

Falling in Love, Twice

By Susan Metcalf

Famed romance novelist Nicholas Sparks once wrote, ““There's no love like the first.” Thankfully, he is wrong.

Julie met her husband, Tom, in 1997. They lived in different states but knew they had something special. She adored him. They married a little over a year later and were blissfully happy. Three years later, however, when they were expecting their first child, they were hit with terrible, life-changing news. Tom was diagnosed with Melanoma – cancer. He died twelve days before their daughter was born.

Julie raised Bethany as a working single mom. Her life was good but without the man she'd loved. “I never thought I would find love again after my first husband died because he was so wonderful. I prayed for so long and I told God I was lonely. And then, God sent me another extraordinary person.” She met Tommy. It was love at first sight.

The Proposal

Tommy asked Julie if she'd like to go shopping in Asheville, North Carolina. Asheville is an eclectic, bohemian town in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Conveniently, it was just over the mountains from where they lived.

“I was all for that because I love to shop. I could tell he was nervous, though. We stopped by a scenic outlook that's in-between Johnson City and Asheville. He said he wanted to write our names on a rock where many other tourists had left their marks. I went back to the car to grab a Sharpe. I gave him the pen. I couldn't see what he was doing but when he said go ahead and look, I saw what he had written. ‘Tommy and Julie got engaged here on November 3, 2018.’ I read it and then turned around and saw him down on one knee. He asked me to marry him and I said yes!”

The Preparations

The preparations took Julie ten months because she wanted to do most of the décor herself. “Simple and elegant. That's the theme of the whole wedding. I think of myself as simple and elegant, so I wanted the decorations to reflect me.” She also wanted to use natural materials and elements that popped.

She created hanging flower balls on shepherd's hooks. She filled tall Pilsner vases with silk florals. Her accent colors were soft pink and muted blue, which matched the men's suits and her daughter's bridesmaid's dress.

The Venue

Originally, Julie chose another venue but when she learned of the renovations taking place at Cherokee Creek Farm, in Jonesborough, she changed her mind. Cherokee Creek Farm was a

community established two years before Tennessee's oldest town. Its commanding brick house and 200-year-old pecan tree took her back to a special place in time.

"You could feel a sense of history. When you look out the window, you can tell history lived there. You could see signatures from travelers who stopped there in the 1800s. The building still has the names of three or four people that arrived via train. The original owners opened their home to travelers and let them take respite there."

The Big Day

"We were nervous. The weather forecast was calling for a 60% chance of rain, but Mother Nature cooperated. It was a perfect day.

As for family, Tommy had his son and stepson by his side. Julie's daughter walked her down the aisle.

"When I left the house and turned the corner to see the ceremony site and I heard the music playing and then I saw Tommy standing there, I had to hold back my tears. I never thought I would get married again after putting my life on hold for so long.

"I love to reminisce about our beautiful day. And to think about Tommy, the second love of my life. I get misty-eyed.

"I believe if you just wait, God has someone picked out for you. He did for me."