

READING EXERCISE

The Adventures of Lola Badiola

CHAPTER 12: THE COFFEE

Lola Badiola walked into the bathroom and looked at herself in the mirror.

It had been almost three years since her last panic attack. Her therapy and yoga sessions had helped control these self-destructive tendencies. Today she had recovered in time to make her speech. She had stepped back from the edge of cliff. But it had been a close one.

Ever since she was a teenager, she had fought an ongoing battle with the demons inside her head. She knew the triggers – alcohol, caffeine, lack of sleep, stress – and she avoided them as much as she could.

She was determined to keep her condition a secret from her new colleagues. Mental strength was considered essential in her line of business. She didn't want to be stigmatized.

Lola took some cold water in her hands and splashed it over her cheeks. She breathed deeply and then she walked out of the bathroom.

Waiting for her outside was Cayetano Tolosa.

"Hi." He said with a big, warm smile.

"Hi" replied Lola.

"Nice speech."

"Thanks."

"Do you have time for a coffee?"

"Sure."

"I know a place away from all the tourists"

"Great."

Lola followed Cayetano out of the office.

They walked down the high street and passed the Zara store on the corner of Gran Via and Calle de Mesonero Romanos. Lola's first summer job was as a sales assistant at her local Zara store. It was so exciting. The fast fashion business model and just-in-time operations created a sense of urgency in the store. There were always people coming and going and Lola loved the chaos and commotion. In fact, they had customers who would visit them almost every lunchtime, slip on a pair of shoes, dress up in a formal suit or take back an item that didn't fit.

She looked at Cayetano's clothes and concluded that he had never shopped in an Inditex owned store. His shirt had a high-top collar similar to the ones worn by Karl Lagerfeld, his shoes were from

Balenciaga, he wore skin-tight Calvin Klein jeans and a Hermes belt. The cost of his clothes was probably greater than Lola's monthly salary.

They arrived at the café.

"Give me a café con leche and a pincho de tortilla," said Cayetano to the old man behind the bar.
"What are you having Lola?"

Lola caught the eye of the old man and said:

"Could you make me a fresh orange juice, please."

"No coffee?" said Cayetano.

"No."

"Smoke?"

"No."

"Do you mind if we sit outside so I can have a cigarette."

"Sure."

They took their drinks and sat at a small round table next to the entrance of the café. Cayetano lit his cigarette and smiled at Lola.

"It's so great to have you in the team."

Lola's father had once told her that when you start a new job, move to a new neighborhood or join a new team, you should always be careful of the first person who wants to be your friend. They usually have a hidden agenda.

As Lola sat down opposite Cayetano Tolosa her father's words echoed inside her head.

READING COMPREHENSION

1. How long has it been since Lola's last panic attack?
2. When did she start suffering from panic attacks?
3. Why does she want to keep her condition a secret?
4. Why did Lola enjoy her first summer job at Zara?
5. What is Zara's business model?
6. Why is it unlikely that Cayetano Tolosa has shopped at Zara?
7. What is Cayetano Tolosa wearing?
8. What does he order from the café? How does he order it?
9. Why do they have their drinks outside the café?
10. What advice did her father give her that is relevant in this situation?