

**Salisbury Festival Story**  
**By**  
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If anyone had predicted it would happen, I wouldn't have believed it. Even if it had been written on the stars, laid bare in the cards, or etched into the fate line on my hand, I would have dismissed it as superstitious nonsense.

Here's what happened.

It had been a fantastic summer. In late July, for the first time in the two years we have been together, we leave our respective children and go on holiday. Just the two of us, and we are dizzy with the freedom of it.

We arrive in Salcombe, trailing our dinghy, and are unexpectedly delighted with everything. The apartment is on the top floor of a splendid Victorian house. We have our own mooring and the bedroom window looks out onto the estuary. We can lie in bed and watch boats coming and going. Heaven.

However, the British summer is true to form, and the rain begins within an hour of our arrival.

"It's ok", we say, 'we can still have a good time", and we do. We relish the lazy days stretching ahead. No children to marshal, no plans to be made. We slip into a comfortable routine. We get up late, we read our books and browse the papers.

The rain gets progressively worse. Sailing becomes out of the question. We wander around the town, take long lunches and retreat to our eyrie. At one point he says it is like our honeymoon and, what with the weather, and the fact that we are falling more deeply in love, we spend a lot of time making our own entertainment, if you get my meaning.

The week drifts by and all too soon we are heading home. We have five children between us and they require a lot of managing. Who is home for supper? Who needs a lift? Who needs picking up? Who has a friend staying? Our days are filled with the comings and goings of teenage life.

Then September arrives and my period doesn't. A wet Tuesday afternoon finds me in a chemist, nonchalantly browsing pregnancy-testing kits. Last time I was pregnant, you went to the doctor and phoned two days later for the results. Now you can buy kits that are accurate from the day your period is due. I have no idea which one to choose.

I am conscious of the staff looking at me and imagine they are thinking I have a wayward teenage daughter. I feel very, very old. I am 41 – far too old to be furtively checking out pregnancy testing kits.

Eventually, I buy the most expensive one and practically run back to the car. When I get back, we decide to take the test straight away. It is the kind where you have to wait two minutes for the results.

Those two minutes feel like a lifetime. Then there it is – the thin pink line. Definitely pregnant. I send him off to get another kit. I take the test again and again over the next hour, always with the same result – definitely pregnant.

We are shocked beyond belief. We are stunned into silence. There is so much to say we don't know how to start.

Everything about having a baby at this stage in our lives feels wrong, yet here we are with a child we made together and a huge decision to make. I can only think of the sleepless nights, the lack of freedom, the never having a week away together again. I am frozen with fear.

That rainy day in September 2005 changed my life forever.

We have just celebrated our beautiful son's fourth birthday. I couldn't imagine then how much I would love him. Now, my heart bursts with it. I might have lost the possibility of childfree holiday, but I have gained something so much better.