

READING EXERCISE

The Adventures of Lola Badiola

CHAPTER 8: THE HOTDOG

Lola pressed the buzzer of the intercom and entered the Adriatica building. JBLOCK S.A. was located on the second floor. She decided to walk up the spiral staircase instead of waiting for the elevator. She needed to release the adrenalin that was flowing gently through her bloodstream.

Waiting for her at the entrance to the office was J.J. Thomson.

"Lola! It's great to see you again," he said.

He moved forward to kiss her on the cheek. He had become accustomed to this southern European style of greeting having spent so much time in Madrid.

Meanwhile Lola was walking towards him with her hand stretched out ready to greet him in a more formal manner.

They ended up simultaneously shaking hands and kissing in a slightly awkward manner. This was to be the first of many multicultural misunderstandings between the two of them.

"Did you have any trouble getting here?"

"No, no problem. Great location."

"Yes, we wanted to be central."

"You couldn't be more central than Gran Via."

"We love it. Follow me."

J.J. Thomson led Lola into the main area of the office. There were a group of employees having a team meeting in the distance. They all stopped and looked at her as she passed by.

She followed J.J. into his office, and they engaged in a few minutes of small talk.

"How was your recent trip to Las Vegas?" asked Lola.

"It was a disaster!" J.J. replied shaking his head and laughing. "I flew directly from Madrid, then caught a taxi to the hotel. I bought a hot dog for three bucks from a street vendor and ate it while I read through my speech. By the time I reached the conference centre I was feeling really sick. I went to a pharmacy, but they had sold out of paracetamol. Can you believe it? I had a stomachache, my kidneys were hurting and my heart was pumping. I don't know how I completed my presentation, but as soon as I concluded, I ran to the nearest bathroom and threw up!"

Lola grimaced. "Poor you!"

"Then I washed my face, walked back into the conference room and answered some questions from the audience!"

"That's dedication." Said Lola.

They both laughed.

They spoke for a little while about personal issues before J.J. eventually turned the conversation to more serious matters. He leaned forward at this desk.

"Listen Lola, I want you to take control of the marketing plan, I want you to create a brand image that truly reflects our core values. I want our customers to believe in us, to trust our promises, to say great things about us when we are not in the room. I'll give you whatever you need to make it happen."

Lola was excited by the entrepreneurial challenges of her new role. She loved the responsibilities and freedom of her position. But most of all she felt a deep sense of purpose.

There was a war being fought in the digital world. A war between truth and lies, between the fake and the real, between information and manipulation.

Lola was ready to go into battle with J.J. Thomson and his army of geeks.

COMPREHENSION

1. What is the name of the company?
2. Where is it located?
3. Why did Lola walk up the stairs rather than take the elevator?
4. What was the first multicultural misunderstanding between JJ and Lola?
5. How did JJ describe his recent trip to Las Vegas?
6. What did he eat that gave him food poisoning?
7. What did he try to buy at a pharmacy but couldn't because it was sold out?
8. What did he do as soon as he concluded his speech?
9. What does Lola have to take control of?
10. How does Lola feel about the challenges?