

In the castle, Zedran stood alone on the balcony, watching as the ash from his cigarette scattered into the breeze and disappeared.

Countless leaves gently floated down in the distance. As he gazed at the desolate scene, a deep sense of melancholy enveloped him.

"If only you were still here, how wonderful that would be!" Zedran murmured to himself. His eyes tinged with a hint of redness.

The butler approached from behind, bringing a mink coat.

"Master, it's cold. Please take care of yourself."

Zedran waved his hand dismissively. "It's fine. I need some time alone."

After a long while, he returned to his room and glanced at the ink painting on the wall. His face was full of conflicted emotions.

More than twenty years had passed, and that beautiful face had completely faded from memory, leaving only fragmented recollections.

If Zedbar had not taken that photograph, Zedran might never have thought of her again for the rest of his life.

Yet fate was full of twists and turns. As he saw it, memories flooded back.

Zedran hesitated for a long time before finally stepping forward. He lifted the ink painting and turned the hidden switch.

A secret door quietly appeared after a slight tremor.

Inside the small room, various items were neatly arranged, though years of neglect had left everything covered in a thick layer of dust.

Directly opposite the secret door hung a painting of a delicate woman. Her graceful face was bearing a striking resemblance to Arabella.

Zedran's body trembled involuntarily at the sight of the woman in the painting.

Memories surged like a breached dam, flooding his mind.

Back then, they were both in the bloom of youth, instantly hitting it off upon seeing each other.

In the spring of youth, young Zedran was smitten at first sight by Arabella.

Arabella, in turn, secretly admired the dashing and charismatic Zedran.

With mutual affection, they secretly pledged their love after a few clandestine meetings.

Zedran, in his youth, believed this was true love.

However, their vastly different social statuses posed a significant barrier. He was the eldest son of the illustrious Zedran Family, while she was merely a lowly palace maid.

Inevitably, their sweet love affair couldn't remain hidden for long.

How could the eldest son of the Zedran Family fall for a maid?

Despite Zedran's desperate resistance, his individual strength couldn't withstand the power of the family.

After being confined for two months, he saw Arabella again, now pregnant and taken as a concubine.

Tears welled up in Zedran's eyes as he recalled the past.

Reaching out to touch the scroll, his face was full of regret and guilt.

"It's my fault I couldn't protect you! It's my weakness. If I had resisted with all my might, perhaps you would have been my wife by now."

As he finished speaking, tears silently fell from the corners of his eyes.

Images from the past involuntarily resurfaced in his mind—Arabella's tragic death.

"I am old now, with no chance left, but our child has an infinite future ahead. Those who conspired against you will meet their just ends. The future king of Montiria can only be our child!"

In the silence of the secret room, Zedran's deep murmur sounded like the roar of a ferocious beast.

An atmosphere of hatred filled the room.

No one knew the extent of what Zedran had endured in that battle to save the woman he loved.

Risking his life to shield Arabella from a fatal blow, he damaged his internal organs and ruined his body.

The bloodline of the Zedran Family ended with his generation.

Only the legitimate wife of the Minister of Border Affairs knew that the couple had never shared a bed since then.

This was the lifelong sorrow of Zedran.