

GlossyVOWS

Austin couple fell for each other, but the bride-to-be fell even harder

By Helen Anders

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Natalie Esquivel and Lance Roberts both work in the insurance business in Austin. When they decided to get married, they assessed their risks as low.

They didn't count on Natalie taking a fall and breaking her tailbone in Mexico during a rainstorm two days before the wedding. But as people in their line of work know, nature can sometimes throw you a curve. What's important is that the situation not end in a total loss. And this didn't — not by a long shot.

Let's start at the beginning, though, when Natalie and Lance met at the insurance agency they both worked for, Natalie as a senior underwriter and Lance as a total loss supervisor.

"My boss introduced us," Lance says. "His wife worked with Natalie. He called me into his office late in the day. His wife and Natalie were in there."

getting to know each other over ceviche at Polvo's.

A week or so later Lance made a trip back to his family's farm in Iowa for a visit. When he went to his car after work to hit the road, he found a care package for the trip — candy and No-Doze and such — sitting next to the car. He had no idea who left it; he'd only gone out with Natalie once.

But when he got back from Iowa, she fessed up. He was charmed.

"It was neat getting to know her," he says. "We come from such different backgrounds." Lance is from a big farming family (they raise corn, soybeans and hogs); Natalie is an only child who grew up in Austin.

"Now I have a huge family," she says. "For an only child, you always wish for brothers and sisters. Now I have them."

Lance proposed to Natalie right before a Valentine's Day ski trip.

"We had gone to look at rings a couple of months earlier."



and bought one. Natalie says she was surprised when he popped the question on the eve of the ski trip.

"She was upstairs starting to pack," Lance says. "I called her downstairs and said, 'I have something to tell you.' I got out the ring, and she started crying."

Because they wanted their wedding to be mostly a family affair, the pair decided to get married in Puerto Morelos, Quintana Roo, a fishing village 40 miles south of Cancún. Two days before the wedding, Natalie, Lance and their families made an excursion by catamaran to nearby Isla Mujeres to snorkel and shop. Rain was

was wearing flip-flops, slipped in the rain and fell on her backside. Her aunt, an emergency room nurse, knew Natalie needed to see a physician. When the group got back to the mainland, a doctor in Playa del Carmen diagnosed a broken tailbone.

"It was very painful, but it's not something you can put a cast on," Natalie says. So she got a couple of muscle-relaxing shots and carried on.

Two days later, on their wedding day, the rain magically cleared and Natalie, "on autopilot a little bit," had the wedding day of her dreams under a rainbow.

"It was more than I'd hoped

A broken tailbone could not stop Natalie Esquivel and Lance Roberts from celebrating their love with family and friends in Mexico.

Heather Mabry WWW.ECLECTICIMAGESPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

NATALIE AND LANCE ROBERTS

The date: June 28

The bride: Natalie Esquivel, 30, senior insurance underwriter

The groom: Lance Roberts, 28, insurance total loss supervisor

The parents: Richard and Gloria Esquivel of Austin and Deborah and Jeff Roberts of Corning, Iowa

The venue: Azul Beach Resort at Puerto Morelos, Quintana Roo

Guests: 40

Wedding planner: Carmela Hartman, InStyle Weddings and Destinations

Flowers: Planned by Mervellie Flowers of Austin, acquired locally.

Photographers: Heather Mabry and Diana M. Lott, Eclectic Images

The two were introduced, and they exchanged e-mails during the next few weeks.

Then they had their first date,

Natalie says. "It was just sort of a whim."

Later, without saying anything, Lance had gone back

coming down in buckets, but everybody was in a good mood and having fun.

That is, until Natalie, who

for," she says. "I wouldn't do anything different."

Lance made her get rid of those flip-flops, though.

Presiding: A local judge

Attendants: Four bridesmaids, four groomsmen

Invitations: Rachel Titsworth

Honeymoon: Puerto Morelos, Quintana Roo