



a novel

Bridge Retakes

Angela Lopes

FIRST EDITION

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Phila is out in the state capital São Paulo, Brazil, to help her cousin with her beauty salon. Phila loves her family and friends in Brazil, plus she loves the food, forró and sertanejo music and the land. She goes to Brazil at least one time every year. This time, Phila thought she'd try out a local dating site. On this dating site she met Zé. Zé posted photos of himself in his car, at his sister's beauty salon and after one of his soccer games. Zé works in the sales of photo and video equipment in São Paulo. Phila works three different jobs in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada: editing theses, cleaning and telemarketing. Her father and mother were born in Recife, Pernambuco,

Brazil. Phila was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Zé was born in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. He still lives with his mother and siblings, in a better favela in São Paulo. Zé's family is composed of devout Catholics with robust African traditions embedded in their daily interactions. He is extremely close to his siblings and mother. Phila's parents were raised by Phila's grandmother on her father's side and both grandparents on her mother's side. They both came from lower middle class families. All the money they had got invested into learning English. Her mother and father met in English school at the ages of twenty-one and twenty-three. After two years of study, each working three jobs and getting married, they immigrated to Vancouver. Phila was born a year after they landed in Vancouver. Three siblings followed.

Phila decided to never forget where her parents came from, their economic struggles and spiritual suffering. Phila has little desire to buy anything, and all her savings from work go into her journeys to Brazil. She still lives with her parents in a middle class suburb in Winnipeg. Zé has always dreamed of leaving Brazil. Zé has never ever left Brazil. He often thinks of it as a trash can. What

the first world can give his family and him is economic stability. Something they only get in month-long spurts, maybe two per year, a feeling of stability. Zé believes if he were ever to move to Canada to work, he could drastically improve his family's economic situation and help provide more opportunities for careers for his siblings. In São Paulo, Zé makes just enough to help out his family and finally he bought his very first car. To be approved for a Canadian tourist visa, he should own a home, have a certain amount of money in the bank, own a car and have a family that he could return home to. He only has the family and car aspects covered.

What if we met bigger than we fathom we are in this
disorganization?

Phila, March and April 2015, São Paulo

This age is interesting, this being thirty and all. I never thought I'd make it so far. The disorganization speaks to me at a time when I finally have some inner stability. I am always trying to understand, always trying to organize. I'm not gonna lie, I kinda like the disorganization here. It means I can organize my beginning with you. I am trying, trying to understand this disorganization. My life is getting better the closer I get to God. Here I meet Zé. Zé is a part of this disorganization, I am a part of this disorganization. Going back and forth from São Paulo to Winnipeg, twice per year, suits me. I can work in both cities. But this city São Paulo is the craziest ever. Here we

get through everything and anything, so much so that all we go on is feeling. Our families are the backbone to this feeling. It may be absurd to some people, but I can no longer go on what some people say. It's not so bad that I left. We do not know my story. I remember when we walked to the car and you pulled me in, I couldn't make the next move. The car smelt of wet carpet. We wanted to stay, but we wanted to go. We bounced into the rain forest. How love can grow out of us growing out of each other. Sometimes I see you bigger than you think, like is there potential here? I wasn't sure which direction to move, all seemed resplendent. Sometimes I think I can really put it all together. Like this moment is everything with you. Like tomorrow has no matter, no place in my thoughts. I have little money because I spend it all on going to São Paulo. Sometimes I do not wanna be near you, the feeling is too robust. We are just beginning. Every time you reach out, you want to deny me. Into a must see, must do. I revel in the limit against what cannot be known. All my endeavours facilitate a sparser sea of flame. And if I cannot be bigger I will do more than I can but this more is untidy. It gets ferocious. So I fabulous my eyes to a longer lash. One, two, fancy.

We cannot manage to get paid enough. To look for more work, I travel. The cleaning, telemarketing and editing are not enough. I love to engage with the people here, by any means teaching English or French or whatever. Maybe translation sometimes too. There is something I am here that I adore, to adjoint to that family feeling. We expected nothing, I am not denying the joy in this. Being critical left us lonely, we were always forgetting ourselves texting glamour. Every passage is vast with a cat call. But you wouldn't let me go. Our first moments together just cannot let me go. You see sometimes my illusions are my reality, this is how I get things done. I walk differently now. All I could do was feel for you. Sometimes I didn't account for it. You gestured me where to go, and I reminded you where you're from. There is something in the water where you live. How could I leave you. But I'll be honest: my fear is that I fall drop dead in love with you, and then you leave me. I like very much being afraid. I like getting to know you, and moreover I like you telling me what to do. Every step is virtually desired. I breathed in so much of who you are, I now truly understand you. It was all so sudden.

Sometimes conceptions of webs of

thought absconding reality are the gesture to reveal it. Like my mother's phrasal structure. She gets me to do things I don't usually wanna do. But my mother is not here. It is hard to organize beyond the family, here. Wild like boars, we always have something to do. They say the beginnings of love relations are too passionate. I had to put my books away to be my body. You, you just had to conquer me. And, boy, did you ever. I swear no man in Canada has moves like you. Something like wanting to be gotten becomes imperative, pastures a similar entitlement though not a lodge in mind rather murmurs. Did I ever tell you I know more than this? You see something virtuous now. I organize what I thought I never could. You, you are seeing me plan life, putting pieces together of our beginning.