

# The Adventures of Lola Badiola

## CHAPTER 14: THE DILEMMA

Luis Bruña was sitting at a table in a restaurant waiting for his wife. They hadn't been out for a meal together in over three months.

They both worked long hours. He was in charge of the cybersecurity department of one of Spain's largest technology companies. She worked as a psychiatrist with her own practice. They had three young children between the ages of 4 and 14.

As a result, it was almost impossible for them to have any time together as a couple. They spent the weekends playing board games with their kids or doing DIY around the house. The last time they had been out to the cinema was to see the sequel of *Trainspotting* which was more than two years earlier.

Recently the situation had become even more difficult for Luis. He had lost Lola Badiola, the top revenue producer in his team. His boss, Mario Ruiz de Velasco, was putting him under increasing pressure. And his family life was starting to suffer.

To break this cycle, he and his wife had decided to organize lunch together every Thursday. They had agreed not to complain or criticize. They would simply listen to each other's stories over a glass of wine and some good food. They both knew that they needed to reconnect.

Luis looked up and saw his wife enter the restaurant. Valentina San Roman was the love of his life - strong, beautiful and a little bit crazy.

He remembered the first day they met. They were sitting next to each other at the dinner party of a mutual friend. She turned to him with a provocative smile and said: "So, tell me about yourself." He was momentarily lost for words. Then he rambled on about his childhood. It was not a good first impression.

Luis's thoughts were interrupted by the vibrations of the phone in his pocket. He took it out and looked at the caller ID. It was his boss, Mario Ruiz de Velasco.

It was a call he had to take.

Or was it?

This was his lunch hour, his free time, his marriage.

But he couldn't stop himself from answering.

"Hi Mario."

"Where are you?"

"I'm about to have lunch with my wife."

"I need you back in the office."

"I'll be back at 4pm."

"I need you back now."

Luis looked at his wife as she placed her handbag on the table and sat down in the chair opposite him. He couldn't let her down.

"It's the Swiss." said Mario "They've been hacked again."

"What?" replied Luis, shocked. "Do you know who it is this time?"

"It's the same guys as before."

"That's impossible."

"They broke through the upgraded firewall."

"Do you know how they did it?" asked Luis

"Not yet."

"Have they told you what they want?"

There was a long pause before Ruiz de Velasco said in almost a whisper.

"Chaos. They just want chaos."

Luis was speechless. Their upgraded firewall was the benchmark in the cybersecurity industry. To break through it in less than 24 hours was unthinkable.

"The wine list, sir."

"Eh?"

"The wine list."

Luis was brought back to the present. His wife was looking at him curiously. The waiter was handing him a wine list. Meanwhile, Ruiz de Velasco continued to talk on the phone:

"How far is it from the restaurant to the office?" he asked.

"I'm on the other side of Madrid, Mario."

"How long will it take you to get here?"

“About 20 minutes in a cab.”

“Listen, the Swiss have given us one last chance. We mustn’t blow it. So, I’ll see you back here in 20 minutes. We need to show them what we can bring to the table.”

Luis was lost for words.

“And, by the way,” continued Mario. “Send my regards to Valentina.”

Then he hung up.

Luis put the phone back into his pocket and looked across at his wife.

### READING COMPREHENSION

1. How many children do Luis and his wife have?
2. What do they do at the weekends?
3. How long has it been since Luis and his wife went to the cinema together?
4. What is Valentina San Roman like?
5. Where did Luis and Valentina meet?
6. Why does Luis hesitate to take the call from his boss, Mario?
7. Why does Mario need Luis back in the office?
8. How far is it from the office to the restaurant?
9. How long will it take for Luis to return to the office?
10. What do you think Luis says to his wife?