

Divorced Me 961

Chapter 961

Aaron entered the room, holding a bouquet in his hands, followed closely by Lance and Lucas.

"Sweetheart, I'm here to get you!" Aaron shouted as soon as he stepped through the door, his handsome face full of excitement.

"Hold on a second." Gernard raised his hand, stopping him in his tracks.

Aaron paused and looked at him. "I know the drill. What do you have for me? Bring it on!"

Gernard chuckled and stepped aside, revealing a table behind him covered with a red cloth. Four red strings dangled from the edge. Maria, standing nearby, explained, "Mr. Fletcher, if you pass the first challenge, you can move forward." Aaron raised an eyebrow. "And what's the first challenge?"

Maria pointed to the red strings. "Pick one and eat whatever it's attached to. No reactions allowed-if you stay stone-faced, you pass."

Aaron grinned and immediately turned to Lance, pulling him forward. "Buddy, it's your time to shine."

Lance remained calm and casually pulled one of the strings. At the end of it was a serving of mustard.

Everyone winced at the sight, knowing all too well the intense kick of mustard.

But Aaron and Lucas exchanged a calm look, their expressions completely unbothered. This was nothing for them.

Lance squeezed a bit of mustard onto his hand and, without flinching, ate it with a straight face.

Maria and Gernard stared at him in shock.

"Isn't it spicy?" Gernard asked, genuinely surprised.

Lance, already done, shrugged. "Not really."

He then went on to pull the other strings, eating lemon, sugar, and bitter melon-all without showing the slightest reaction.

Maria watched him in disbelief. "Do you even have taste buds? How can someone eat all those things without a single reaction?"

Aaron quickly jumped in, laughing. "Does it matter? Did he eat it or not? Was he expressionless?"

Maria sighed. "Yes, yes he was."

Aaron smirked. "Then that's it! First challenge cleared!"

As soon as Aaron finished speaking, one of his groomsmen behind him pulled out a handful of small party favors and tossed them into the air. They fluttered down, and everyone in the room eagerly grabbed one.

Aaron moved on to the second challenge, coming face-to-face with Gavin, who stood with his usual cold demeanor. Aaron flashed a smile and asked, "So, what's the next challenge?"

Gavin stepped aside, revealing a table with slices of bread on it.

Maria explained, "You have to bite the word 'LOVE' out of the bread. That's how you pass."

Aaron picked up a slice, ready to start.

But just as he was about to take a bite, Gavin said calmly, "You have to carve the word out of a single slice of bread."

Maria shot Gavin a quick look, slightly confused.

"Wait, is that the rule?" she thought to herself.

She could've sworn it was supposed to be four slices.

But Gavin, being in charge of this challenge, had the authority to modify the rules, and his change made the task even harder-and a lot more interesting.

Aaron stared at the bread, momentarily thrown off. Bite out four letters on one slice of bread?

He turned his gaze to Gavin, locking eyes. "Are you deliberately making this difficult for me?"

Gavin raised an eyebrow. "Aren't you the groom? If I don't challenge you as her family, who will?"

He was straightforward, making no attempt to hide his intentions.

Aaron glanced down at the bread, narrowing his eyes before finally deciding to go for it. He took a deep breath and started biting carefully.

Everyone watched intently, wondering if he'd actually manage it.

Soon enough, Aaron held up the

slice-wobbly but unmistakable, with the word "LOVE" bitten into it. The crowd burst into cheers, impressed that he'd pulled it off.

Chapter 962

Though the letters were a bit crooked, Aaron had succeeded. He placed the bread on the table, glanced at Gavin, and seeing no reaction from him, didn't dwell on it. His focus was clear-he needed to get to his bride. With the bouquet in hand, Aaron eagerly pushed open the bedroom door, only to find Aveline, her belly prominently showing, standing at the door with the wedding shoes in her hand, clearly blocking the way. She blinked and gave him a warm smile, extending her hand. "Hand over the cash, and I'll let you through."

Without hesitation, Aaron spun around, grabbed two hefty envelopes from one of his groomsmen, and handed them to Aveline.

Her arms dropped slightly from the weight, nearly fumbling the envelopes. She looked down in surprise. "Wow, that's a lot of money!" she said, noting how stuffed they were likely holding around two thousand dollars each. Aveline hugged the envelopes and shoes tightly, grinning. "Still not enough."

Aaron pulled out two more heavy envelopes and teased, "Aveline, you won't be able to carry these much longer."

She held her ground. "You can set them down, but it's still not enough."

Aaron looked at her, amused, and said, "Alright, name your price."

After a brief pause, Aveline smiled sweetly and said, "I want half of your assets."

The room erupted in laughter and surprise. They thought the earlier challenges were tough, but clearly, this last one was the real challenge! And since the woman holding the shoes was pregnant, no one dared try to take them from her. If Aaron didn't play along, there'd be no bride for him today.

Aaron was momentarily stunned. Half his assets? She was playing big!

He turned to Lucas, chuckling. "So, if I give up half my assets to you guys, will you take care of me and my wife from now on?"

Lucas, with a loving gaze toward Aveline, replied, "We can afford it."

"Betrayal! Don't forget you're on my side!" Aaron exclaimed.

Lucas simply shrugged.

"Can't afford it? Well then, no wedding. Let's go," he said,

pretending to lead Aveline away

taking the wedding shoes

"Stop right there!" Aaron shouted, shocked at Lucas' sudden defection.

him.

Unbelievable! Who had the brilliant idea of putting Aveline in charge of the third challenge?

Maria, standing in the back, quietly took a couple of steps backward feeling slightly guilty. "Well, that's the whole point, isn't it? It makes things more fun!"

Aveline blinked at Aaron with a playful smile. "So, are you willing to give up half your assets to marry Selena?"

Aaron grinned. "I am! I'll have a contract drafted right now!"

Aveline studied him for a moment, then smiled warmly. "Alright, I believe you truly love her."

With that, she handed him the wedding shoes.

Aaron took them gratefully. "Thank you!"

Without wasting any time, he dashed into the room. When he finally saw Selena sitting gracefully on the bed, he felt a sudden rush of emotion, and to his surprise, his eyes turned misty.

Even though they were already legally married, something about this ceremony-this moment-felt deeply significant.

Yes.

He wanted to introduce Selena to the world as his wife.

"Honey, I'm here to get you," he said, his voice thick with emotion.

Selena gently lowered her fan and smiled at him. "I'm ready."

"Kiss! Kiss! Kiss!" someone from the crowd suddenly shouted, and the rest of the group quickly joined in, chanting and cheering.

Chapter 963

Aaron gently slipped the wedding shoes onto Selena's feet, then leaned in to kiss her.

"Wow!" The crowd erupted in cheers and applause.

In one swift motion, Aaron scooped Selena into his arms, carrying her out of the room with large strides. As they exited, someone popped a confetti cannon, showering them with colorful streamers, adding to the joyous atmosphere. Laughter and excitement filled the air.

A line of luxury cars awaited them, making their way to the hotel with an impressive procession. The street was cleared for their passage, adding to the grandeur of the occasion.

At the venue, the banquet hall was vast and opulent, with crystal chandeliers casting a dreamy glow over the entire space.

Guests were already seated, chatting and anticipating the ceremony.

Selena went to the dressing room, where she changed into a breathtaking wedding gown and had her hair and makeup redone, taking her beauty to another level. Aveline watched, her eyes suddenly welling up with tears.

Selena caught sight of her and quickly asked, "Ave, why are you crying? Do I not look beautiful?"

Aveline nodded, her voice thick with emotion. "You look stunning, absolutely beautiful."

She wasn't sure why she felt so emotional-perhaps it was the realization of how far they had come. Despite all the challenges, they found happiness. Selena, still getting her hair styled, tried

to comfort her friend. "No more tears! Just watch me walk down the aisle, all gorgeous. Next up, it'll be your turn." Aveline took a deep breath, trying to hold back her tears.

Just then, there was a knock on the dressing room door.

One of the attendants opened it slightly and peeked outside. "Mr. Tudor? Is there something you need?"

Aveline turned and saw Lucas at the door. She excused herself, walking over as the attendant stepped aside.

As soon as she stepped out, Lucas pulled her into a gentle embrace.

"I knew you'd end up crying," he said softly, stroking her back.

Lucas knew how deep her bond with Selena was more than just friends, they were like sisters. It was no surprise the emotional moment had brought tears.

Aveline nestled into his arms, quietly

letting her emotions flow until she felt a bit lighter. She sniffled and looked up at him. "Is my makeup ruined?"

Lucas gazed at her for a moment, studying her face in silence.

Growing anxious, Aveline urged him, "Come on, tell me! If it's smudged, I need to fix it!"

"There's still the ceremony later!" Aveline reminded him, but before she could say more, Lucas leaned in without warning, capturing her lips in a tender kiss. His lips moved gently over hers, lingering in a soft, affectionate rhythm.

Aveline's breath hitched, her hands instinctively clutching the fabric of his suit, crumpling it slightly in her grip. After a long moment, Lucas pulled back, his voice husky as he whispered, "Now it's smudged."

Aveline glared at him playfully. "You...!"

This man had done it on purpose!

Lucas chuckled softly. "Ave, I haven't kissed or held you in three days. I've missed you. Don't you miss me too?"

His directness and open warmth made it impossible for her to stay upset.

With a huff, she replied, "I need to go back inside."

"Alright," Lucas said with a soft smile. "After the ceremony, I'll take you home for a proper rest."

Aveline didn't respond, just pushed open the door and stepped back inside.

Selena immediately teased her. "Well, did Mr. Tudor sweet-talk you back into a good mood?"

With her cheeks still flushed, Aveline walked over to the mirror to fix her lipstick.

Selena took one look at her and laughed. "Your lips are already so swollen. Maybe skip the lipstick."

Aveline muttered under her breath. "Lucas's fault."

Selena couldn't help but smile at her friend's flustered state. The playful banter between them lightened the mood in the room. With the final touches complete, the ceremony was ready to begin.

The classic wedding march filled the air, and the lights in the grand hall dimmed, leaving only the entrance illuminated.

The doors slowly opened, revealing Aaron standing tall in a sleek black suit, exuding elegance and refinement as he waited for his bride.

All eyes were on Aaron as he stood beneath the spotlight. The usual playfulness and laid-back demeanor were gone, replaced by a look of seriousness and sincerity. He walked with purpose, step by step, to the center of the stage. In the front row sat Aaron's parents. Though they weren't entirely pleased with their son's choice of bride, seeing this formal and committed side of him brought a sense of pride and contentment.

Behind them, Aaron's friends were seated. Lucas and Lance sat together, and Lance leaned over, saying, "Did you notice his hands shaking from the nerves?"

Lucas smirked. "And you're not recording it to use against him later?"

"Great idea." Lance, clearly amused, pulled out his phone and began recording Aaron's trembling fingers.

Yes, this would give him something to tease Aaron about for years to come.

Onstage, the officiant was delivering solemn words of congratulations, and the music began to shift. Aaron turned toward the entrance just as the doors opened, revealing Selena in a stunning wedding gown.

By her side was Gavin, standing in as her older brother, fulfilling his role as the family's representative as he walked her down the aisle.

Selena, arm linked with Gavin's, gazed through her veil at Aaron, her face lit up with pure happiness.

Following the officiant's instructions, they stopped in the middle of the aisle, not yet reaching Aaron. This was part of the ceremony-the symbolic exchange. Aaron approached them, ready to receive her.

As part of the formal handover, Gavin would give Selena's hand to Aaron, marking the start of their new life as one.

Aaron leaned forward slightly, extending his hand.

But Gavin hesitated.

Selena paused, confused, glancing up at Gavin.

Gavin's eyes were fixed on her hand, noticing how bare her ring finger was. If he wanted to, he could turn around and walk her out of here, away from it all. But no-he knew that wasn't an option anymore. She was already married, after all. This ceremony was just a formality.

Yet, for a brief moment, that thought lingered.

It was all in vain.

Aaron spoke up, his voice steady and clear. "Don't worry, brother. I'll spend my life proving that I love Selena."

As he said this, his gaze was unwavering, full of determination.

Gavin lifted his eyes, locking them with Aaron's. "You better follow through. If you don't, I won't hesitate to make sure there's no place for the Fletcher family in Cloudflare City."

His words were calm, but those nearby heard them loud and clear, sending a wave of shock through the crowd. No one had realized that Selena had such powerful backing. With the Cooper family standing behind her, who would dare look down on her now?

And by the look in Gavin's eyes, it was clear-he meant every word.

Aaron tightened his grip on Selena's hand. "That will never happen. I promise you that."

Selena, overwhelmed with emotion, felt her heart swell. She had always thought that Gavin had come as a favor to Aveline, but now she realized that both Gavin and Gernard truly saw her as their sister

Tears welled up in her eyes. She had a family now, too.

The ceremony continued with loving glances, the exchange of rings, and a tender kiss to seal their vows. Everything was perfect.

As the reception began, it was time for the newlyweds to toast their guests, accompanied by the bridesmaid and best man.

Maria approached, holding a bottle of champagne, but she paused when she noticed who was holding the tray next to her. It was Sidney. Her surprise was brief, quickly replaced by a calm smile.

"How did he end up as the best man?" she wondered but kept her thoughts to herself.

Chapter 965

Sidney, dressed in a perfectly tailored suit, approached Maria, his gaze lingering on her, soaking in every detail. Over the past few months, her life had been nothing short of adventurous.

own.

She had traveled to the far north to witness breathtaking auroras, posed with penguins in a remote southern continent, ventured deep into the wilds of an African savannah to observe a massive wildlife migration, and even scaled one of the world's tallest peaks on her

It was as though she had embraced her true self, living life to the fullest. Every time she posted on social media, you could feel the sense of freedom radiating from her. And now, after such a long time, he was finally seeing her again.

Today, she looked elegant in a classic white gown, dignified and graceful, holding a wine bottle in her hands, smiling at him.

"I..."

Sidney began, wanting to say something, but the toasting ceremony was about to start, leaving no room for them to talk.

He leaned in closer, speaking quietly as he moved beside her. "Don't leave later, okay?"

Maria said nothing, focusing on pouring the wine into the glasses. Together, they moved from table to table, with Maria pouring and Sidney holding the tray. By the time they finished, forty minutes had passed.

At the head table, seats were reserved for Aaron and Selena.

Joining them were Aaron's parents, Lucas and Aveline, and Lance-filling the table perfectly.

Selena, now in her formal toasting dress, sat down and let out a small sigh of relief. "Finally, I can sit down and eat something."

Aaron's mother, sitting nearby, placed some food on her plate. "You're looking too thin lately. Have you not been eating properly to stay in shape?"

Surprised by the gesture, Selena smiled. "Thank you, Mom. I'll make sure to eat more."

Catching Aveline's eye, Selena quickly realized the change in Aaron's mother's attitude-it was because of Aveline and the Cooper family. Before this, Aaron's mother would never have even acknowledged her, let alone serve her food. For a moment, Selena didn't know how to respond, but she didn't let it bother her. She happily ate and enjoyed the meal.

Later in the afternoon, it was time for the traditional post-wedding games.

The newlyweds' home was a beachfront villa Aaron had recently purchased and decorated to

Selena's tastes. When they arrived at the villa, the atmosphere was brimming with excitement, with bright red decorations filling the house.

Selena wandered around the living room, taking in the festive décor before turning to the group that had followed her inside.

"Can we skip the whole wedding prank thing? I'm exhausted today, and all I want is a proper rest. What do you think?" Selena pleaded. Lucas raised an eyebrow. "What do you think?"

Hearing that, Selena immediately

knew he was planning to mess with her. She quickly moved over to

Aveline, Koping her arm through et

hers. "You can't pull any pranks tonight! Aveline's baby is watching, and you all need to set a good example!"

Lucas paused for a moment, slightly thrown off.

Aveline smiled, lips pressed together to stifle a laugh. "You guys can do whatever you want. I'm not getting involved," she said, knowing full well she wouldn't be participating in any pranks in her current condition.

Besides, the crowd wasn't as big as earlier during the wedding festivities. Even if they wanted to play around there weren't enough people to really make it happen. Aaron had specifically ordered the younger members of the Fletcher family to stay away, given how unfriendly they'd been toward Selena in the past.

Aaron wrapped his arm around Selena's waist and said with a smirk, "No wedding pranks, but we're definitely not skipping the wedding night. Everyone, feel free to leave." Selena, cheeks flushing, elbowed him gently, her rare shyness showing through.

Maria chimed in at that moment, "How about we throw a wild newlywed party instead?"

Selena's eyes lit up instantly. "Now that sounds perfect!"

It just so happened that the villa had a pool, and all the decorations were already in place. All they needed was to invite everyone, and the party could begin!

Chapter 966

One call from Aaron, and in no time, the rest of their friends had arrived. Though it was late, the atmosphere quickly became lively, and naturally, party games were on the agenda. Aveline glanced at the pool, looking eager to dive in.

But Lucas, holding her hand, immediately stopped her. "Don't even think about it. You can't swim right now."

While swimming was fine earlier in her pregnancy, things had progressed. With twins on the way, the risk was too high, and Lucas wasn't about to let her take any chances. Aveline sighed, her expression falling slightly. "Alright."

Seeing her disappointment, Lucas couldn't bear it. He kissed her forehead and asked, "How about some strawberries?"

Aveline adored strawberries, and ever since she got pregnant, her craving for them had only intensified.

"Yes, please." she nodded with a smile.

Lucas brought over a plate of fresh strawberries, feeding her one after another with care.

Meanwhile, the others had set up a game of Truth or Dare-a classic that never failed to get the party going.

Aveline, watching the group, hesitated for a moment before raising her hand shyly. "Can I join?"

Selena glanced at her and suggested, "You can join, but if you land on a dare, how about Lucas does it for you?"

Aveline turned to Lucas, her eyes sparkling with hope. "What do you think?"

Seeing her so happy, Lucas gave in, smiling warmly. "Alright."

His tone was full of affection, and his eyes glowed with love.

The group sat in a circle, the lighting casting a cozy glow over them, as the energy in the room began to build. The bottle spun on the table, and everyone watched closely to see who would be chosen next. As it slowed, the bottle stopped, pointing directly at Selena.

Maria, acting as the host, held a small notepad and asked with a grin, "Truth or dare?"

Selena straightened her back and declared, "Truth!"

She wasn't afraid of anything!

Maria flipped open her notepad, then asked with a grin, "So, does kissing your partner feel good?"

"Whoa!" The group erupted into cheers, not expecting such a bold question right off the bat.

Selena smiled slightly, completely unfazed. "It feels amazing!"

Maria placed the notepad back on the table, joining the game as Selena took over as host. The bottle

continued to spin, and when it finally slowed, it stopped directly in front of Aaron.

Selena raised an eyebrow at her husband, "Truth or dare?"

Aaron smirked. "Dare."

After all, the thrill of this game was in the dares!

Everyone's excitement grew.

Selena flipped open the notepad again, glancing down at the next challenge before smiling mischievously. "Open a bottle using your abs!"

The group burst into laughter, already teasing him. "Aaron, do you even have abs?"

"He's probably too busy running the company to hit the gym, right?" they joked.

All eyes were on Aaron, but he didn't seem the least bit bothered.

Casually, he began unbuttoning his shirt. His demeanor was relaxed, grabbing a water bottle while pulling up the hem of his shirt to reveal perfectly sculpted abs.

"Whoa!"

His toned muscles were on full display as he bent slightly, tensing up. The water bottle cap popped

right off after a few rolls along his

"Way to go, dear!" Selena said with a grin, leaning in to give him a kiss, shamelessly flaunting their affection.

Aaron took a long drink, his Adam's apple moving in a way that made the scene even more enticing.

The bottle spun again, and this time, it landed on Aveline.

Aveline, in the middle of enjoying her strawberries, blinked and said, "Dare."

Selena immediately winked at her, knowing her best friend all too well. "Knew you'd pick that!"

Chapter 967

Aveline smiled sweetly, her eyes sparkling.

Lucas, on the other hand, shot her a long, meaningful glance, clearly aware of what was going on.

She wasn't even looking at him, which made it all too obvious what she had in mind.

Alright, then.

He loosened his tie slightly and glanced over at Aaron. "So, what's the dare?"

Aaron, flipping through the notepad with a knowing smirk, caught on immediately. It was clear Selena and Aveline had teamed up to mess with Lucas.

As Aaron scanned the page, he let out a soft chuckle. "Well, looks like fate's on your side, buddy."

He continued, "Kiss the person next to you for one minute."

Aveline's face turned pink instantly, while Selena's excitement deflated as she realized the dare wasn't quite what she had hoped for.

She glared at Aaron and pinched his side. "You didn't rig this, did you?"

Aaron quickly raised his hands defensively. "Hey, I swear I didn't! I haven't even seen this notepad until now."

Selena sighed in defeat.

Lucas' lips curled into a small smile as he turned to Aveline. "I think we can modify that. How about just a kiss instead of the full minute? My wife is pregnant, after all. She shouldn't be overexerted." Aveline's cheeks reddened further, and her shy smile made her look even more radiant. Lucas leaned in and pressed a gentle kiss to her lips, then whispered teasingly in her ear, "Be good, okay?" She pretended not to hear him, her face flushed with warmth.

Now it was Aveline's turn to take over as host. The bottle spun again, and when it finally slowed down, it pointed directly at Gavin.

Throughout the night, Gavin had maintained his usual cool demeanor, as if he wasn't particularly interested in the game. Yet, he had still agreed to participate.

Aveline looked at him with a smile and asked, "Brother, truth or dare?"

Gavin remained calm. "Truth."

Aveline nodded, flipping through the notepad before raising her brow at the question. "When was the last time your heart skipped a beat?"

Gernard's face lit up with a knowing smile, while Gavin remained as stoic as ever. "Today," he answered calmly.

The moment he saw Selena in her wedding dress, his heart had skipped a beat. He wasn't lying.

"Whoa!" Selena, oblivious to the deeper meaning, immediately

"Who is it? Do I know them? Need to play matchmaker?"

3 her face full of curiosity.

"It's none of your business," Gavin replied, his tone as cool as ever.

Selena pouted, unimpressed with his cold response. "Alright, let's keep the game going."

Gavin spun the bottle, and this time, it landed on Sidney.

"I'll take a dare," Sidney said without hesitation.

Gavin casually flipped open the notepad and read out the task, "Confess your love to one of the women here."

Both Aveline and Selena exchanged

excited glances, their faces lighting up with anticipation. This was, exactly the kind of dare they were hoping for.

Sidney raised an eyebrow but didn't shy away. Without missing a beat, he turned his gaze toward Maria. "Maria, I like you."

"Whoa!" gasped a few guests who hadn't been expecting that turn of events.

Desmond and Baron wasted no time, jumping in with grins and shouting, "You two should just get together already!"

Maria, holding her wine glass, smiled calmly and replied, "You two need to behave, or else."

Desmond laughed. "Come on, Maria. It's Aaron's big day-no need for violence."

With the playful banter in the air, Sidney kept his eyes on Maria, but she remained relaxed and unfazed, quickly saying, "Let's move on."

The bottle spun again, and this time, it pointed directly at Maria.

Chapter 968

Sidney spun the bottle, and it landed squarely on Maria.

Uh-oh...

Selena and Aveline exchanged amused glances, both with knowing smiles, anticipating what was to come.

Maria, however, remained calm, her expression unfazed.

"Dare," she said coolly.

Sidney casually took the notepad, flipping through it until he found a task. With a smirk, he read aloud, "Share a glass of wine with one of the men here, arm-in-arm." Selena immediately wrapped her arm around Aaron.

"Tonight's our wedding night-he's only sharing a drink with me!" she declared with a playful grin.

Aveline chimed in, "Lucas isn't drinking tonight."

Gernard, sensing something off in the atmosphere, added, "I'm allergic to alcohol."

Gavin stayed silent, his aloof demeanor enough to keep anyone from approaching.

Desmond, ever the joker, raised his hand quickly. "My tolerance is terrible. I'm saving myself for the punishment round. Maria, please show mercy!"

Baron eagerly nodded along, agreeing with him.

Braden hesitated for a moment, glancing over at Maria. "I..."

Baron cut him off, placing a hand on his shoulder. "What do you mean, 'I'? You're driving us home later, remember?"

Braden fell silent, resigning himself to his fate.

Now, it came down to Lance and Sidney.

Maria's gaze flickered between the two for a moment before she settled on Lance. "Doctor, would you care to share a drink with me?"

"It would be my pleasure," Lance replied smoothly, picking up his glass without hesitation.

The two shared the drink without any lingering tension-quick and simple, with none of the expected awkwardness. Still, the air seemed to shift as Sidney gripped the notepad tightly, the veins on his hand becoming more prominent. Selena and Aveline exchanged yet another look, both surprised by the turn of events. They had assumed Sidney would be the one sharing the drink with Maria.

Lance, on the other hand, remained

perfectly composed, though the

subtle hint of amusement in his eyes showed he had noticed the tension.

If anything, it seemed like he had disrupted things on purpose, stirring the pot with an easy, unaffected smile.

"Let's keep it going!" Maria said brightly as she picked up the bottle, deliberately avoiding Sidney's disappointed gaze. She gave the bottle a spin.

It slowed and finally stopped in front of Desmond.

Maria smiled sweetly at him. "I picked a dare, so how about you do the same?"

Desmond sighed dramatically. "Fine, dare it is!"

Maria opened the notepad and read with a raised brow, "Princess-carry someone of the opposite sex and do fifty squats."

She gave him a quick once-over, smiling playfully. "Think you can handle it?"

Desmond groaned at the challenge but quickly stood up, taking off his jacket as if to prove a point. He glanced toward one of the maids nearby. "Can I borrow you for this?" The maid nodded, a bit shy but willing.

Desmond scooped her up in a

princess carry and began the squats. He managed to keep up a steady pace, but by the time he

finished fifty squats, beads of sweat

were visible on his forehead

When he finally set the maid down, Desmond collapsed back into his seat, breathing heavily. "I'm convinced you're out to get me."

Maria laughed. "Hey, it's all in the spirit of fun! I didn't make the rules-pure luck."

Taking a long drink of water, Desmond caught his breath and spun the bottle for the next round.

As the game continued, the group's energy rose to its peak.

Laughter filled the air, and the atmosphere was electric.

After several rounds, Sidney quietly got up and walked away from the group. He moved toward the pool, his gaze fixed on the shimmering water, a look of undeniable sadness flickering in his eyes.

He stood there silently for a moment, then downed his entire glass of wine in one go.

Aveline, noticing him by the pool, approached him quietly.

"What's going on?" she asked, her voice soft yet concerned.

Chapter 969

Sidney turned his head, his gaze landing on Aveline. The moonlight fell softly on her, casting a gentle, ethereal glow over her figure, especially her rounded belly. She looked radiant as if wrapped in a halo of quiet serenity. Her eyes, full of warmth and calm, met his. For some reason, the restless frustration Sidney had been carrying all evening seemed to ease. He let out a small, bitter smile. "Aveline, how have you been lately?"

She nodded, offering a simple, "Pretty good."

Sidney sighed. "I wish I could say the same. I've realized something important about myself, but things weren't so clear in the beginning. Now I'm stuck-unsure how to move forward."

Aveline took a moment to process his words, her expression thoughtful.

"Then show your sincerity," she finally said. "It takes time, but others will see your true feelings if you're genuine. Be patient."

Sidney nodded, appreciating her advice. "You're right."

He smiled again, though this time it held a bit more warmth. "Seeing you so happy now... I'm really glad for you."

Aveline smiled softly. "We'll all find happiness in the end."

As Aveline left, Sidney lingered for a moment by the pool, watching her retreating figure.

From a distance, Maria observed them, her fingers lightly resting on the rim of her wine glass, though she hadn't taken a sip. She looked pensive, lost in thought.

It wasn't long before Aveline walked back inside, and Sidney turned, only to notice Maria standing alone not far away. Her elegant dress hugged her frame, highlighting her graceful posture as she casually studied her glass, lost in her own world. Sidney hesitated for a second, then walked over to her.

"Done playing for the night?" he asked when he reached her.

Maria glanced up briefly, then nodded. "Yeah, I'm tired. I was thinking of heading out soon."

"Let me give you a ride," Sidney offered.

Maria shook her head lightly. "We've both had drinks. I've already called for a driver."

Sidney didn't miss a beat. "In that case, mind giving me a lift too?"

Maria looked at him, mildly

surprised. The night air was filled with the distant hum of insects and the soft ripple of water from the pool. His eyes, steady and intent, focused on her, catching the glow of

the nearby lights.

A gentle breeze stirred the warmth of the evening, softening the edges of the moment. His gaze, usually guarded, seemed to hold a hint of something softer, something she hadn't noticed before.

Maria felt her pulse quicken, and for

a second, she wondered if it was the wine making her see things

differently. Or maybe... she really et

had noticed something different about Sidney tonight. His eye's never seemed so captivating before.

Maria set her glass down, a playful smile curving her lips. "Alright, but you're paying for the ride."

"Deal," Sidney agreed without hesitation, a grin spreading across his face. "Whatever you want, just name it."

Maria turned on her heel, throwing over her shoulder, "I'll let you know when I figure it out."

Sidney followed her naturally, his steps falling in line with hers as they left the beachfront villa together.

Meanwhile, across the room, Selena, who had had more than a few drinks, caught sight of them leaving. She immediately grabbed Aaron's arm, her eyes wide with excitement. "Did you see that? They just left together! They're totally going to end up together."

Aaron wrapped an arm around her waist, steadying her as she swayed slightly. "Selena, you've had too much. Let's get you back to the room to rest, okay?" "I'm not drunk!" Selena insisted, waving him off dramatically. "Tonight is a night for celebrating! No stopping until the sun comes up!"

Lucas glanced at his watch before gently taking Aveline's hand. "It's getting late. Let's head home."

Desmond, Baron, and Braden also rose, signaling the end of the night for them as well. They gathered their things, saying their goodbyes. Gernard clapped his hands together and grinned. "Ah, nothing like a wedding night. Great times ahead for you two. We'll leave you to it." Turning to Gavin, he added, "Ready to head out, brother?"

Gavin didn't say a word, but stood up and followed, leaving without looking back.

Chapter 970

As the guests trickled out of the beachfront villa, Selena glanced around the now-empty courtyard, her eyes widening slightly. "Hey, where did everyone go?"

She was a little tipsy, her cheeks flushed with a soft pink hue, her gaze hazy and slightly unfocused, adding an extra layer of allure to her already beautiful features.

Aaron gently took the wine glass from her hand, setting it aside before scooping her up in his arms. He started toward the upstairs bedroom, holding her close as her body relaxed into his.

"You haven't even seen your new room yet. Let's go take a look," he murmured.

Selena's limbs went limp, her arms draping lazily around his neck as she leaned into him, her voice soft and dreamy. "New room... what does it look like?"

Aaron smiled, amused by her dazed innocence. "You'll find out soon enough."

Their master bedroom was on the second floor, the largest in the villa, with elegant double doors leading into the suite. Inside was a cozy sitting area, complete with a sofa, cabinets, and a TV. As they walked further in, a round bed adorned with luxurious red bedding came into view, surrounded by soft, flowing drapes.

Aaron gently laid Selena down on the bed but didn't pull away.

Instead, he hovered over her, his eyes darkening as he took in her flushed face.

"Selena, you're my wife now."

Her foggy mind slowly processed his words, and she blinked up at him, her hands reaching to cup his face. A sweet smile spread across her lips as she whispered, "Husband."

At that moment, Aaron's restraint snapped. He leaned down, capturing her lips in a deep, hungry kiss, as if he'd been parched for days and had finally found water.

Selena gasped, her breath catching as the intensity of the kiss left her dizzy. "Slow down..."

Her words came out in between ragged breaths, her small fists weakly pushing against his shoulders.

Aaron's voice was thick and gravelly as he chuckled. "You like it slower, huh?"

Her eyelids fluttered, and she mumbled, "I... I can't breathe..."

Aaron laughed softly, then lifted her into his arms again, his voice low as he teased, "Alright, we'll take it slow."

With that, he carried her into the bathroom.

The servant had already filled the bathtub with warm water, and Aaron stepped in, still holding Selena tightly against him. "We're going to drown!" Selena gasped, clinging to him as if for dear life, her body instinctively wrapping around his.

Her soft form pressed against his, and the sensation stirred something deep within him. The water rippled around them as, one by one, their clothes were discarded, tossed carelessly out of the tub until they were both laid bare.

With the water's warmth enveloping them, everything moved smoothly, naturally-but Aaron wasn't in a rush. His hands gripped her waist, moving at an agonizingly slow pace, teasing and tormenting. Selena whimpered, her frustration evident as she bit down on his shoulder, her voice muffled as she pleaded, "Faster, please..."

Aaron's breath hitched. He kissed her gently on the ear, murmuring in a low, teasing voice, "Do you want it faster... or slower?" "Faster..." she whimpered again.

As soon as the words left her mouth, the water surged violently, splashing over the edges as their movements intensified. Selena could barely keep up, her body trembling from the intensity.

Just when she thought she couldn't

take any more, Aaron, sensing her need to cry out, kissed her again—this time silencing any words she might have spoken. Their kiss deepened, and in that heated, intimate moment, their wedding night reached its perfect conclusion.

The night outside was calm and dark, the sky a blanket of stars.

In the car, Maria leaned against the window, letting the cool breeze wash over her face, slowly clearing away the remnants of her drunken haze. Beside her, Sidney sat quietly. He unscrewed the cap from a bottle of water and handed it to her without a word.