

READING EXERCISE

The Adventures of Lola Badiola

CHAPTER 29: GORDON RAMSAY

Gordon Ramsay was one of the most famous chefs in the world. He owned thirty-five restaurants and had received a combined total of twenty-two Michelin stars. He was also the star of several television programs including *Hell's Kitchen*, *Masterchef USA* and *Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares*. In short, he was the world's most successful food entrepreneur. And his current project was perhaps his most challenging. To open a fish restaurant in Madrid. Home of the most discerning and unforgiving fish diners in the world.

One of those connoisseurs was Diego de la Fuente, Chief Technology Officer of JBlock S.A. When Diego found out that Ramsay was opening *La Trucha de Gordon* in Barrio Salamanca, he couldn't resist. He invited his boss, JJ Thomson, for lunch the week that it opened.

JJ Thomson had reached a working level of Spanish, but as he sat in the restaurant, surrounded by two waiters and a sommelier, he realized that he didn't understand a word of the menu.

"What the hell is rape?" he asked in genuine shock.

"It's not pronounced *rape*" replied Diego. "It's pronounced "ra-pay" with two syllables. And it's Spanish for monkfish."

JJ thought about it for a moment and then said:

"What the hell is monkfish?"

Diego shook his head and smiled. "You *Anglosajones* know nothing about fish. Monkfish is big and ugly. But its meat is light and sweet. Like scallop or lobster."

"Oh, that sounds good." said JJ, not wanting to spend any more time thinking about it. "I'll have one of those."

"Are you sure?" said Diego. "They have many other wonderful species on the menu. They have *rodaballo*, that's turbot, they have *lenguado*, that's sole, they have *lubina*, that's seabass, they have...

"Ok. Stop showing off. And just order the fish."

Diego completely ignored his boss and continued to describe all of the dishes on the menu in great detail. Eventually he ordered a selection of seafood as a starter, followed by seabass in salt for himself and grilled monkfish for JJ.

"You know we should eat out more often." said Diego as he took a satisfied sip of Alberino wine. "The programmers are always ordering in. They never want to leave their desks. They've forgotten how to socialize."

"Yeah, well, that depends on who's paying the bill."

"I'm paying for this one," said Diego seriously. "It's my treat."

"We can put it on company expenses," replied JJ.

"No, no, no. I'm inviting you."

"We're here to talk about business Diego, so we'll put it on the business account."

Their argument was interrupted by the arrival of the seafood platter. It was a work of art. The composition of the oysters, prawns, lobsters, crabs and mussels was completely mesmerizing.

The two men did not hesitate. JJ scooped up an oyster and sucked noisily on the contents. Diego cracked open a crab with his big hairy hands. And before long the platter was reduced to a messy mix of empty shells and clean carcasses.

"So, what are we going to do about Lola?" asked Diego.

JJ stopped excavating the tail of a lobster and thought for a moment.

"The only thing we can do," he replied.

"Which is what?"

JJ put down the lobster, cleaned his hands and wiped his mouth. Then he turned his full attention to his colleague's question.

"Diego, both you and I know that this is a fight to the death. Either they destroy us, or we destroy them. It's Netflix versus Blockbuster. Apple versus Nokia. Capitalism in its purest sense. And nobody is going to pity the loser.

At this very moment, there is only one battle being fought. And that battle is called Lola Badiola. She is our weakness, our vulnerability, our Achilles heel. But she is also our strength, our salvation, our Trojan horse.

You ask me what we are going to do about Lola. And I tell you that there is only thing we can do. Give her absolutely everything she needs. And pray to God that she delivers us victory."

The waiters arrived at the table to clear away the seafood platter and present the main courses of monkfish and seabass.

Diego carefully cut into the flesh of his fish and let the steam rise from the flaky white meat within.

"This smells delicious," he said with a look of pure ecstasy on his face.

JJ smiled. "Not bad for an *Anglosajon* chef, eh?"

READING COMPREHENSION

1. How many restaurants does Gordon Ramsay own? And how many Michelin stars?
2. What is his current project and why is it such a challenge?
3. How much does Diego enjoy eating seafood?
4. What does Diego order for starters?
5. What does he order for the main course?
6. Who is going to pay for the bill?
7. What are they going to do about Lola?
8. Why is she a weakness for the company?
9. Why is she a strength for the company?
10. Do you think Diego will return to *La Trucha de Gordon*?