



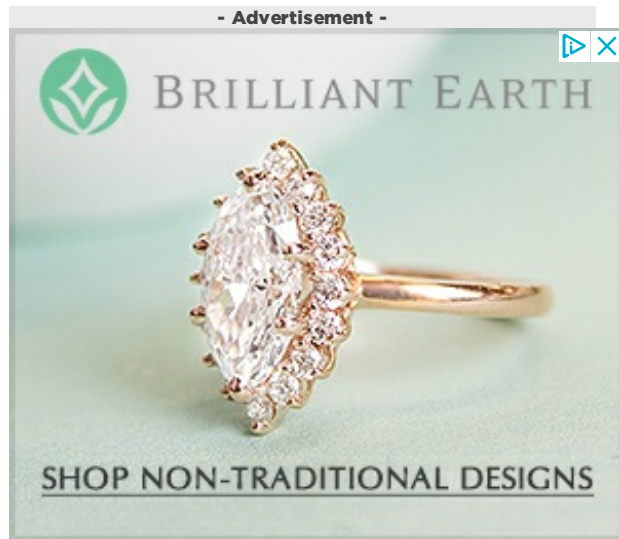
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FORT MYERS

‘It just felt like destiny’: Couple

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RECOMMENDED

SWFL teen blazing a trail as she heads off to marine boot camp

reconnects after Miami hospital stay

For Bianca De Sanctis and Ryan Veranich, their fairy tale relationship could have had a different ending.

Veranich, who was born at 26 weeks, caught pneumocystis pneumonia —a deadly lung infection— due to having a weakened immune system.

De Sanctis had to undergo emergency surgery to remove a tumor after doctors found a mass on her neck.

Both stayed in the same Intensive Care Unit of Miami Children's Hospital.

Melinda Lee/WINK

"They told both of our parents (to) 'plan your child's funeral, because this is it,'" Veranich said.

After completing treatment, De Sanctis and Veranich met via online dating decades later, and realized they were in the same hospital.

"That was one of those aha moments where if I had any doubts this was meant to be, now they are all but removed," Veranich said.

De Sanctis is a teacher at Lexington Middle School and Veranich works at Florida Gulf Coast University.

Both agreed fate played a role in the match.

"It just felt like destiny," De Sanctis said.

The couple returned to the beach where they had their first date for a photo shoot — or so she thought.

"We had taken like one or two pictures and then all of a sudden he takes my hand and gets down on his knees," De Sanctis said.

Melinda Lee/WINK

After she accepted his proposal, the happy couple can look forward to making future memories.

"We have a beautiful future together, and a beautiful wedding and a wonderful life to come," De Sanctis said.

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