

# READING EXERCISE

## The Adventures of Lola Badiola

### CHAPTER 11 – THE SPEECH

On their first morning together, JJ Thomson and Lola Badiola spent almost two hours discussing marketing ideas for the company. It was clear that they were both on the same page.

They would build a solid brand over the long term. They would provide free training and consulting in order to win over prospects to their new blockchain technology. Their sales approach would be soft sell, the commercial team would earn a high basic salary but no commission.

Lola liked discussing business with JJ Thomson. His communication was clear and transparent, he never beat about the bush.

At the end of the meeting JJ said:

“Ok, let me introduce you to the rest of team.”

“Great!”, replied Lola.

“I’m going to gather everyone in the conference room. Would you like to make a little speech?”

“Sure.” said Lola without thinking.

JJ showed Lola into an auditorium with thirty seats, a stage and an enormous video screen, then he went back into the main office to bring everyone in.

For a few moments Lola stood alone. She wanted to make a good first impression with her new colleagues. She had spent the last week updating her wardrobe. She had bought three new suits in the Easter sales with matching shoes, including a pair of Manolo Blahnik heels at a 50% discount. She looked great.

But she never expected to have to give a speech on her very first morning. In fact, she had never given a speech in English before.

She started to feel the strange sensation of panic rising from her stomach, like the shy little girl who has been chosen to read a poem in front of the class.

Her colleagues entered the conference room and sat down. They all stared at her.

JJ jumped up onto the stage, made a few announcements and then said:

“It’s a great pleasure to introduce you all to the new Commercial Director. Lola Badiola!!!”

Everyone started clapping and cheering.

“Good morning.” said Lola.

“Good morning!!!” everyone replied.

Lola looked at the faces of the international team in front of her.

And her mind went completely blank.

There were no words, no ideas, no thoughts. There was nothing. Just a blank.

Her heart started to pump, her legs started to tremble, and the walls of the room started to close in on her. She didn't want to be on the stage but at the same time she didn't want to run away. It seemed like a no-win situation.

Lola looked across at JJ Thomson who was patiently waiting for her to start her speech.

Her stage fright intensified. It was like some horrible dream. She felt physically sick. And in the moment of maximum panic she noticed something quite peculiar.

Sitting in the middle of the audience was an immaculately dressed young man. He was staring at her with a smile on his face. He was clearly enjoying watching her suffer.

Lola took a deep but imperceptible breath and used her yoga training to repel the demons that were attacking her self-confidence. She took one step forward and in a commanding voice said:

“Thank you very much for such a warm welcome. I am so happy to be part of this team.....”

Then she completed a two-minute speech without any further problems.

## READING COMPREHENSION

1. How long did JJ and Lola discuss marketing strategy?
2. What was their approach to sales?
3. What was JJ's communication style?
4. Where did Lola make her speech?
5. What had she been doing the week before she started her new job?
6. Why did she start to panic?
7. What happened to her mind when she started to panic?
8. What happened to her body when she started to panic?
9. How did she control herself?
10. Who was enjoying watching her suffer?