



"Welcome back, Klimt-san, Bruno-san."

"We have returned."

"We are back."

"How did the adventuring turn out today?"

"Average, I'd say."

"Yep, average describes it well."

"I am glad to hear that. The preparations for dinner are done."

It's been one week since we've started staying at Lyra-san's inn. When we come back from today's hunt, Lyra-san welcomes us as usual.

Still, all things considered, she's truly a beauty. Her appreciative words and the gentleness of her voice are irresistible. Just how happy would I be if she was single.

As I ponder about that, the young male employee rushes into the entrance hall, completely out of breath.

"Landlady! Your husband!"

"What's the matter with my husband?"

"The maid at your home said that he has apparently passed away!"

"Oh no!!"

Probably because the old man's health had taken a drastic turn while being treated in the house next to this inn, Lyra-san hurries over.

Dinner is properly served by the other employees, but in the end, the male employee, whom Candy-dono has set his eyes on, comes to inform us that the old man died after his health suddenly deteriorated.

"Oh my, that's a big problem. Should we change inns?"

"It will not be any problem for you to stay. Because we plan to refuse any new guests for a while, you will become our only guests starting with tomorrow."

"Wouldn't it be better for us to leave as well then? Won't you be busy with the funeral?"

"Umm...please keep this a secret, but..."

Currently the relationship between Lyra-san and the heir of the dead old man isn't just bad, but the worst. It sounds like she actually intends to return this inn to its normal business operation as fast as possible after the funeral.

"Well, it's also a matter of making a living for her. Very well, we'll take you up on your kindness then."

"Thank you very much."

In the end we've become the only guests of this inn, but for some reason I couldn't hide the happiness welling up within me. After all, I'm sure that my opportunities to chat with Lyra-san are going to increase from now on.

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Two days after the old man's death, the funeral service was set to take place tomorrow. In front of the old man, who's entombed in a coffin for the sake of being carried off to the church tomorrow, his heir has been yelling around.

"You evil wench! As expected, this must have been your work! You bitch have murdered my father!"

Once we enter the place as he was shouting around very loudly, a roughly fifty-years old man is being held back by the young male employee and another guy, both looking to be around twenty years old, from trying to hit Lyra-san. And next to them stands a middle-aged guard looking unsure what to do about all this.

"What's wrong for the guards to get involved in this?"

"Just for caution's sake, we've lightly investigated the cause of Mr. Baldor's death, and then..."

"You're saying it wasn't an illness?"

"Yep, poison was found in his body through 『Detection』."

Then there's no mistake. It's a spell I can't use myself though...

"The wench over there is at fault!"

I see. I suppose that's the reason why the heir of that old man, err, Mr. Baldor is kicking up such a huge fuss.

"So? What's the real story here?"

"There are no suspicious actions pointing at Lyra-san. Someone over at the church is well-informed about things like these. I got them to cooperate with us, and learned that the poison was

administered around one hour before Mr. Baldor's death. It took the poison around that long to kill him. At the time of the suspected poisoning Lyra-san had just made Mr. Baldor drink his usual herbal tea, but a maid was nearby, and she couldn't confirm Lyra-san having put anything into the tea."

"It's plain as day that she spiked the tea with poison!" Mr. Baldor's heir seems to be dead set on Lyra-san being the murderer.

He's an unpleasant guy. Bruno is also looking at him with accusatory eyes.

"As for that poison: None of it has been found in the cup with the herbal tea."

"Obviously because the maid washed it!"

"It's a poison that should still trigger a faint reaction even after the cup got washed once. Such a low amount wouldn't have much of an effect on a human either. Either way, a church priest probed for that faint reaction with magic. It'd be impossible for him to miss it."

If you use 『Detection』 very precisely, you can find even the faintest traces of poison. In other words, Lyra-san is innocent.

I'm relieved about this, but I'm not overly happy with Bruno also looking relieved.

"This bitch poisoned my father through some kind of method!"

"You say so, Walm-dono, but you were hated by Mr. Baldor, weren't you? You're just as much of a suspect as she is."

"I...haven't done anything like that!"

He keeps suspecting Lyra-san, and yet for him to be a suspect as well... Is this guy trying to blame his own crime on Lyra-san? Also, it looks like Mr. Baldor's heir is called Walm.

"The church has investigated the cause of Mr. Baldor's death because he entrusted his will to them while still alive. There's no way that the church, as holder of the testament, would hand over the inheritance to the successor if he was proven to be the murderer, no matter what might be written in there."

Rich people naturally exist among commoners as well. There are many cases of disputes over their inheritance after those people die. If no will exists, the eldest son inherits everything. Well, just like with nobles, it's the norm to hand over a sizable sum to cover the costs of preparations and arrangements to a second son and those younger.

However, if the patriarch of a powerful family writes a will and entrusts it to the church, I hear it quite often happens that the will is carried out with the church being treated as witness. Sometimes the patriarch and the heir are on bad terms, or it's assumed for the official heir to definitely waste the fortunes as he's an outrageously profligate son.

Commoners don't receive an annuity, nor do they have tax income from territories like nobles. They

won't be able to maintain their fortune unless they earn money through the family business. That means commoners are much harsher towards profligate sons than nobles.

However, I can't really make out Walm to be someone like that.

"According to the testament entrusted to the church, half of the inheritance is to be given to Lyra-san, and the other half to Frick-dono."

"Frick, you say!? I've been skipped!?"

"Me?"

Frick seems to be one of the guys who has stopped Walm from hitting Lyra-san earlier. It looks like he's Walm's eldest son, and Mr. Baldor's grandson.

"Walm-dono, weren't you not aware of the testament's content? Isn't that the reason why you poisoned Mr. Baldor, and tried to lay the blame on Lyra-san?"

"I see. In that case Frick-san would succeed the full inheritance. Walm-san wouldn't be able to get any of it, but since he's his son, you could think that it'd be the same anyway."

Hmm, that train of thought...wait, Bruno! For him to casually vouch for Lyra-san's innocence...don't tell me, he's aiming for her now that she lost her husband...

Nuoo——oh! I cannot afford to lose here!

"It's the other way around! This wench is trying to lay the blame on me!"

"Dad, Lyra-san has no reason to do anything like that."

"But she does! She's obviously targeting our family's fortune! Frick! Don't get deceived by this bitch!"

Unlike his father, Frick-dono seems to hold no reservations towards Lyra-san.

"The father Walm-san was ordered to be banished from the family after having a huge fight over Lyra-san with Mr. Baldor, but it looks like it doesn't apply to his son Frick-san. I hear Frick-san has often visited this house, eaten together with Mr. Baldor several times a week, and handed over souvenirs."

"You're quite well-informed, aren't you Candy-san?"

"I excel at obtaining such information after all."

It's got to be that employee... I pity him from the bottom of my heart.

"Souvenirs?"

"I've been regularly peddling to the neighboring villages while managing the buildings and land

owned by my grandfather in this town."

"Oh, what an admirable boy."

Without stupidly playing around while managing the inheritance from his grandfather, he's been earning money by running his very own business. He's definitely a diligent youth.

Candy-dono seems to look at him passionately, but I wonder, would such a love really come true one day?

"Frick-san has often brought souvenirs he bought at the villages he visited as a peddler for my husband. It pleased my husband, too. He often said, 『What a great difference compared to Walm who's resting on his laurels with the prospect of obtaining our current assets』."

Lyra-san seems to also harbor a good impression of Frick-dono who regularly showed up at his grandfather's bedside while earnestly working himself.

"At this point in time, there are three suspects. Lyra-san, Walm-dono, and Frick-dono."

"Lyra-san is innocent!"

Even if he might be a guard, I think he's way too rude towards Lyra-san!

"Sorry, but I think the maid, who took care of Mr. Baldor while Lyra-san was doing her job at the inn, is also a suspect, so far as it goes. We ought to carry out an impartial investigation to look for the criminal without being bogged down by prejudices."

"You're right. Having weird prejudices might lead to the wrong conclusions."

With the investigation decided to be continued just like that, the guards resume their work. As Mr. Baldor's funeral has been postponed until the criminal is caught, it's been decided to leave the coffin with the church. I hear the church has asked a magician to use ice magic so as to not allow the corpse to rot.

"It's clear that you are the criminal! They'll definitely catch you venomous snake by the tail!"

While seeing off Walm as he leaves after insulting Lyra-san, I rack my brain what I should do to prove Lyra-san's innocence. If Lyra-san's innocence is proven and Mr. Baldor's mourning can be held...while only focusing on that, I keep pondering how I should move tomorrow.

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"The poison has definitely entered his body through the mouth. If it wasn't Lyra-san's herbal tea, it raises the question of what else he ate or drank. The church investigated the contents of Mr. Baldor's stomach, and found out that he apparently ate lunch around one hour before drinking the tea. Same was confirmed through the maid's testimony."

"Okay, so you're basically saying it's also possible that the poison was contained in the lunch."

"But, in that case the poison's effect hit too late. By the way, Lyra-san wasn't present during lunchtime. Since the inn also has guests eating lunch over there, she was busy with the preparations. This was also confirmed by her employees."

"Did Mr. Baldor eat lunch by himself then?"

"No, yesterday Frick-dono visited as well. He apparently prepared lunch with an ingredient he brought over as a souvenir. We've heard about the menu from the maid. It matches with what the church found out through the stomach inspection."

"However, seeing how lunch and tea were both inside his stomach, they couldn't find out which of either was poisoned, right?"

"Yep, that's the problem."

"..."



We had a day off on the following day, though it didn't stem from this incident having taken place. Using that opportunity, Bruno and I started to move in order to prove Lyra-san's innocence. Beforehand we had received permission from Candy-dono to do as we like.

Still, I must admit, Bruno is quite the smart guy. He's discussing difficult issues with the elderly guard investigator we met the other day.

Nothing less of the magician class' runner-up. In my case...it'd be faster to start counting from the bottom. Still!

If I allow Bruno to only get all the good parts, the plan for me to prove Lyra-san's innocence, earn brownie points with her, and get together with her after the mourning period ends...will fall apart. I mustn't allow Bruno to steal a march on me!

"By the way, what about the tableware, cookware, and remaining ingredients of that lunch?"

"Those didn't show any poison response. Just for caution's sake, we also investigated the inn's cookware, tableware, and ingredients as well as the palms of Lyra-san and her employees, but all of them showed no poison reaction. We're at a complete dead-end right now."

Mr. Baldor was poisoned to death, but they don't know how he got poisoned. Since the old guard in charge of the investigation had his priest friend search all over with magic, you can say there's no doubt about the validity.

"Two hours before Mr. Baldor's death, Frick-san ate lunch with him, staying for around one hour. Almost passing each other, Lyra-san, who had finished her busy lunch time at the inn, came over to

make Mr. Baldor drink the herbal tea."

"What kind of herbal tea is it?"

"It's a local product sold in the far, western Holmia Margraviate. Since it's being sold after a long transport, it's an expensive tea. I haven't drunk it yet, but a priest at the church knew about it. Apparently a priest originating from the Holmia Margraviate. He says the elderly are often drinking it back home since it's good for their health."

"So it's truly just normal herb tea. That means Lyra-san has indeed let her husband drink it for health reasons."

"I heard this from the maid, but it looks like Mr. Baldor hated mate tea for its faint sweetness. Since the tea in question lacks sweetness, he liked it. It seems like he heard about this tea from Lyra-san before becoming bedridden, and started drinking it regularly since then."

In short, it'd be difficult to spike that herb tea. It'd be too easy to expose it by taste. It's also proof that Lyra-san hasn't poisoned Mr. Baldor.

"It's a difficult case."

"Indeed."