

## Synopsis

Set in a luxury hotel, this 10-minute mini murder mystery begins when the formidable Lady Crawford collapses after afternoon tea. With suspicions falling on the hot-tempered chef, a frantic investigation uncovers secrets, motives, and misunderstandings as everyone becomes a suspect in the case.

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# A Spot of Murder

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*A Dark Comedy Murder Mystery in One Act*

## Characters (5):

- **Lady Crawford** – Wealthy, dramatic hotel guest.
  - **Chef Marco** – Head chef, passionate and slightly eccentric.
  - **Mr. Blackwood** – Hotel manager, desperate to protect the hotel's reputation.
  - **Detective Finch** – Overconfident detective who thinks he's a genius.
  - **Mabel** – Maid, quiet and polite... perhaps too polite.
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## Scene

A luxury hotel lounge. A table with tea and cakes.

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*(Lady Crawford sits dramatically sipping tea.)*

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

This hotel is a disgrace.

**BLACKWOOD:**

You said the same thing yesterday, madam.

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

And it remains true today.

**BLACKWOOD:**

May I ask what the problem is now?

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

The pillows are too soft, the tea is too hot, and your violinist looked at me as if I owed him money.

*(Chef Marco enters proudly carrying a dessert.)*

**CHEF MARCO:**

Lady Crawford! I present my masterpiece: Chocolate Mousse of Eternal Happiness.

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

That sounds delightful.

*(She takes a bite.)*

**CHEF MARCO:**

Well?

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

Actually...

*(Pause.)*

**CHEF MARCO:**

Yes?

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

It's very good.

**CHEF MARCO:**

Finally! Someone appreciates my art!

*(Lady Crawford suddenly clutches her throat.)*

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

Oh.

**BLACKWOOD:**

Madam?

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

How unfortunate.

*(She collapses dramatically onto the table.)*

**BLACKWOOD:**

Is she..

**CHEF MARCO:**

Dead?

**BLACKWOOD:**

I'm not sure, it looks like it.

**CHEF MARCO:**

She's not answering.

*(They stare.)*

**BLACKWOOD:**

She's dead.

**CHEF MARCO:**

Oh no.

**BLACKWOOD:**

You poisoned her!

**CHEF MARCO:**

What?!

*(Detective Finch rushes in carrying an absurdly large notebook.)*

**FINCH:**

Nobody move!

*(Everyone is already standing still.)*

**BLACKWOOD:**

Detective Finch, thank goodness.

**FINCH:**

I understand we have a murder.

**CHEF MARCO:**

They're blaming me.

**FINCH:**

Excellent. Makes my job a lot easier.

**CHEF MARCO:**

I didn't do it!

**FINCH:**

That's exactly what a murderer would say.

**CHEF MARCO:**

It's also what an innocent person says!

**FINCH:**

Hmm, well good point.

*(Writes furiously.)*

**FINCH:**

This changes everything.

**FINCH:**

Let's examine motives.

*(Points dramatically at Chef Marco.)*

**FINCH:**

Chef! Did Lady Crawford insult your food?

**CHEF MARCO:**

Constantly.

**FINCH:**

Aha!

**CHEF MARCO:**

She insulted everyone.

**BLACKWOOD:**

That's true actually.

**MABEL:**

She called my cleaning "emotionally disappointing."

**FINCH:**

How can cleaning be emotionally disappointing?

**MABEL:**

I still don't know.

**FINCH:**

Interesting.

*(Writes.)*

**FINCH:**

Manager! Any motive?

**BLACKWOOD:**

She left terrible reviews online.

**FINCH:**

How terrible?

**BLACKWOOD:**

One star.

**FINCH:**

Monstrous.

*(Detective examines the dessert.)*

**FINCH:**

The mousse!

**CHEF MARCO:**

What about it?

**FINCH:**

Poison!

**CHEF MARCO:**

Obviously.

**FINCH:**

But was the poison mixed into the dessert?

*(He tastes it.)*

**BLACKWOOD:**

Should you be doing that?

**FINCH:**

Probably not.

*(He thinks.)*

**FINCH:**

No poison in the mousse.

**CHEF MARCO:**

See?

**BLACKWOOD:**

Then how was she poisoned?

*(Mabel quietly tries to leave.)*

**FINCH:**

Nobody leaves.

**MABEL:**

I was getting some towels.

**FINCH:**

For a corpse?

**MABEL:**

Yes to cover her over.

**FINCH:**

Let's reconstruct events.

**BLACKWOOD:**

The chef served dessert.

**CHEF MARCO:**

Correct.

**BLACKWOOD:**

Then Mabel brought Lady Crawford's tea.

*(Everyone pauses.)*

**FINCH:**

Tea.

**MABEL:**

Everyone drinks tea.

**FINCH:**

Not everyone dies afterward.

**MABEL:**

That's fair.

*(Finch examines the teacup.)*

**FINCH:**

Interesting...

**CHEF MARCO:**

What?

**FINCH:**

There's a strange smell.

**BLACKWOOD:**

Poison?

**FINCH:**

No.

**CHEF MARCO:**

What then?

**FINCH:**

Lavender.

*(Mabel freezes.)*

**FINCH:**

Mabel, don't you use lavender cleaning products?

**MABEL:**

Maybe.

**FINCH:**

And didn't Lady Crawford complain about them yesterday?

**BLACKWOOD:**

She demanded we stop using them.

**MABEL:**

She did.

**FINCH:**

Mabel.

*(Dramatic pause.)*

**FINCH:**

You poisoned Lady Crawford.

**BLACKWOOD:**

Mabel?!

**CHEF MARCO:**

The maid?

**MABEL:**

Well... yes.

*(Everyone gasps.)*

**BLACKWOOD:**

Why?!

**MABEL:**

Because I couldn't take it anymore.

**FINCH:**

Go on.

**MABEL:**

Three months of complaints.

**CHEF MARCO:**

Understandable.

**MABEL:**

She said my folded towels lacked "narrative tension."

**BLACKWOOD:**

She told me the lobby smelled of dogs.

**CHEF MARCO:**

She said my soup was emotionally unavailable.

**MABEL:**

Exactly.

**FINCH:**

So you poisoned her tea?

**MABEL:**

Yes.

**FINCH:**

With what?

**MABEL:**

Rat poison.

**FINCH:**

Straight to the point.

**BLACKWOOD:**

This is terrible.

**CHEF MARCO:**

At least everyone knows I didn't poison her.

**FINCH:**

Indeed.

**BLACKWOOD:**

What do we do now?

**FINCH:**

Well, I arrest Mabel.

**MABEL:**

Fair enough.

**CHEF MARCO:**

And then?

**BLACKWOOD:**

Then we reopen the dining room.

**CHEF MARCO:**

Excellent.

*(Suddenly Lady Crawford sits up.)*

**EVERYONE:**

WHAT?!

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

Must everyone shout?

**FINCH:**

You're alive?!

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

Unfortunately.

**MABEL:**

But I poisoned you!

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

Yes, I know. I overheard everything.

**BLACKWOOD:**

Then why were you lying there?

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

I wanted to hear what people really thought of me.

*(Everyone gasps and looks at each other.)*

**MABEL:**

So... am I still under arrest?

**FINCH:**

You did admit attempted murder.

**MABEL:**

Right.

**FINCH:**

Yes.

*(Mabel sighs.)*

**LADY CRAWFORD:**

Could someone bring me more tea?

**EVERYONE:**

NO!

*(Blackout.)*

**END**