

Rake walked slowly to her side and pulled out the book she had just placed on the shelf. "Promise me you won't go to Gretna Green with Thomas or any other man."

"You can't ask me to promise you that. I don't know what lies in my future, and such a promise is impossible to make."

"Then promise me you won't go to Gretna Green without telling me, so I have a chance to stop you."

She laughed outright. He was hilariously outrageous sometimes, this Lord Richard Darling.

"You want me to tell you if I'm about to elope, so you can stop me?"

"Yes. I want you to promise to inform me beforehand, so I have a chance to interfere."

"If I ever do elope, my reputation would be destroyed immediately, and the only thing to save me then would be a marriage. Do you really think I would then want you to interfere and make sure a marriage never takes place?"

"I might marry you myself, to save you."

She laughed again. "Then I promise to never elope to Gretna Green, if only to save you from a fate worse than death—marriage."

Rake chuckled as he ambled toward the door. "With the right woman, marriage would not be a complete waste."