

# READING EXERCISE

## The Adventures of Lola Badiola

### CHAPTER 22: THE GRAPHITE GREY TOYOTA PRIUS

The morning sun was shining brightly through the office window and directly into Lola's eyes. She squinted as the enormous silhouette of Diego de la Fuente appeared in front of her. He closed the blinds then sat down opposite her.

"Here," he said as he put a large cup of detox fruit juice in front of her, "I know it's your favorite."

JJ Thomson was standing by the window looking out on to Gran Via.

"What really happened at Telecom España?" he asked.

Lola took a sip of her fruit juice as she considered how best to answer the question.

"It ended badly," she said.

"Were you fired?"

"No. They didn't get rid of me. I walked out."

"Do you have any paperwork to prove that you resigned?"

"No. I just walked out.... literally."

A sparrow landed on the windowsill and looked inside the room, oblivious to the drama that was unfolding within.

"When you say it ended badly, what do you mean?"

"I tried to do the right thing. I tried to leave on good terms. But Mario Ruiz de Velasco wouldn't let me. He made it personal."

Lola's voice started to crack. She felt the tears building up inside her. "You believe me, don't you?"

Diego de la Fuente leaned forward. The ferocity from earlier had completely vanished and now he looked once again like a big, cuddly teddy bear. He was the kind of guy Lola could really get along with.

"Of course, we believe you, Lola."

Lola started to tremble as the emotion of the morning boiled over.

"I'm so sorry!" she said. "I feel terrible that I've dragged you guys into this."

JJ Thomson turned away from the window and looked down at Lola.

"Listen carefully, Lola. This is not about you."

A flock of parakeets flew across the rooftops of Gran Via.

“Our software represents an existential threat to the all the incumbent IT firms in the world, from the smallest private company to the largest public companies listed on the New York Stock Exchange. We will do to them what the smartphone did to Nokia, Motorola and Blackberry. Make them obsolete.”

Lola had never heard JJ speak like this before. She knew that they had plans to disrupt the market but not on such a dramatic scale. He continued:

“Mario Ruiz de Velasco is as ruthless as he is ambitious. People say that he wants to be the richest man in Spain - richer than Amancio Ortega, or Bill Gates or even Jeff Bezos – and he won’t let anything get in his way.”

JJ turned to Lola.

“It’s not you he wants to destroy, Lola. It’s all of us. And he’s got together with some very powerful friends in order to make that happen. Come and have a look.”

JJ beckoned Lola to join him at the window of the office. They looked down onto the street below where the two agents from Interpol were standing waiting

A graphite grey Toyota Prius stopped and picked them up.

“They’ve been following me everywhere since I arrived in Madrid. They’re looking for a weak link in our company. And now they think they’ve found it.”

## READING COMPREHENSION

1. What drink does Diego de la Fuente give Lola?
2. How does Diego de la Fuente behave throughout the discussion?
3. What does JJ Thomson want to know about Lola?
4. Why can’t Lola prove that she resigned?
5. What will JBlock’s software do to other IT companies?
6. “We will do to them what the smartphone did to....” which companies?
7. What do Lola and JJ see happen in the street below?
8. Who or what is the “weak link” in the company?
9. What do you think will happen next?