

This was a chapter I thought about including after Stephanie ran into James in Atlanta and then went to see Ryan in New York. I wanted to give her a friend or another woman to confide in but I didn't want to add yet another character to the book. Not to mention, I didn't know where else I could fit her in to the story, so I didn't want to mention her once and then never again.

I'd confided in my cousin, Sheila to gain some clarity over the situation.

"Hold up! You did what?" she shrieked.

Her noisy reaction made me glad we'd decided to stay in and make margaritas and tacos at her apartment instead of going out.

I groaned and buried my face in my hands.

"I know, I know. I'm a ho."

"Girl, please! Men do that shit all the time. You are not a ho!" Sheila scoffed. "Maybe a freak, but definitely not a ho." She cackled.

"Sheila it's not funny! What am I going to do?" I asked pulling my bare feet up higher on her couch.

"If it were me, I'd definitely pick Ryan. From those pictures, I can tell he's fine, plus he's rich, and handles business. Okay! You told him about your dad and he gives you a check that you didn't even have to ask for."

She was right. Ryan was *very* generous. But this wasn't about picking James over Ryan.

"It's not a competition. I'm not trying to pick one over the other." I said strongly. But if I did have to make a choice, it would be James. Even though I hadn't heard from him since Spring Break.

"Damn right it's not a competition! James is broke and trippin'. I mean I know the dick was better—"

"Sheila!" I gasped. Although wasn't a lie.

“Hey, I’m just going by how glazed over your eyes were when you were telling the story.”  
She giggled.

Being an only child was hard sometimes, but Sheila was like a sister to me. Her mother and my father were siblings and we grew up together. She’s the only person I felt I could confide in and would give it to me straight, no chaser.

“Whatever. James is a non-factor.” I said sadly.

“Exactly! Look, I’m going to tell you like my mama told me: want who wants you. Period, the end. Ryan ain’t doing all this calling and visiting for nothing. Open your eyes!”