Adventurers! Might you have a dime to spare?"

The man explains that he believes throwing a dime into the well will bring him great fortune. Despite his poverty, he has made it his mission to collect enough spare change to make the offering. He offers to trade any information or services he can provide in exchange for a coin.

The general store

The players enter the general store, and they're greeted by Lily, a shop worker with a bit of a rude attitude. The general store is surprisingly large for a town like Rustwater, and it contains most basic adventuring gear at double the price listed in the Player's Handbook. In addition to the standard gear, there are also magic beans for sale at a steep price of 30gp each. These beans work like the beans found in the *Bag of Beans* magic item.

When questioned about the high prices, Lily admits that they're quite steep but doesn't know why they're so inflated. She tells the players that the store owner sets the prices and that she's just an employee. Despite her less-than-friendly demeanor, Lily is willing to answer any questions the players might have about the store's wares.

Tavern of fortune

The players enter the Tavern of Fortune, and despite its name, it looks quite run down and empty. The floor hasn't been cleaned in ages, and there is a strange smell lingering in the air. An old elf is sound asleep behind the counter, and there is a group of hunters playing a card game in the corner.

The elf's name is Gregory, and he's quick to complain about the youth of today. He seems more interested in ranting than serving customers, but he'll reluctantly serve a beer for the steep price of 2 gold.

The nobles house

The players walk into a genuinely nice and elegant building and are greeted by a friendly-looking human named Ousk. Two other nobles, Yuts and Lats, stand quietly behind him. Ousk immediately greets the players, saying, "You must be the adventurers we've hired."

Ousk proceeds to give the players their mission: to find a bandit camp located by taking the trail north of the village. The nobles offer 40 gold per person for the job, but this price is obviously very low and can be negotiated up to 200 gold per person.

Family of Zuckerberg

Ousk, Yuts, and Lats are not who they appear to be. In truth, they are powerful doppelgangers who have taken on the identities of the previous noble rulers of the town. These three doppelgangers have hidden the bodies of the former nobles within a secret room in the library. As the players delve deeper into the mystery, you can drop hints and clues to suggest that there is something inhuman about Ousk, Yuts, and Lats.

Trail to the bandit camp

As the adventurers trek through the wilderness on their way to the bandit camp, those with a keen eye and a passive perception score higher than 15 might notice subtle clues that suggest an owlbear might be nesting nearby. They might spot broken branches and claw marks on trees.

Travel encounter: they suddenly hear a deep, guttural growl that sends shivers down their spines. They turn around to see a massive *owlbear* charging towards them with its sharp claws and beak bared.

The bandit camp

The camp is surrounded by a makeshift wall of wooden planks and some old barrels. The tents look old and ragged, and there is a strong smell of burnt meat in the air.
As you approach the camp, you hear some rustling from the bushes nearby. Suddenly,

a group of bandits jump out, wielding swords and shields.

Billy, the clumsy one, trips over a rock and falls to the ground. **Bruce**, with his deep voice and intimidating presence, steps forward and orders the players to leave. **Bryce**, the mute one, simply stands there with a crossbow pointed at them.

Then, a figure in a hat steps out from one of the tents. He introduces himself as **Rubus Hat** and demands to know why the players are there.

The players may choose to engage in combat. In the event that combat ensues, Bill, Bruce, and Bryce should use the bandit statblock, while Rubus Hat should use the bandit captain statblock.

Note to the DM: If the players want to attack the bandits, drop subtle clues that they are actually the good guys and that the nobles are draining the town. For example, have the bandits mention that they are stealing fromthe rich to give to the poor, or have them mention that the nobles are exploiting the town and leaving its people in poverty. This will give the players a chance to reconsider their actions and potentially change the direction of the story.

Let's get criminal

When the adventurers choose to ally themselves with the bandits, the outlaws will request their assistance in disrupting the noble's party that is set to take place in a few days' time. The bandits aim to take advantage of the chaos caused by the disturbance to steal the riches of the wealthy merchants and nobles attending the event.

In addition to the bandit's request to disrupt the noble's party, their leader Robus will approach the players with another task. He suspects that the three main nobles who are hosting the party are hiding something and behaving oddly, almost as if they are not entirely human. Robus believes that the players may be able to uncover some information that could shed light on the matter.

Back in town baby!

The players might return to town with the stolen loot and the bandits, either alive or dead as requested. If the players hand over the bandits as agreed, the nobles will reward them with a generous sum of gold and ask them to help keep their upcoming event safe, suspecting that the bandits may have something planned.

However, if the players have sided with the bandits, they will find themselves returning to town empty-handed. Upon arriving, the nobles will express their frustration towards the players, and will use read thoughts to confirm whether or not they are lying. However, the nobles will **not** take direct action against the players, as they fear that they may have valuable information about the bandits' plans.

It's party time!

The players can indulge in any activities they wish. But If the players had previously deceived or acted against the nobles in any way, they will find themselves under increased scrutiny. The eyes of the nobles will be upon them, watching for any signs of dishonesty or misdeeds.

The library

As you step into the library, you're struck by the grandeur of the space. The room is expansive, with a soaring ceiling and rows upon rows of elegant bookshelves lining the walls. The shelves are filled with books of every size and color, and you can't help but feel a sense of reverence for the vast knowledge contained within.

With a DC 15 History check, the players can uncover some information about the town's past. It seems that this place used to thrive, but about twenty years ago, the nobles in charge began to act differently. Taxes were raised, and the people began to suffer under their rule. With a DC 15 Investigation roll or a passive perception above 18 the players are able to find a hidden door behind the shelf. As they push it open, it reveals a secret room filled with caskets, each one containing a body identical to the three nobles.

BEDROOMS

KITCHEN

SECRET ROOM

MAIN PARTY HALL

S

ENTRANCE

LIBRARY
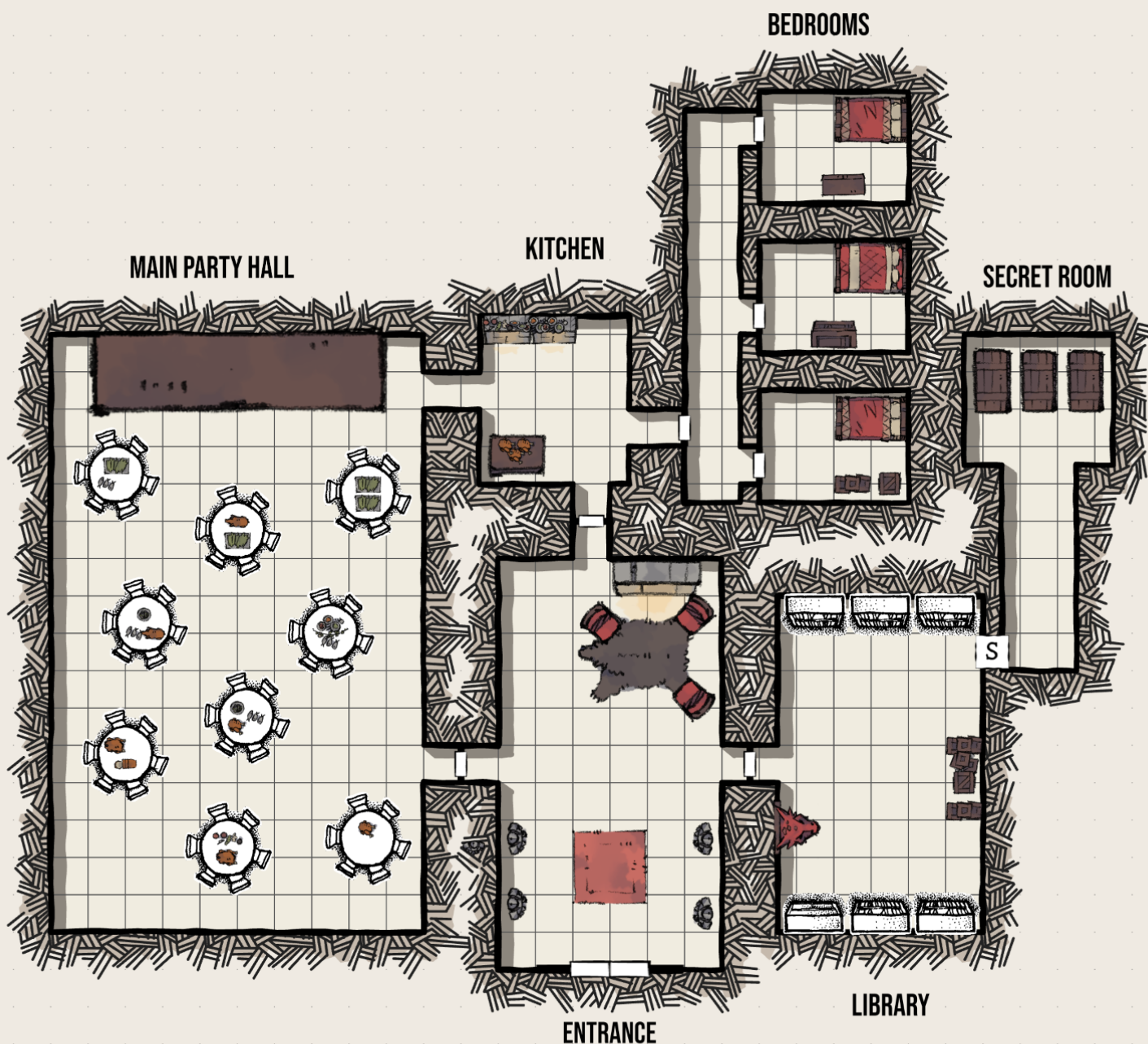
If the nobles were suspecting the party of lying at the beginning read this:

> *Yuts suddenly turns to face you with a menacing glare, and his voice takes on an otherworldly quality as he speaks. 'You are ruining everything!' he hisses. His skin begins to shift and change, turning a sickly shade of blue, and his eyes bulge grotesquely from their sockets. Lats Ousk and Yuts will start attacking the party.*

The party hall

As the adventurers enter the opulent ballroom, the grandeur of the noble guests is palpable. The air is thick with the mingling scents of perfumes, spices, and intrigue. The players have free reign to indulge in any activities they wish, but they must tread carefully, for their past deeds may have already preceded them.
If the players had previously deceived or acted against the nobles in any way, they will find themselves under increased scrutiny. The eyes of the nobles will be upon them, watching for any signs of dishonesty or misdeeds.

> *As you step into the grand ballroom, your eyes are greeted by the sight of over fifty people, including wealthy merchants, high-ranking priests, and nobles of the realm, with even a king and queen in attendance. The space is adorned with crystal chandeliers and fine furnishings, and several dozen tables are spread throughout the room, each laid out with a feast of sumptuous delicacies. At the far end of the ballroom, a stage has been erected, and standing at its center is Ousk, the host of this lavish event. As he speaks to the assembled guests, his voice carries effortlessly across the room, his words amplified by magical means.*

If the time is right or if the party causes a distraction the sound of shouting and chaos echoes through the hall. Suddenly, a group of 15 bandits burst through the door, led by three bandit captains. The nobles that were previously suspected of being doppelgangers have transformed back to their true form, revealing their inhuman nature to the party.

The ending

The final outcome of the adventure is entirely in the hands of the DM. you create the consequences of the players' decisions and shape the ultimate conclusion of the story.

An adventure written by Julian Kroes

Cover art generated using mid-journey

Some assets in the map belong to two-minute tabletop

Also thanks to Adventures Await Studios since I used their work as a guideline for writing this adventure

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so a[]ected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.