# Eighty-eight

*by* T. M. Upchurch

“I like yellow and I want to live ‘til I'm eighty-eight.”

“Is yellow your favourite colour?”

“Yes.”

“Mine's pink, and I want to live ‘til I'm eighty-eight, too.”

“You can't pick the same age as me.”

“Why not?”

“OK, you can.”

But Susie moved house, so they didn't live to eighty-eight together.

“I'm going to live ‘til I'm eighty-eight…” She felt daft. “Like Gran.”

He heard and as she babbled on about her first kiss and Auntie Jean being Dad's real mum, she realised that things you can't prove can be more intimate than the things you know to be true.

He smiled, “I kissed a bloke once, on a school trip. And I'm going to live ‘til I'm eighty-eight, too.”

He was serious. She traced her fingertip around the contour of his lips and decided to marry him.

When he slept, and she was about to, she did the maths. Not every night. But on their honeymoon she figured they'd manage a silver wedding. When the girls were born, she guessed she'd be a granny, maybe great-granny. When he died, she counted seven years alone.

Eighty-seven was a busy year, getting ready. Eighty-eight a reflective one, bathed in nostalgia… her youth, their youth… and the reality of a new life: Great-granny after all. She gazed at her albums, mementos, certificates and certainties, and gave thanks for each and every one.

Finally, the day before her eighty-ninth birthday, she woke as curious, as alive, and as expectant as she had ever been.

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