Chapter 11: Dez Cerveja

When my ex-wife and I separated, I took it very hard. People deal with grief in interesting ways. I took the drink-the-pain-away approach at first. I didn't want a logical mind that tried to explain why things with the love of my life didn't work out.

Remember I told you Rio is like Vegas. That makes it a great place for a rebound but a terrible place to actually lick your wounds. Armed with only a broken heart and a healthy drinking problem, I went headfirst into dating again.

I'm not proud of this, but it didn't take long for me to "move" on. One night in particular, I was out drinking with my friend, discussing the breakup and how it was making me feel. We started talking with a group. I found one woman attractive. He made the introduction and began doing the job of being my translator for my flirting.

I don't remember what was said, but she agreed to come back with me. I warned her my ex's stuff was still in the apartment. She didn't seem bothered by that. It's really ruthless out here in Rio.

We started being intimate, and that's when I realized a biggggg problem.

She was very built, almost a bodybuilder physique. I'd never been with someone more muscular than me. Apparently there's an interesting thing that happens when women use testosterone to build muscle. I was now looking at one of its side effects, and I had a mini panic attack. Had I just taken a trans woman home? How did I not know? Upon a more thorough investigation, I confirmed she was indeed a woman, but I couldn't shake the original shock. We didn't hook up that night.

The next morning I messaged the friend who introduced us and told him what had happened. He laughed and said she had mentioned all of it to him while they were talking: the testosterone and what it does. Of course, this flew over my head at the time.

Not having actually finished my "mission," I went back out on the hunt. This time at the beach. I was a little scared. I thought to myself the best way to avoid bringing home someone questionable is to see them in their bikini. Surprisingly, this is also harder than you'd imagine, since your senses are impaired.

That day I spent doing my favorite things, relaxing on the beach. But today I was exceptionally lonely and getting drunker than I usually would. I was buying beers from the barraca ten at a time. This was before I realized you could simply return the ones you didn't drink.

Once I felt myself getting a bit too drunk to be in public, I looked for someone to give my beers to. Unfortunately, I had just ordered ten, and I really shouldn't have kept drinking, especially alone. (For the record, I gave most of them away.) I looked around and saw a beautiful woman alone. I had seen her before but couldn't be bothered to Google Translate-flirt with anyone that day.

I approached her with the giant bucket of Heineken. I asked if she spoke English, and to my surprise she responded in perfect English. I lit up. I had found my drinking partner. At this point my goal was only to give her the drinks and leave. I said, "Want ten beers!?" She said yes and laughed. I put the bucket down, then went to collect my things to leave.

I fully intended to just leave, but it was still nice out and I wasn't done enjoying the beach. I went back with my things to ask if I could join her. She said sure, almost surprised I asked. Who drops off ten beers and leaves? It's the worst pickup approach ever.

My fondest memory of this interaction was what happened next. We talked. I explained everything about my breakup. She was very understanding and warm. Then she asked to read my palm. I thought it was cute. What information could she get out of me?

She began to read my palm, saying some generic stuff. Then she uttered something that still makes me tear up to this day. She said, "I can see that you recently lost a baby girl." Being drunk and totally shocked, I couldn't fight back the tears.

My ex-wife and I had lost a baby less than a month before. I'm normally opposed to any displays of emotion, as you can tell in Chapter 6. But this really fucked me up. All the sadness I had been hiding came rushing to the surface. I was fully crying, with a stranger on the beach holding my hand.

Bless her heart, she just comforted me until I could regain my composure. I still can't thank her enough for that special moment. After the beach, we went home together. I never saw her again after that night.

I have a puzzle piece tattoo on my right arm. My ex has the other half. While we were in bed together that night, the palm reader mentioned the tattoo and expressed interest in doing one together. As I cuddled her, stroking her arm, I jokingly said, "That's an entirely too intimate thing."

I'm still looking for my next puzzle partner.