

"If it's not the tea, the next candidate would be the lunch, right?"

"But, he ate lunch a full hour before drinking the tea. With the effect of the detected poison, Mr. Baldor would have been dead by the time Lyra-san made the tea for him."

A time difference of one hour...speaking of poisoning, that's a rather aristocratic way of killing. According to my father, it fairly often happens that the nobles, who were considered by society to have died from sickness, were actually killed by poison, and I also hear that many among nobles excel in knowledge about poisons.

I feel like I heard such a story from a noble relative in my childhood...or maybe I'm mistaken? I've got to recall some useful knowledge!

"Oh, right! I have heard that there are medicines which can lengthen the time until a poison shows its effect!"

For example, poisoned nobles would try to find out the nature of a poison. In order to not allow a tracking of the culprit by calculating backwards from the time when the poison showed its effect after getting in contact with it, the poisoner would adjust the effect's manifestation time by having the target take another component alongside the poison. It's possible to speed up or slow down the time for a poison to show its effect, but I heard it's difficult to calculate the precise quantity and to properly neutralize the effect of those poisons that can be taken alongside the neutralizer.

But, the poison used here is one of those very types. And as long as you properly check it in advance, the chance to fail is rather low.

"You mean changing the time for the poison to affect the target with the "Addition Medicine"? I've heard of its existence, but there's few precedents of it being used."

It might be just natural for the guard members of this town to have little experience with it since they have few cases involving wealthy merchants and nobles like it happens at the capital.

Father told me that the Addition Medicine is a special drug which isn't easily obtainable.

"And, in that case it'd be problematic to put it into a drink like herbal tea."

Since it's already difficult to just blend in the poison, depending on the type, it'd easily get spotted if another type of medicine gets added. If pushed to say, I think it'd be easier to add them to food.

"What if something capable of extending the time for the poison to show its effect had been added to an ingredient?"

"You're saying Frick-san is suspicious? But, you see, he's also..." Bruno seems to not consider Frick-dono to be the culprit.

He's been taking care of his sick grandfather while tackling his own work as a diligent, excellent man. He's also kind to Lyra-san. There's no way that a person like him has killed his grandfather who was actually dotting on him.

I also agree with Bruno.

"But, Frick-dono does have a motive, too. If he can put the blame for the murder of his grandfather on Lyra-san, all of the fortune will become his."

"Once you start suspecting people, there's no end to it."

"That's what my job entails. As soon as people think you're slightly suited for this, you get immediately transferred over. Anyway, it's definitely easier as work requiring physical strength and stamina decreases in proportion."

The guards assign the right person to the right place as in having those who are young and durable handle the arrest of thieves and hoodlums, while leaving the investigation of cases like our current one to people with a good discernment like the elderly guard in front of us.

"When I thought that it might be a smart move to listen to the stories of the surrounding people who are related to this, now that it had reached this point, I was told something very interesting by a certain person."

"Something very interesting?"

"Frick-dono has a village he often frequents as a peddler. This place seems to be a production area for various kinds of medicinal plants."

It sounds like there's a person who testified that Frick-dono would often stock things, saying that he could turn it into money later.

"Who told you that?"

"The young, male employee at the inn's reception. A person called Maxel."

I suppose he's talking about that young, handsome guy who's unhappy over having drawn Candy-dono's affection to himself. Right now I've heard his name for the first time.

"How come he knows about this?"

"He said that Mr. Baldor and Frick-dono were talking about the medicinal plants of that village at one time when he went over to call Lyra-san. It was a talk about whether Frick-dono should buy up the plants more aggressively during the harvest season. Some of those plants can also be turned into poison, but Mr. Baldor told Frick-dono to not do that since it'd just earn him distrust from the authorities."

All of this sounds to me like a grandfather giving his cute grandchild advice.

"However, it's a fact that the village, where Frick-dono procures his medicinal plants, also has the plants needed to extract the poison that killed Mr. Baldor in the end."

In other words, circumstantial evidence exists.

"This would make Frick-dono a suspect, but since the poison in question has been detected on him, it's ultimately just a deduction, right?"

"Certainly you're right there...how did it go?" At this point the subordinate of this guard shows up, and whispers something into his ear. "It sounds like one soup plate has vanished from the kitchen in this house. I actually asked my men to check back with the maid."

"You're saying the plate was taken out so as to not allow the poison to spotted on it with 『Detect』?"

"That's what it looks like."

Moreover, yet another young guard arrives, and whispers something into the ear of the elderly guard.

"Just now my men found the soup plate in question buried beneath a tree in the garden when searching the house where Walm-dono and Frick-dono live. It seems that the plate also gave a poison reaction to 『Detect』. I think this settles it."

"The appearances of others can sometimes be deceiving."

"So true."

For the grandson, who worked earnestly to gain his grandfather's trust, to be the criminal that poisoned that grandfather...was he possibly truly unhappy with receiving only half of the fortune he should have usually received in full?

I've often heard that the greed of humans knows no bounds, but this is a case that makes me really feel the truth behind that saying.



Thus the case was safely resolved in one day. The culprit is Frick, the grandson of Mr. Baldor.

When he ate lunch with his grandfather, he added the poison he had obtained through peddling to the soup bowl. Later he secretly carried the plate out of the house to not let it fall in the hands of the investigating guards. It was also possible for Frick, who's been procuring medicinal plants, to get his hand on the Addition Medicine to delay the poison effect.

Since Mr. Baldor's stomach contents have been secured as proof according to the elderly guard, we'd clearly know the truth as soon as they finish the analysis.

"I'm the criminal? I buried the plate, which carried the poison that killed grandfather, in the garden to hide it away? I haven't done any of that!"

"But, you see, the evidence matches this conclusion."

"That's absurd! My son would never do something like that!"

"Mr. Walm, you're suspected of being an accomplice, so I'd like you to cooperate with us in the investigation."

"I don't care what you want! My son and I are not guilty!"

"(I can't imagine it from Frick's personality, but it kinda feels quite possible if you consider who gave birth to him)."

"(No kidding)."

The inheritance dispute is a case that makes me wonder how the hearts of people can get so dark.

"It's unthinkable for Frick-san to do something like that! He isn't a person who would do something like that..."

"But, Lyra-san."

All things considered, Lyra-san is a gentle person. She pleads for Frick even though she's been suspected as well. She's truly just like a goddess!

"Everyone, you shouldn't let others trick you so easily."

"Candy-san?"

"Candy-dono!"

All of a sudden Candy-dono, who should have left us to our own devices once we decided to selfishly assist in the investigation, barges in at this point.

"What do you mean by that, Candy-dono?" Bruno asks Candy-dono about his intention.

"It means that Frick-san isn't the criminal. I mean, Frick-san has never obtained any poison. Right?"

"Yes. On that day the medicinal plants in that village still hadn't grown up, so I bought grandfather's beloved namasa, and came back. It should have been used for the herb fry containing several types of herbs."

Asking the villagers should make it immediately clear whether Frick procured medicinal plants that can be used to make the poison in question. Candy-dono explained that the guards could simply check up on that later.

"Yep. I have analyzed the contents of Baldor-dono, and discovered namasa and other herbs in there."

No way...for Candy-dono to have done something like that while we didn't see him...

"But, the poison has actually come from the soup plate that was hidden away, you know? I can't

really imagine that anyone but Frick could have applied the poison on the plate."

"Is that really so? The effect of the poison was delayed by an hour because of the Addition Medicine. That's the explanation here, but some types of Addition Medicine can't be found with 『Detect』 either. In reality, I couldn't spot it in the stomach contents."

"Because it was digested by the stomach, right?"

"You could also consider that the Addition Medicine wasn't included there from the very start. This kind of medicine is troublesome to obtain."

"But, how was the poison effect delayed by an hour then?" Bruno speaks up fervently since Lyra-san would immediately become the prime suspect if he were to lose the verbal argument with Candy-dono here.

I don't believe Lyra-san to be the culprit either. I get my mental preparations ready to argue Candy-dono down when push comes to shove.

Going by the circumstances, Frick is definitely the criminal here.

"It's a theory based on the idea that the time until the poison became effective wasn't altered."

"What do you mean?"

"It's simple. The poison was inside, or rather got produced inside his stomach one hour before Mr. Baldor passed away."

"I don't understand what you mean."

How's poison being produced inside a stomach all of a sudden?

"The easy explanation is that the poison that killed Mr. Baldor can often be found in nature. You can get it from several plants, insects, fish, and worms. Those creatures produce that poison to protect themselves from their natural enemies.

Candy-dono talks just like a scholar.

"In addition to extracting the poison from those creatures, there's also a case where combining components contained in two rare plants result in the poison."

"In other words, if you eat those two plants at the same time, the specific components combine inside the stomach, turning into poison?"

"Oh my, you're a smart boy, Ron-chan. You're quite quick witted when it counts."

Even I can come up with this much.

"Two means, the herbal tea Lyra-san had Mr. Baldor drink every day, and a plant that was included in the lunch one hour before the teatime...in this case, a herb that was used for the namasa herb

fry?"

"You're perceptive, Bruno-chan."

It's only logical since Bruno is smarter than me.

"In that case, the culprit would be Frick-san after all, no?"

"I haven't done anything! The ingredients for that lunch were only everyday ingredients you can find anywhere!" Frick continues to loudly assert his own innocence.

"Lyra-san had Mr. Baldor drink the herbal tea every day for around two years. Mr. Baldor drank it regularly because he actually liked it himself. There's nothing unusual about that. On the other hand, Frick-san knew about the composition of the tea which Mr. Baldor drank every day. It's only natural since he's been procuring medicinal plants. He should be easily capable of preparing a herb that would produce the poison if you combine it with the components in the tea." The elderly guardsman has apparently zeroed in on Frick.

"True, the herbal tea had been ordered for two years. It was impossible for Lyra-san what kind of lunch Frick-san had with Mr. Baldor."

As Bruno says, Lyra-san was busy preparing lunch for the inn's guests around that time. She didn't have the spare time to go back home. The guard investigators also confirmed that the inn's guest had testified for her having worked in the dining room on the first floor all the time.

As expected, Lyra-san is innocent.

"Once I examined the stomach contents, it became apparent. Though it's a somewhat special herb. It seems like you can only harvest small amounts of it in this area, and it's main habitat is the village where Frick-san often procures medicinal plants. Apparently they can't get enough of it to sell it, and thus the villagers use it to remove the smell when grilling fish. As someone regularly frequenting that village, Frick-san should know all that."

"I don't know anything about this! Various types of herbs and fragrant grasses as well as such rarer ones exist in that village, but it's my first time to hear anything about one of those turning into poison after being combined with a component in the herbal tea!"

"But, Lyra-san should know even less about that."

She's the landlady of an inn, and not some researcher.

"What about the herbal tea? That's a special product of the Kingdom's western part!"

"It's rare around here, but it's not like you can't get your hands on it. In fact, some stores in the town also sell it. Also, a part of the herbs that we don't know quite well either remained undigested in Mr. Baldor's stomach, but once I tried to mix them with the herbal tea after extracting the component, it turned into poison. No amateur would know about such a reaction."

The only one having such an expertise is Frick as someone dealing with medicinal plants.

"When we investigated the ingredients remaining in the kitchen, we also found the leftovers of the mix of various types of herbs, which was used for the namasa herb fry, and the herb in question was also among them. I can only think that Frick-san has prepared this herb to be used as an ingredient of the lunch's fry." The elderly guardsman seems mostly convinced of Frick being the culprit.

"If Lyra-san were to be arrested as the criminal, Frick would receive all of Mr. Baldor's inheritance!"

"Indeed. He has plenty of reasons to do this."

"I'd say it's decided with this."

Once the elderly guardsman makes a signal, the young guards seize Frick and Walm.

"I haven't done anything!"

"My son and I are innocent!"

"We will listen to your stories at the guard station. Take them away."

"I'm not guilty!"

"That evil wench is obviously the culprit here——e!"

While watching father and son being restrained and taken away to the guard station, I rejoice from the bottom of my heart over Lyra-san having been proven innocent.

"Bruno, you too, huh?"

"Klimt, you too, huh?"

However, our fight over Lyra-san hasn't finished yet.



With Frick, and Walm who's considered to be his accomplice, having been arrested, the case has finally started to head towards its conclusion. Currently we're the only guests of the inn.

When we're having our dinner in the dining room on the first floor, Lyra-san comes over to greet us while wearing an apologetic expression.

"We have caused you a great amount of trouble."

"It's nothing you need to worry about."

"Indeed! Lyra-san, you haven't done anything wrong!"

"That Frick is a truly vulgar man to try laying the blame of his crime on someone else!"

What a modest woman she is, despite being a victim herself. No matter how many years are going to pass, I'm sure I'll make her happy.

I won't lose to Bruno!

"The funeral service for Mr. Baldor is still not over yet, so things are going to be hectic from now on, right?"

"Yes. It looks like it has been decided for me to serve as the chief mourner."

Seeing how the son and grandson of the deceased were arrested as his murderers, it's only reasonable for Lyra-san, his wife, to be the chief mourner.

"Are you going to be alright?"

"Maxel and the others will help me." Lyra-san explains to Candy-dono.

Since they're Lyra-san's allies, I can feel relieved.

"Well, your relatives are all in such a messy state."

"Indeed..."

Immediately after Walm and Frick were taken away by the guards, their relatives found out that Lyra-san would apparently receive all of Mr. Baldor's inheritance, and immediately started to launch cruel slander against her. Even though they wouldn't get any of the inheritance even if Walm and his son were innocent anyway. What a bunch of good-for-nothings.

As I thought, Lyra-san needs a strong man to protect her!

"Still, Maxel-chan, eh...?" Once again Candy sends a passionate look towards the employee who's currently working in the dining room.

That man seems to be as troubled by Candy-dono's advances as ever.

"Maxel-chan looks like a reliable guy."

"After all, he is in a position where he manages the other employees."

I guess that essentially makes him the number two.

"I see. Was he employed in another inn before coming to this one?"

"No, before that he peddled between towns and villages as a merchant."

"Was he an acquaintance of yours back then?"

"We were born in the same village. It is not like we were that close back when we both still lived in the village, though. Once I learned about his origin at the time of his employment, I felt a certain level of familiarity with him."

"Such things also happen among adventurers."

I suppose he's talking about getting close after talking and finding out about coming from the same place, and then becoming good friends with just the old stories being enough to bridge the distance. Unfortunately it's nothing I have ever experienced, however.

"Have you decided when you're going to hold the funeral service?" Candy-dono asks Lyra-san.

"In three days. There's a lot to prepare. Fortunately the church is taking care of the corpse."

Since a lot has happened, it's inevitable for the funeral to get delayed.

"If it's in three days, it'd allow us to participate as well. I wonder if this is also some kind of fate at work here."

"Thank you very much. I am sure my husband will be delighted over this in the other world." Lyra-san bows at us.

As always, she's a woman with a fine conduct.

"Are all of you okay with this as well?"

"Of course."

"I'll gladly take part in it."

"Sure."

"...(nod)."

All members of Twilight of Dawn agree to participate in the funeral service, and then we decide to take off for the remaining three days until then.

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