**Chapter 41: Diana Conquest Strategy (2)**

Diana opened her eyes in bed as sunlight streamed in through the window.

Mornings with the sun were unfamiliar to Diana, who always started her day in the dark.

Her mind felt strangely hazy. She felt like she was floating on a cloud.

Her back felt damp, like it had been soaked with rain.

She gingerly put her hand on her back and felt the mattress soaked with something like water.

The sleeping quarters felt strangely awkward, but it wasn't Diana's room.

'I even put a sealing spell on the room, but I managed to escape.’

Once a quarter, when the curse rages, reason is blurred and only instinct and primal lust remain.

It meant she craved cock like crazy.

But with all five curses intertwined in a magical way, no matter what she did, Diana could never be taken by a man.

This was the fundamental reason she had remained a virgin all these years.

Her body desperately wants a man, but a combination of curses prevents it from happening.

So when the curses would flare up, Diana would lock herself in her room for a week or so and m\*\*turbate like crazy.

She sends everyone out of the inn and closes the shop.

This preparation has kept her out of trouble so far, but the different location of the room she's lying in seems to have made this time's outburst a little louder.

What was different from the last runaway?

'Balkan⋯'

It's probably because of the kid she recently brought in.

At first, it seemed selfless.

She served him soup out of pity for the way he was shivering in the cold darkness of the Labyrinth City.

But since then⋯ since the day he clutched at her chest, to be exact.

Every time she thought of him, she felt her stomach flutter and her body heat up.

The curse's outbursts come once a quarter, but once a week, there's a foreshadowing.

Hundreds of times a day, her uterus would clench, turning her head into a stupid deformity, as if to prepare her body for the big one.

Each time it happened, Diana remembered the utensils he used, the towel he wiped himself with, the bed he slept in⋯ but she endured it with desperate patience.

‘I will not succumb to this curse.’

Despite the occasional discomfort, she had managed to get by. She believed that nothing would be too much trouble.

- Heh, heh, heh, heh, Balkan, Balkan, Balkan.

But that, too, was a foolish notion, for he hadn't experienced the outbursts since his arrival.

Diana rocked frantically on his bed, wrapped in the covers she'd pulled over her, her nose buried in the pillow he'd slept on.

Taking a deep breath, the scent of Balkan paralyzes her. In response, she rocks even more frantically.

She smells Balkan again. She sways again. The cycle was complete.

She didn't remember much of what happened after that but the bed was soaked, and she knew she must have m\*\*turbated like crazy after that.

‘What the hell was I thinking?’ She wondered, doing such an unforgivable thing.

The only explanation she can come up with is that she was acting on instinct, following her primal libido.

'I'm the worst, I⋯'

Diana felt a deep sense of self-loathing.

Disgust with herself was one thing but what she hated most was that, even after all she'd done, she still wanted to look good to him.

'He must never find out about this⋯!’

What if he caught her masturbating on his bed?

It was horrifying to think about.

The labyrinth has many variables. He's late from the second floor, but Diana realizes he wouldn’t struggle there.

He'd make it back safely so she had to get moving.

-Squeak!

"Hmph!"

Diana's mind was racing as she tried to get out of bed, but a vicious grip on her chest stopped her in her tracks.

A large, soft lump of fat squeezed in the large, firm hand, squeezing back and forth between her fingers.

‘No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.’

There shouldn't be a human by her side right now and she should never have felt the touch of this hand.

A large, thick, firm hand, with every finger, relentlessly leaving red handprints on the woman's soft chest.

How could she forget the hand of the man who had convinced her subconscious that she was a female?

Gritting her teeth and ignoring her womb, which had begun to throb and tremble again, Diana looked up at the owner of that familiar touch as memories of last night began to surface.

Memories of being forcibly embraced, molested, and pounced upon as he returned exhausted from the Labyrinth.

A frustrated groan echoed through his room.

Yes, his room.

"I, I, what the hell did I do⋯?"

A helmeted, torn breastplate, half-naked, stunned man lay beside her.

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I used the Blessing of Radiance at full power and promptly blacked out.

When I opened my eyes, I immediately saw Diana.

"Ahhhhhh..."

Diana moaned in a daze.

I stared at her, realized where my hand was, and unconsciously fidgeted a few more times before collecting it.

My sweaty hand was quite warm.

I wondered how long I'd been sleeping, and I could still see my handprint on Diana's breast through her gray dress.

She stared at me blankly, as if her mind had stopped working.

I had a brain freeze, too. Waking up and seeing her gasping for air was a little too much for my heart.

"Heh."

"Ahhhhh."

Our words overlapped, and there was another moment of silence.

I gesture for her to speak first, and she nods urgently.

"Uh, the Balkan⋯ this⋯ situation⋯ uh⋯ so⋯ ah⋯"

Diana is definitely not her usual self.

She stuttered, as if her brain had shut down, and her normally closed eyes darted around, scanning her surroundings in confusion.

I finally broke the ice.

"It's the curse, isn't it?"

Let's just look at the facts.

What is the underlying cause of Diana's outburst?

‘Well, it must be the Curse of Decadence.’

Diana is not the kind of woman who would do such a senseless act. There must have been something at work, a curse, that paralyzed her reason.

Indeed, I've seen symbols as obscene and ominous as that pervert's.

"⋯⋯Yes."

Diana filled me in on the details of one of her curses.

She didn't tell me everything, but it was pretty much what I expected.

Once a week, her libido would spike, and once a quarter, her sex drive would explode to the point of unconsciousness.

"⋯⋯"

Diana bowed her head to me like a sinner. She couldn't even open her mouth to apologize.

She just stood there, speechless, her head bowed deeply, her eyes fixed on me.

I'm not trying to gloss over the situation with silence.

It's just that Diana, who is always quick to recognize her mistakes and apologize, has become so hardened that she can't say anything.

She knows that what she has done will never be forgiven by the men of this world.

"Such a vile curse. It must have been hard for you, Diana."

"Huh?"

But I am not a man of this world. A beauty worthy of anyone's admiration comforted herself in my bed?

Honestly, it was still too fantastical to be real.

And, if we're just talking about the good or bad of the situation, it's extreme because last night I was on the verge of losing it myself.

"If only," I thought, "Diana hadn't regained consciousness halfway through and stopped herself, I'd have been in the mood, and I'd have packed her womb with my healthy, two-month-old concentrated baby seed.”

The fact that she stopped was proof that she was trying to honor and care for me, even while she was being consumed by the curse and losing her mind.

Because of that, I want to do the same for her.

At my mention of what she must have been through, she looked up, dazed. She stared at me.

"Diana, actually, I got a blessing from the labyrinth this time."

From the sounds of it, Diana had been a fairly accomplished explorer in the past, and there were only two possible reasons she hadn't removed the curse.

‘Either she couldn't afford it, or the temple couldn't remove it.’

It seems unlikely that Diana would be short on funds. I'm guessing the latter.

'It must be the darkness.’

That uncomfortable, foreboding darkness. The darkness that enveloped and threatened the unidentified [being].

Even in the temple, I wondered how it could be untouchable.

"Do you remember what happened last night?"

"⋯Ah, yes⋯I remember⋯"

"Remember when I squeezed Diana's lower belly, and the pattern disappeared?"

"⋯⋯!"

Diana gasped and patted her lower belly.

Her bare belly, covered by her gray dress, was now sigil-less.

The blessing had worked last night.

Surely, this blessing would help curb Diana's runaway behavior.

"And if you ever get horny again⋯or if you ever go on a rampage⋯maybe my blessing can help."

Diana stared at me blankly. She was a little embarrassed at this point.

In a situation where it wouldn't be surprising for someone to run away in contempt or exploit me to the bone for money, it's odd.

"I want to help Diana, I owe you so much."

In fact, she's even covering for me so I’m trying to help her in return.

"⋯Balkan. I've hurt you, irreparably."

"Oh, that's hardly a wound, and you just covered up one of mine."

Diana's eyes narrowed. I think she realized which time I was referring to.

"⋯Balkan, that one⋯"

"Again, are you going to say 'just because'?"

I remembered my first meeting with Diana.

My first murder, my first labyrinth and the people who would pounce on me at every turn.

My first meeting with her, when she handed me a hot bowl of soup and gave me the keys to the inn as I shivered in the dark, cold streets, trying to sleep.

"Just. For no particular reason. For nothing in return. That's what you said even then."

"⋯⋯"

"Then I, too, just want to help Diana, for no particular reason. I just want to help, so why not?"

I locked eyes with Diana, who stared back.

Her normally closed eyes were fully open.

I stared into her amber eyes from behind my helmet.

Then, a thin laugh escaped her mouth.

"⋯Really. I’m no match for Balkan."

Her voice was a mixture of gratitude, guilt, and apology.

"Yeah, well, I don't think I'm going to be able to beat Diana either."

I smiled and squeezed Diana's hand. We looked at each other for a moment and laughed.

"⋯⋯"

After a few moments of silence, Diana cautiously spoke up.

"Then, I'm sorry, but ⋯ can I ask you a favor?"

I smiled and nodded, grateful to her for saving me from a moment of doubt that could have ruined the rest of my life.

"Sure!"

And just like that, I would be helping Diana with her libido for years to come.

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"But, Diana. What's the name of that curse?"

Diana's smile hardened as she looked at me with a wry smile.

"Does it have a name, or is it necessary to suppress the curse⋯?"

"No, I'm just curious, because I don't think such curses are common."

After a moment of silence, Diana blushed bright red and spoke cautiously.

"Uh, mmm, la, lan, gol."

"Mmirangol? Is that the curse of Mmirangol?"

"⋯⋯⋯⋯ Mi, I'm sorry, go, I suddenly don't remember much⋯"

Cutting off the conversation in a hurry, Diana scrambled out of bed, grabbed my bedding for laundry, and was downstairs in a flash.

Literally in a flash. It was so fast that I barely saw the afterimage.

I shrugged it off, toweling myself off for a brisk start to the day, and thought to myself.

Curse of Decadence from the Black Moon■

Obscene Decadent Mark.

"Oh shit."

The Labyrinth is so hard.

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"This boring academy. Finally out!"

"I know."

Around twenty students, including a red-haired elf and a canine beastman, were beaming with joy at the rare opportunity for an outdoor assignment.

At the words of Professor Mankostil, who was leading them, the students turned to look at the red-haired elf, Ellie Ordia.

"Ellie. I'm jealous ⋯ free time."

"Another genius recognized by a professor. I can feel the walls."

"Tsk. I'm just a commoner."

"Don't you know, her mother is a genius?"

"⋯⋯Really?"

Pure envy, envy of talent, admiration, jealousy.

Ellie Ordia didn't react much to the various stares, but the last words were different.

For in their words, there was a hint of disgust.

"My mother."

"No, well, just⋯"

The talent recognized by the entire faculty stepped forward, and the two students who'd been chattering shut up.

"Tsk. You can't even talk in front of me."

"⋯⋯"

Seeing them avert their eyes, unable to overcome the pressure, Ellie clicked her tongue.

She kicked the ground as if to vent her frustration. In a fit of frustration, she roasted the ground once with a fireball.

Ellie Ordia.

Third year at the Royal Academy. Top of the class. Prodigy wizard.

Such titles paled in comparison to the enormity of her family name.

"⋯She's not my real mom."

Ellie, who hit puberty late, hated her adoptive mother.