

## READING EXERCISE

### The Adventures of Lola Badiola

#### CHAPTER 63 – THE RUSH

Lola was now a force of nature, a tornado sweeping any obstacle aside. She told Eugenio and Concha that she was going to borrow their guest for a few hours. She promised to bring him back to the flat, safe and sound, later that evening. When Eugenio protested, fearing the loss of his prize asset, Concha stepped in to support the plan. She could see that whatever Lola needed to do; it was essential. She also wanted to have a one-on-one conversation with her errant husband.

Lola put her arm around the little Korean and ushered him out of the apartment. They didn't wait for the elevator, instead they hurried down the winding wooden stairs. Lola had to catch her companion a couple of times to prevent him from falling face first down the stairwell.

They reached the exit of the building and ran around the corner to the main road. It was lunchtime so there was a lot of competition for the cabs heading down Fuencarral. One stopped about twenty metres away to pick up an overweight couple wearing baggy jeans and sneakers, most likely American tourists on their way to the Prado. Lola grabbed Park's hand, ran towards the cab and pushed the couple out of the way. "Welcome to Madrid," she said as she jumped into the back seat.

"Better for them if they walk, you know what I mean," she said to the cab driver, a typical Madrileño, who didn't know whether to defend the fat Americans or laugh at the joke. Lola gave him the address of the Telecom España headquarters and offered him a 50-euro tip if he arrived there before 3pm. This focused his mind and he accelerated away from the scene without any further comments.

Lola took out her mobile and called Diego de la Fuente. She got straight to the point.

"Hey."

"Lola!"

"You don't want JJ to sell the company, do you?"

"What?"

"It was obvious at dinner last night"

"What are you talking about?"

"I don't have time to explain right now. Just listen carefully. I need you to meet me at the Headquarters of TE in thirty minutes. If you leave now, and travel on your Vespa, you'll get there in time. You need to bring a laptop, the most powerful one that we have, and a standard contract for signing. You got that?"

"What's going on Lola?"

"See you at the entrance to TE headquarters in thirty minutes."

Lola hung up the phone and then immediately scrolled through her contact list until she reached the name of Gonzalo Garrido. She clicked on his number.

"Gonzalo. Whatever you are doing right now, you need to drop it."

"Lola?"

"I need you to prepare me the following legal document. A confirmation that TE agrees to drop all pending and future lawsuits against me related to any cyber security breaches of their company, their clients and affiliates."

"What are you talking about?"

"I need you to do that right now and then meet me at TE headquarters in 30 minutes."

"Lola, are you crazy?"

"Never been saner in my life. I'll see you in 30 minutes."

Then she hung up the phone and turned to the skinny little man sitting next to her.

"Now, Pluto, tell me everything you know about Telecom España."

As the taxi weaved frantically in and out of traffic on the M30 ring road, Park explained the weakness he had exploited in the software that controlled the company's electrical infrastructure. He told her how he was able to access the automatic transfer switch that determined whether the power entering the headquarters came from the electrical grid or from its own internal generators. He explained that he was able to trick the system into believing that there had been an external power cut, thus triggering the internal power generators to switch on and cause an electrical overload. Most machines, from desk top computers to the company elevators, would temporarily cease to function until the building management understood the problem and rebooted the system.

Lola listened carefully asking questions about how Park had discovered the vulnerabilities, what Telecom España had done to patch them and whether he still believed these weaknesses existed. By the time they arrived at the headquarters, her plan was taking shape.

She got out of the taxi and looked up at the gleaming tower of steel and glass in front of her. Somewhere at the top of the building JJ Thomson was in a meeting room finalizing the terms of a deal. Lola needed to get into that room before the deal was signed.

She heard the sound of a Vespa's straining engine in the distance and spotted Diego de la Fuente arriving with a leather bag wrapped around his massive torso. He parked his bike on the pavement and strode over to where they were standing, his face was flushed with tension.

"I brought the laptop and contract. Now could you please tell me what the hell is going on. I almost killed myself three times on the way over here."

"This is Pluto," said Lola, introducing the little man standing next to her.

"Hi, nice to meet you" Diego replied, offering his huge, hairy hand to the stranger, too distracted by the drama to register the man's name.

Park didn't move a muscle. He'd never met anyone like Diego before, more mythical creature than human being, half man, half bear.

Lola repeated herself, this time with a little extra emphasis.

"He is *Pluto*."

Diego looked at Park, and then back to Lola and then back to Park. And finally, the penny dropped.

"You're kidding me. You are fucking kidding me! How did you find him?"

"Doesn't matter. The point is he's now on our side."

Diego instantly understood the significance of the situation. Not only would they no longer have to worry about the threat of this unknown hacker, but also, they could learn from his skills and expertise.

"So, what's the plan?"

"Give Pluto the laptop. And have the standard contract ready for me when I ask for it. We're gonna gatecrash JJ's party and change the music."

"Understood."

Diego reached into his satchel, pulled out the laptop and handed it over to Park.

The North Korean programmer had never used or even touched a portable computer before, everything he did in the cybercrime department was on a Chinese desktop.

He took the machine like a classical guitar prodigy might take a brand-new Fender Stratocaster. He caressed its silky body, then opened it up and ran his fingers delicately across the robust plastic keys. An expression of awe once again beamed from his face.

"Hey, what's going on?"

A taxi had just pulled up outside the entrance of the building and a man was striding towards the three of them.

"Gonzalo!"

Lola ran up to him and, in her nervous excitement, wrapped her arms around him in an enthusiastic embrace. Then she introduced him to the other two men.

"Do you have the legal document?" she asked breathlessly.

"Yeah. Just a one-pager. It's basic but it's binding."

"Great!"

Lola took a deep breath. She now had everything that she needed to carry out her plan. But first she had to get them all past security and into the boardroom on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor of the building.

"Ok guys, follow me."

And without any further discussion, she led her three warriors: a Harvard-educated lawyer, a bearlike technology manager, and a North Korean defector, into the headquarters of Telecom España, into the house of Mario Ruiz de Velasco, deep into enemy territory.

### READING COMPREHENSION

1. How is Lola behaving throughout this chapter?
2. How does she get to the TE headquarters with park?
3. What does she tell Diego to do? Why do you think she does this?
4. What does she tell Gonzalo to do? Why do you think she does this?
5. What does she ask Park about while they are in the taxi?
6. What does Park tell her about the vulnerability in Telecom España?
7. How does Diego react when he meets Pluto?
8. How does Park react when Diego gives him a laptop?
9. How does Lola react when Gonzalo arrives?
10. How will they manage to get into the offices of TE?