# Cross My Heart and Hope To Die

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Friday

A change of plan

'Hi, it's me.' Kath reached Miranda on her mobile. 'Where are you? Can you talk?'

'Yup. I'm on my way to the station and I'm late - astonishingly - but, yes, fire away.' Miranda marched along the street at a cracking pace, parting pedestrians before her like Moses at the Red Sea.

'Now, don't go ballistic, but there's a small problem about Devon-'

'Oh, no! Kath - don't you dare tell me it's all off - you have no idea how desperate I am to get away - the shop's been so busy - half my staff have been off with flu - and my new collection's way behind schedule - and Anna's been looking forward to this for weeks and weeks - we can't let her down now - and in any case I've booked the painter to come and do our bedroom so we have no choice but to clear out - and - hang on, hang on, I have to get a ticket - where's my bloody change? God, I can't find anything in this stupid bag.' Miranda lowered her voice without pausing for breath. 'And Simon's driving me up the fucking wall at the moment, I don't know what's up with him, he's being impossible - at least in Devon I can have long walks by the sea and escape him for a couple of hours - please, please don't say we can't go - I really-'

'Miranda!'

'I promise you I will really lose it if I spend one more minute in London-' Miranda ran down the stairs to move away from a pungent drunk who was leering at her.

'Manda, will you please shut up for a second! Calm down, will you?'

'I'm completely calm-'

'Will you just let me tell you?'

'Sorry. I'll shut up.'

'Right. Devon is on. Definitely on, so you can stop panicking for a start.'

'Thank God for that - I'm so shattered - nothing could stop me going - I don't care if it's been cut off by floods or foot and mouth - I-'

'Manda!'

'OK, OK! I really am shutting up now. Hurry, hurry, there's a train coming.'

'There's just been a slight change in the line-up, that's all. It barely affects you, but it's not so hot for Anna because Sara won't be coming now. The Frasers have had to pull out because Gina's dad has suddenly got a lot, lot worse and-'

'Oh, no - he hasn't? How awful! Poor her. Still - I'm not all that keen on her husband anyway. As long as you're not cancelling.'

'I'm not. So, anyway, the thing is, we asked Rob instead to - to - make up the numbers, so now he's coming, only he's bringing his girlfriend too, which wasn't part of the plan, because I thought he'd chucked her, well, he had, but then they got back together again, you know how hopeless he is, he can't make up his mind, well . . . anyway . . . so - oh, and my Dad's just broken his arm and can't look after himself properly . . . so . . . and this really wasn't my idea, believe me, but Rob thought . . . maybe . . . well, actually, Rob's already asked him and it's a bit awkward because we can't un-ask him now, can we? Besides, we could hardly leave him on his own with his arm in a sling, and the only alternative was for me to stay behind and play nurse and Joe wouldn't