Engagement: Lee Singletary and Nathan Bland

By **Brittany M. Wehner** - March 8, 2018 12:15 am

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Lee Singletary and Nathan Bland refer to their love story as a "21st-century romance." The two met online but when they connected in person, they knew it was meant to be.

"I literally knew the minute I met him, which sounds really weird, but we had an instant connection. I knew this was my person," Singletary said of his fiancé.

Singletary and Bland met in 2014. The men recalled their first date: casual drinks at a wine bar on 11th and Spruce streets.

"When we first met, I was like, 'Oh, I like this guy very much.' In that first date, our connection was just something I had never experienced before," Bland said.

Bland is a ballet dancer and owns a school in Pennsylvania. He moved from New York City months before meeting Singletary, who moved to Philadelphia in 2006. Singletary said he was instantly attracted to Bland's love for the arts.

"The way he spoke about his commitment to the arts and education was really attractive to me."

Their love story sparked and grew, and the two moved in together five months later.

Bland proposed to Singletary in 2016. While his original plan was to take him to Las Vegas for his birthday and propose at a Celine Dion concert, the plan changed: Instead, Bland hosted a dance-themed fake photo shoot with his photographer friend.

"[The photographer] was like, 'Lee, get in a few photos with Nathan.' Prior to that, he took some [photos] by himself while I was sneakily getting the ring in my back pocket," Bland explained.

When the time came during a partnered dance, Bland got down on one knee and pulled out the ring while Singletary was looking away. Bland laughed, recalling the magical day as he talked about the ring box being upside-down.

Singletary said he didn't see it coming.

"I literally had no idea. I'm pretty gullible already, but this was so not out of the norm to go to a photo shoot with a friend. We talked about getting engaged and even talked about going to a destination," he said.

"When we were there in the moment, the ring box was upside-down. I didn't see a ring and the photographer was feverishly clicking. You could hear the noise of the camera and everyone was staring. I was so confused and it dawned on me that [Bland] had been talking the whole time. I was not processing until I heard the words, 'Marry me.' I obviously said yes, but I was in shock," said Singletary.

The couple's wedding is scheduled for Oct. 5 in Lancaster. The event will bring in their family members from various states and countries.

Singletary and Bland traveled to Croatia, where Bland was once a soloist in a Croatian ballet, in September.

"He had roots there for over a year. There was a whole other part of his life I had only heard about in stories and seen in Facebook photos. So, meeting all of his friends in extension of his family was something really cool we got to share together," said Singletary.

Bland also reflected on a Florida vacation with his fiancé and his family. "That was nice to be able to see everyone together and to be with his family."

Family is important, according to the happy couple, and after they tie the knot, they will be looking to purchase property in the city, establish roots and have children.

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