

READING EXERCISE

The Adventures of Lola Badiola

CHAPTER 36: THE WILD WEST

Lola listened carefully to Gonzalo's assessment of her situation. It was clear that she needed a lawyer to protect her from Ruiz de Velasco. But there were other issues that were worrying her.

"What about Interpol?" she asked.

Lola was deeply concerned about the meeting with the two agents. They had arrived at the offices of JBlock unannounced and proceeded to interrogate her about her possible involvement in the hacking scandal. It wasn't just her career at risk, it was her freedom.

"I wouldn't worry about them," Gonzalo replied.

Lola looked perplexed.

"Look, the law enforcement agencies are kind of irrelevant in the world of cybercrime," explained Gonzalo, "You see, the issues are so technical that it's almost impossible for them to understand, let alone demonstrate to a judge or a jury."

Gonzalo smiled, "The digital world is like the wild west. The hackers are the outlaws, the IT departments are the local sheriffs, and you guys are the vigilantes. The law, as we know it, doesn't really exist."

Lola thought back to her meeting with the two agents. It was true that they hadn't shown any expertise in the area of cybersecurity, they hadn't had any concrete evidence, and they had been treated like a couple of travelling salesmen by JJ Thomson.

Gonzalo leaned forward.

"If Interpol bother you again, just call me, and I'll deal with it."

Lola was impressed by Gonzalo's knowledge and certainty. In less than an hour, he had understood all the issues and was ready for action. She started to feel a little safer, as if the arm of an old friend had been wrapped around her shoulder.

"And what about the magazine article?" she asked hopefully.

"What about it?"

"Well, I'm worried about what they are going to write about me."

Gonzalo chuckled.

"Welcome to the big-league, Lola. You're a person of interest now. That's something you'll just have to get used to."

Lola looked upset.

"Listen, Cyberworld is a reputable magazine. Its journalists appear on TV and on the radio all the time. Its articles are read all over the world on the internet. They won't make any false accusations. It will just be a lightweight profile of your professional and personal background."

Lola wasn't convinced.

"I need to get back to the office," she said abruptly.

"Sure."

"Thank you so much, Gonzalo. You don't know how kind and helpful you've been."

"Wait until you receive my invoice."

They both smiled.

And then there was a long pause, as if they were waiting for the other to say something. But neither of them did.

Eventually, Lola stood up and gathered her personal items. Gonzalo opened the door of the meeting room and the two of them walked back through the main office.

It was buzzing with activity - phones were ringing, clients were arriving, and an IT hardware team were installing new equipment including a wireless network, a CPU, and a scanner.

"We've had to shut down all our systems while they do the work," explained Gonzalo, "We're preparing ourselves for 5G. It's gonna be a game changer."

"Yes," replied Lola, unable to engage in any small talk.

They walked out onto the main street and stood in silence as they waited for Lola's taxi to arrive. It was one of those clear winter days that feels extremely cold in the shade and wonderfully warm in the sun.

The tension between them was palpable. It was easier to talk about professional issues in the office than personal ones outside of it.

Suddenly Lola turned to Gonzalo and said, "I want you to know how sorry I am that..."

He interrupted her.

"Lola," his voice was gentle, "It's okay."

They stood looking at each other for a few seconds.

"I'll call you on Friday when they publish the article," he said.

Then he kissed her goodbye and walked back into his offices.

Lola sighed, not sure whether she was relieved or disappointed.

READING COMPREHENSION:

1. Did Gonzalo seem worried about the two Interpol agents that interrogated Lola?
2. What metaphor does Gonzalo use to describe the digital world?
3. Did Lola think that Gonzalo was doing a good job as her lawyer? Why?
4. What advice does Gonzalo give Lola about the imminent publication of Cyberworld magazine?
5. Is Cyberworld a serious magazine? Why?
6. What was the weather like when they left the office building?
7. What was the atmosphere like between Lola and Gonzalo when they were waiting for the taxi to arrive?
8. What do you think Lola was going to apologise for, before Gonzalo interrupted her?
9. Why do you think Lola was feeling half "relieved" and half "disappointed" after her meeting with Gonzalo?
10. What do you think will be written about Lola in the Cyberworld article?