

READING EXERCISE

The Adventures of Lola Badiola

CHAPTER 15: THE WATCH

Lola Badiola and Cayetano Tolosa sat outside a café just off Gran Via talking about business. The two of them were the marketing department of JBlock S.A., a cybersecurity company using blockchain technology to revolutionize the fight against corporate crime.

Lola had never worked in a start-up environment and Cayetano had never worked in the technology sector. They would both have to learn as they went along.

"So, tell me, why did you want to work at JBlock, Cayetano?" Lola asked.

Cayetano took a sip of his coffee and a drag of his cigarette.

"The money," he said with a smile.

They both knew this was an ironic comment as the base salary at JBlock was much lower than more established companies. Cayetano continued:

"The truth is, my cousin introduced me to JJ Thomson. I spoke to him for just 15 minutes. And I knew I had to work with him. He's a visionary."

"Didn't you have an official job interview?" asked Lola.

"Of course, I did," replied Cayetano. "And I prepared like a maniac in order to stand out from the other candidates. I read everything about JJ Thomson. And then I practiced my answers in English out loud. I knew I was a good fit for this company, but I had to convince him of the fact."

"What kind of questions did he ask you?"

"Oh, the usual things. Tell me about yourself. What are your weaknesses? Where do you see yourself in five-year's time? Along with a few brainteasers like - what's four fifths of 1005?"

Cayetano crushed his cigarette into the ashtray and looked Lola straight in the eye. "You think I got the job because of my connections, don't you?"

"No, not at all." replied Lola

"All the programmers think so," continued Cayetano. "They think that I'm only working at JBlock because Diego, the head of programming, is my cousin."

His expression changed. He suddenly looked sad and vulnerable. "They don't respect me."

Lola leaned forward. "Hey. If JJ Thomson offered you the job, then you deserve the job. As you said, the guy is a visionary."

"Thanks, Lola."

Cayetano reached forward and gently held her arm.

It was an unexpected gesture and Lola wasn't sure how to respond.

A car stopped at the nearby traffic lights with its windows open and stereo playing the operatic classic "Nessun Dorma". It was Lola's favorite genre of music. She felt a shiver run through her body.

"That's a beautiful watch." said Cayetano still holding Lola's arm.

They both looked down at the large watch on Lola's thin wrist.

"It was my father's," she said. "It's a Patek..."

"...Philippe in white gold." Cayetano completed her sentence. "Your father was a very stylish man." He released her arm. "It's a pity that it doesn't have the original crocodile skin strap."

Once again, Lola was unsure how to respond. She had inherited the watch and replaced the original strap with a synthetic alternative that looked almost identical. Nobody had ever noticed before.

"Shall we head back to the office," said Cayetano, "I need to follow up a few sales leads."

Without waiting for an answer, he walked over to the bar and paid for the drinks.

Lola couldn't help noticing the contours of his muscular body as it stretched the fabric of his tight-fitting designer clothes.

READING COMPREHENSION

1. Where are Lola Badiola and Cayetano Tolosa sitting?
2. What ironic comment does Cayetano make about his job?
3. How did Cayetano meet JJ Thomson?
4. How did Cayetano prepare for the interview?
5. What questions did JJ ask him?
6. What do the programmers at JBlock think about Cayetano?
7. What music was playing in the car that stopped at the traffic lights?
8. What kind of watch does Lola have on her wrist?
9. What does Cayetano Tolosa notice about the watch?
10. How does Lola feel about Cayetano?