

This Pineapple Love: A Testimony

Heartache. Heartbreak. Two miscarriages. Two separations. Two foreclosures. Two children. Two divorces.

Multiple lives shattered into innumerable little pieces. Darkness with seemingly no entry point for light. Long, winding roads that seemed to go nowhere. Depression. Anxiety. Anger. Grief. Numbness. Challenged faith. Pruning. Winter. Spring. God, who? God, where? God, here? Not *here*? Yes, absolutely *here*. Right *here*.

This is the tale of a love story where boy meets girl on a beautiful summer night and wonderful things happen. Luc, my pineapple love, and I vowed to become partners on this marital journey for the rest of our lives. And it's been a harmonious love song since we exchanged those vows on November 3, 2018.



What is “this pineapple love”? Grab a cup of tea and let me tell you a story.

In 2014, I was two years removed from a tumultuous divorce and on the road to rebuilding my life with the help of supportive family, friends, and a lot of therapy. Over the course of my six year marriage I'd lost two children to miscarriage, our home, as well as pieces of myself I thought I'd never regain. Divorce is a death of sorts.

But, this particular year was different. A collective of women from my church and I formed a prayer circle that changed our lives forever. We gathered once a week and read, prayed, and fasted our way through a book called *Draw the Circle – The Forty Day Challenge* by Mark Batterson.

I'm entirely certain that I did not know what I was getting myself into. As we met in my little oasis I trudged ahead hoping to get something out of it. I sought God's guidance over numerous areas of my life – one of which was remarriage. God had given me a vision of what He intended for marriage though I had not yet experienced it, and it was this vision that I held on to. The zaniest part of Batterson's challenge talked about crazy faith and encouraged us to pray about what to pray about. If ever I was confused, this day took the cake.



Dear Future Husband,

While talking with God about the desire to remarry, He responded telling me to demonstrate my belief by writing a letter to my future husband. Then He instructed me to buy him a tie. What an odd thing! How do I write a letter for someone I haven't yet identified, and how do we select the right tie for this mystery man? Y'all, I sat down with pen in hand and the words came. I bought a gift box and placed the letter in the box. But I held off on the tie for a while.

Soon after this prayer circle ended, I began to hear stories about how God was answering the prayers of the other women. I celebrated all that He was doing in the lives of my sisters excited about what I believed He was about to do for me. These answers to prayer made me so happy some days I found myself leaping forward almost as if to jump into the things I was believing Him for.

On the heels of a 2016 trip to London with my cousin, she and I talked expectantly of how life would change when these husbands appeared in our lives. At the end of that trip, we decided to refer to our husbands as pineapples. Why pineapples? We needed to be able to talk about potential suitors without being obvious, and so pineapple it was. Little did we know,

some view pineapples as an expression of “welcome” – an invitation of hospitality, friendship, and warmth.

Obedience in Dating

I finally got my dating shoes broken in by 2017 and got past the shell shock of swiping left and right. However, it was time for another fast in my life. I met this guy who seemed to line up with a number of prayer journal entries but something was just a little off. I was confused (*major hint that this probably wasn't God*) and wrestled with God. After toiling through this 40-day journey with a couple girlfriends, the Lord distinctly showed me that His hand was not leading me toward this man and He instructed me to leave him alone. By this time, I'd learned to tell my feelings what to do and let them catch up. My spirit was at peace. On that last day of the fast, July 14, 2017, I released that man and registered my own business.

The next day, July 15, 2017, I took this newfound freedom and peace out for a spin. I was schmoozing with friends at a fundraising event when I met a gentleman by the name of Luc A. Gabriel. He approached me and our exchange was light-hearted and easy. Little did I know that here stood my “pineapple.” We became friends and things would remain that way for nine months until God revealed who we were to each other.

The Other Side

After nine years of marriage and subsequent separation, Luc found himself a year removed from divorce in late 2014, and at the time I wrote that letter, God was in the process of pulling Luc back toward Him. The divorce had left him injured but he struggled forward.

By 2016, Luc was reconnected in church and regaining his footing. God began speaking to Luc very subtly and persistently. He wanted to remarry and serve God alongside his wife and though unsure if God would come through, he began to search. He continued to date and started wrestling with God over many things. God challenged Him to go deeper and though he couldn't conceive His will at the time, Luc accepted the challenge.

About this time, Luc had actually come across photos of me by way of social media and thoughts of interest surfaced but nothing would come of it for quite some time. He dated around, searching for something more but not quite finding it.

Preparing For What's Ahead

Luc relocated back home to Philadelphia in late 2016. His life took many twists and turns with his career, living arrangements, and his own share of dating escapades. He too suffered many losses along the way and wondered if God was ever going to deliver on His promise to restore to him what he'd lost.

Around the time we met in July 2017, Luc was recommended for jobs he was well qualified for but nothing was materializing. Suddenly, after joining the Navy Reserves, an opportunity for full-time orders came about and what would normally take up to a year, took less than *two* months! Approximately nine months later, Luc began the process of moving back to Maryland.

Looking back on that time, Luc needed that temporary move back to Philadelphia to reset his frame of mind, desires, and focus. He believed that

God pulled him back home as a means of preparation for something ahead. He had no idea what that would be until that first friendly date in November of 2017. It was short and sweet. We discovered a few of our common experiences and life moved on. But one thing we both took notice of was that our friendship developed effortlessly.

There's Love in Hard Conversations

Months later, as our core values seemed aligned we both sought clarity from God about whether this was what He was orchestrating or not. Either way, we were prepared to accept the friendship. Not long after, we had a turning point conversation in Spring of 2018 that laid things out pretty clearly. You know the ones – the make or break conversations that determine whether to move forward or not.

I returned from another trip with girlfriends to a very serious Luc who stated his intentions with crystal clear precision. I stated my expectations and requirements and God showed off from there. Suddenly and abundantly, just as God had said, *I AM* began to restore the years the locusts had stolen. Luc and I began taking this journey together and I had a few Gideon-like encounters just to make sure this was it. Remember the tie? Remember the pineapple? After several signs, I asked God for one more. One morning I prayed in my heart and said "I'll walk away today if you say to." While getting my hair done, I got a call from Luc. We'd already spoken a couple times that day so it was a little odd that he was calling back so soon. He'd been window-shopping and began gushing about a pin-striped shirt and I wondered where he was going with this story.

Then time seemed to stand still as he uttered the next few words, "and you should see this dope tie to go with it, it's navy blue with *gold pineapples*." I have no idea what he said after that. I simply sat in shock looking down at my wrist staring at my gold pineapple charm bracelet. It was at that moment that I realized I would never have to question God about this pineapple love ever again. I bought the tie and presented it and the letter at just the right time. He wore it on the day we married.



The rest, is His story to continue writing. We are now expecting our first pineapple chunk this December.
The lesson from this pineapple love is...
God restores!