

Case 14

Tony, Claire, and Beth were the best of friends through high school. Tony and Beth attended the same college and began dating each other in their sophomore year. After graduation they announced their engagement and Beth asked Claire to be her maid of honor. About six months before the wedding, Beth's mother became ill. Since Beth was unemployed, her father asked her if she could stay home and take care of her mother. Because her mother needed her constantly, Beth found little time to spend with Tony. Although Tony became quite lonely, he was very understanding and tried to be as supportive as he could.

Two months passed and Beth's mother's condition worsened. Given the circumstance, Claire offered to help Beth to call off the wedding. However Beth explained that the wedding was now even more important to her mother than it was before and that she had no intention of calling it off. Claire understood and continued to be a supportive friend both to Beth and Tony. Knowing Beth's fragile emotional condition and Tony's feelings of loneliness, Claire made a point of spending time with both of them.

One evening Claire met Tony for dinner, and noticed while dining that he was very quiet. She asked him if there was something bothering him, other than the obvious circumstance with Beth and her mother. Tony paused for a moment and asked Claire if she could keep a secret. Claire warmly assured Tony that he could tell her anything. He proceeded to confess that he had had a brief affair shortly after Beth's mother became ill. After his confession, Tony told Claire how grateful he was to have gotten all of that off his chest and thanked Claire for being such a good friend. Still, Claire was speechless.

The following week, Beth called Claire and asked her to help her pick out a restaurant for the rehearsal dinner. Beth and Claire spent the afternoon driving around visiting restaurants. In the car Beth mentioned that she thought that Tony seemed a little preoccupied for the past month, but also added that the last few times they were together he seemed like his old self again. She then asked Claire for her opinion about whether "something was going on with Tony".