

Ashley texted me on a Monday at 8 AM. I was still in bed, caught in the mundane mood only a “work from home” morning could bring. But her text sparked a sliver of excitement.

**“Can you talk?”**

The blue message on my screen made me curious. Eager.

I told her yes and waited for her call.

Instead, she replied, **“I’m on my way.”**

I jumped out of bed, quickly straightening my apartment. I fluffed the pillows on my couch, wondering what could make her drive from East to West Baltimore. But my womanly instincts told me it was about her relationship.

Thirty-five minutes later, Ashley sat on my couch.

I perched on the loveseat across from her, sensing her hesitation.

**“It’s hard for me to say this,”** she said with a nervous laugh.

I laughed, too, unsure why. Maybe to break the tension.

**“I’m laughing because I already cried,”** she said, her smile fading.

She covered her face with her hands, like a child playing peek-a-boo. Then, finally, she exhaled the words:

**“I found gay porn in Shawn’s phone.”**

Her confession dropped into the living room like a heavy weight, landing squarely on the coffee table between us. She wanted me to pick it up, to share the burden, but I let it sit there. Her words hung in the air, floating around the room - dense and unresolved.

**“I think it’s more common than we realize,”** I said, tiptoeing around the truth of what I meant.

Ashley and I had spent countless hours talking about love, about the men we’d marry and the children we’d have. We had also shared our own secret pasts about our own encounters with women. But to Ashley, Shawn’s desires felt like betrayal.

**“I can’t be with a gay man,”** she said firmly. **“That’s always been my fear.”**

**“Yes, I understand. And he may act on his desires,”** I told her. I didn’t encourage her to stay.

When she left my apartment, her words didn’t. They stayed in my living room, followed me around my apartment, tugged at the corners of my mind.

I remembered high school afternoons, sneaking to watch lesbian porn. I remembered the spark of excitement I felt when I saw late-night “Girls Gone Wild” commercials.

Still, I liked boys. You could even call me boy-crazy. Yet, there was always that pull—a curious tug toward women.

In college, I stopped resisting. I met Shanell, and we dated for a few months. But there was always a guy who eventually stole my attention, pulling me back to what felt more natural, more aligned with my dreams of a husband and children.

My attraction to women was real but not overwhelming. My desire for family was stronger.

Two years after that morning in my apartment, Ashley married a new man she met online. They had a baby boy.

I couldn’t help but wonder: **Is she happy?**

Was marriage a milestone she checked off her success list? Or was it something deeper, something true?

Her life made me reflect on my own.

**Is this what I want?**

The answer stayed the same: **Yes.**

But I wanted clarity. I didn’t want to break someone’s heart, the way Shawn broke Ashley’s—or the way he seemed to break his own, caught between desires he couldn’t reconcile. I felt sorry for him. The woman he loved left him.

Although I understood, and could even relate to him, it was still complicated.

It was as complicated as sexuality can be. For some, it's a bright, clear path. For others, it's a twists and turns through longing, fear, and self-discovery.

Over the years, I've learned that choosing doesn't mean erasing. It means embracing the fullness of who we are while moving toward what we want most.

And I choose love. It is my choice. My decision. To love a man. To build a family. To honor the complexity of desire while embracing the stability of commitment.

Although some paths aren't clear, I've chosen mine. Not because it's simple, but because it's mine to choose.