

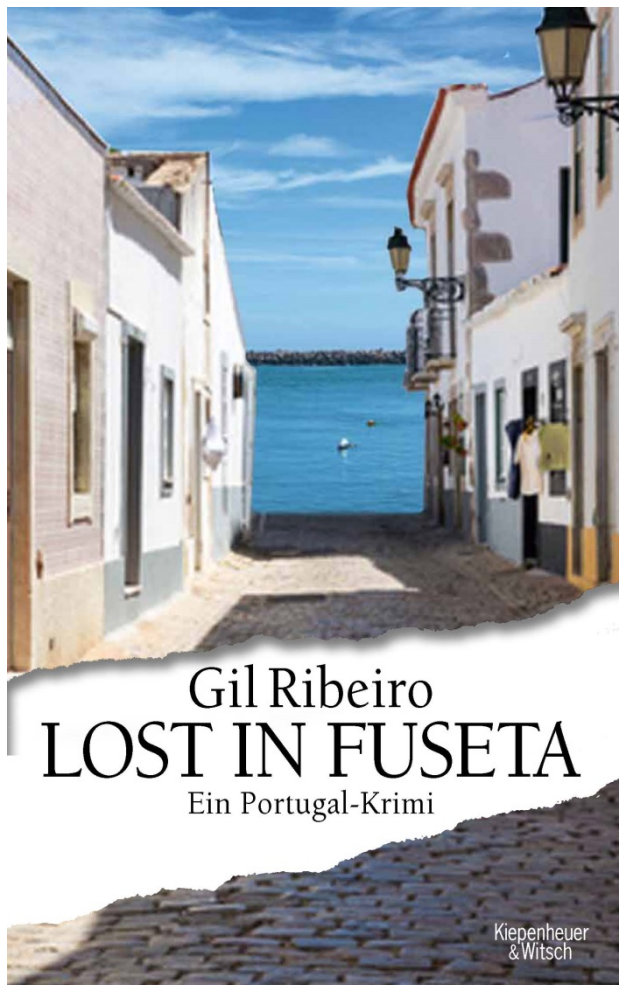
Sample Translation (pp. 11-38)

## **LOST IN FUSETA**

**by Gil Ribeiro**

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## DAY ONE

### 1.

It was one of those days that started out so promising that you couldn't help but fear something would get in the way. The thermometer showed 28 degrees Celsius, and the sky over Faro was clear. It was September 14. The previous weekend, school vacations in England, Germany and the Netherlands had come to an end. Only half as many planes were flying in, and the beaches of the Algarve on Portugal southwestern coast had been swept clean.

Even the light in September was different. Softer.

It was on this day, which some of the inhabitants of Fuseta, a small fishing village in the eastern Algarve, would immediately nickname *Black Wednesday*, that great suffering would descend on this place. The Portuguese tend as a rule toward pessimism, and there's even a word, *saudade*, to describe the national mood of gloom. But Fuseta was hit particularly hard on this day. Black Wednesday was when Rui Aviola left the inhabitants of the village for a year.

Rui Aviola was a policeman in the Guarda Nacional Republicana, or GNR, which sounded much more grand and exciting than the daily routine of the job ever was. The GNR was responsible for misdemeanors that took place outside of towns. For lost cats and fugitive husbands, people joked in the halls of the Criminal Police in the governmental presidium in Faro, where officers investigated dead cats and dead husbands.

As part of an exchange program Rui Aviola was being loaned out for twelve months to Hamburg, Germany. A lot of things could happen in twelve months, the regulars in the bars of Fuseta agreed. Perhaps Aviola would die in the course of duty or – even worse – meet a pretty blonde German woman. The villagers imagined this creature as a wealthy, blonde robot. Aviola would father a child and stay in Germany.

“Some desk jockey at Europol thought this up because he was bored,” said Carlos Esteves, who sat in the passenger's seat of an unmarked police car feeling the sweat run over his neck and down his back. Carlos was a sub-inspector of the Polícia Judiciária, the Portuguese criminal police. You'd be hard pressed, though, to recognize that at first. Carlos wore shorts, espadrilles and a wide, light-blue shirt. He'd pushed his thin Ray Bans back over his medium-length hair. He was 38 years old, a massive-sized fellow, who tried, usually successfully, to avoid having to move quickly.

Carlos sucked a Diet Coke up a straw while the road to the airport raced by. Graciana Rosado, a diminutive criminal detective, briefly flipped on the car's siren to shoo off a family of French tourists in a decrepit Citroen in front of them. Three children and a Golden Retriever were competing for space on its back seat. Graciana floored the accelerator.

Carlos didn't know anyone who seemed more at peace than his colleague. But as soon as she got in her car, a dark Volvo station wagon, she turned into a rally driver. Carlos had seen how her boyfriend, a journalist named João, always held on to the door for dear life.

Colleagues had nicknamed Graciana Rosado, who was 162 centimeters tall, tied her dark hair in a ponytail and wore a thin dress jacket over her jeans and blouse to conceal her weapon, Piaf. To be more precise her professional patron Raul da Silva from Commissariat I in Faro had given her this nickname. Not only because of her small size, but because she had the same raspy voice as Edith Piaf, albeit without the singing talent. But da Silva was the only one who used the nickname when she was in earshot.

“Did you ever sleep with Rui?” Carlos asked.

Graciana gave him a brief hard look. Brief because she was coming up fast behind a Dutch camper van.

“Is that supposed to be a joke?”

Unlike her, Carlos was single. He didn't have a girlfriend, or, as he put it, at least not *one and the same girlfriend*. He spread his arms in mock innocence.

“It wouldn't be a crime.”

Graciana sighed. It certainly wouldn't be. One evening, just when she had met João, something almost happened. Even the memory made her shudder.

Rui Aviola looked as though he had been formed by Michaelangelo himself. A body to die for, deep blue eyes, and a face framed by dark curls. Rui was the very picture of a man. He went through life with a certain solidity that distinguished him from a male model. And he didn't have a big head. In Fuseta, people thought he would make an ideal lover, an ideal son-in-law and an ideal father. Only a certain dullness in his eyes disrupted this overall picture of perfection somewhat.

Graciana might have allowed herself to be seduced one evening in a bar named Farol down by the port, an octagonal building with dark wooden paneling and two doors. Even in December, patrons sat outside watching the brightly colored fishing boats, anchored only ten meters away on the small quay, rocking gently in the waves.

She'd been drinking, and Rui had bought her two or three *medronhos*. The fruits of the strawberry trees, which only grew here in the Algarve, a bit further north in the hinterlands, were handpicked by farmers and distilled into schnapps. Running stills was illegal but had a long tradition in Portugal. The GNR looked the other way and let the farmers get on with it.

The *medronhos* Rui Aviola had bought her that evening only made him even more handsome and irresistible, but Carlos, who hadn't failed to notice Aviola's intentions and Graciana's condition, took her arm without a word and guided her home. Graciana only lived 500 meters further up the Virgílio Inglês No. 5, a pedestrianized street, whose cobblestones had been so worn down by eighty years of use that children could play atop them barefoot.

Sometimes, when sleep was just about to overcome her, Graciana regretted that Carlos had gotten in Rui's way that evening.

"Rui, Rui!"

Young women between the ages of fourteen and sixty had congregated at the gate to say farewell to Rui Aviola, and his female colleagues had insisted on driving him to Faro Airport. Wearing a pair of tight jeans and a half-unbuttoned shirt over his well-tanned chest, he picked up his hand luggage after it had cleared security and blew his admirers a kiss. Graciana and Carlos, who had gotten himself a sandwich, stood off to one side, but also Rui waved in their direction before he turned the corner and disappeared.

For a year. As a part of the Europol exchange program that would bring the people of Fuseta a German from Hamburg.

*Simply the best.* That was what the flyers had said.

*Let's learn from one another. Let's swap our best people.*

According to the gossip, the initiator of the Europol program had thought it up as a way of saving her own position, which was facing an imminent ax. A job creation measure benefiting the creator.

Whatever the case may have been, the exchange program had been up and running for six months. Lisbon had gotten a vivacious female detective from Hungary, Porto a colleague from Edinburgh. Now it was Faro's turn. The hope was to eradicate skepticism toward a greater European police authority among precisely those units that would be the first to be subjected to them.

And Rui of all people had applied for the program.

"What do you want up there?" Carlos had asked him, shaking his head. "It's cold. It's crawling with Germans. You probably have to put your handkerchief over a bar stool to reserve it."

"Maybe," replied Rui, who was deaf to Carlos' irony. "But I want to get out of Fuseta. See something else. Ever heard of the Reeperbahn?"

"Sure. But you don't need that."

"It's too boring here. There are no detective jobs coming free in Faro. And none in Lisbon either."

After listening to Rui's explanation, Carlos Esteves had sighed and avoided looking him in the eye.

His boss, Raul di Silva, who only had three detectives under his command, was glad that the Adonis of Fuseta had stepped forward. He had sold his colleagues in Hamburg a provincial policeman as a full-fledged detective and had thus avoided being understaffed.

Graciana Rosado also knew about Rui's fruitless attempts to transfer to the Polícia Judiciária. Rui Aviola would never make detective. He wasn't smart enough. Graciana had discussed the situation with her Swedis girlfriend Agnes, who had come to Fuseta as a backpacker, never left and had been working for six years in the Farol Bar. Agnes was always trying to get a date with Rui.

"Agnes, Rui would lose a game of chess against this table."

"I know that," Agnes had answered, "but I'm not interested in sleeping with his brain."

Now Fuseta was going to have to make do without Rui for twelve months, and the cluster of disconsolate women at the airport gate dissipated. Carlos Esteves shoved the rest of his sandwich into his mouth.

Graciana Rosado had to grin at the sight of her colleague. She had known Carlos since she was a child. If she thought back hard enough, she could remember at least a hundred different situations. Maybe more. But she would really have to think hard to picture one in which he didn't have something edible in his hand.

"What are you smiling about?"

"Nothing. Everything's cool."

"You think I eat too much."

"No, I don't."

"Hmmm," growled Carlos, casting a glance at the information display of departing and arriving flights.

Carlos Esteves was a man who enjoyed life. He appreciated a lovely piece of Mediterranean croaker, preferably with roasted slices of pineapple, with the same gusto as a perfectly hand-rolled cigarette. Memories of visiting to the football stadium enjoyed the same fond place in his heart as the sight of a sunset from an oceanside dune. Sometimes Graciana envied him for this.

Carlos nodded at the information screen. Graciana followed his gaze. Flight LH 2409 from Hamburg. *Arrived.*

"Lost?"

Carlos, who was a head taller than Graciana, pulled out a crumpled piece of paper containing the complete name of their new colleague from Germany: Leander Lost.

In advance of his arrival, they hadn't thought very much about their guest, whom they'd simply referred to as the Alemão, the German. But that didn't mean they weren't prepared to be hospitable. Like all Portuguese, they had been brought up to show to their guests a hospitality that, although often shamelessly exploited by tourists, bordered on complete self-negation.

They encountered a lot of Germans in the Algarve. Alemães were punctual and liked eating in places with huge portions rather than good food. They didn't throw around either tips or praise lightly. Portuguese people at neighboring tables would look away in embarrassment when they minutely scrutinized the bills in restaurants. Germans were proud of their automotive industry. And they were European champions in complaining.

After the first childless tourists, who chose to travel outside of school vacations, had alighted from the plane, a tall, thin guy in a dark suit with a white shirt and a leather tie appeared. His full dark hair had been cropped to a couple of pragmatic millimeters.

Leander Lost saw the piece of paper Carlos held up in front of his stomach and approached, pushing a trolley with three gigantic pieces of luggage and two voluminous suit bags.

The first thing that struck Detective Graciana Rosado about Leander Lost was that he hardly ever blinked.

“My God, he’s just a child,” sighed Carlos Esteves.

“Nonsense, Carlos. He’s got to be in his mid-thirties.”

“He’s so pale. He looks like he has leukemia.”

“Could you please be nice?”

“I *am* being nice.”

“Senhor Lost?”

“Yes,” the man said in English.

She extended her hand. “Graciana Rosado, sub-inspector of the Polícia Judiciária, and this is my colleague Senhor Carlos Esteves.”

“Olá.”

Carlos shook the German’s hand.

“Olá,” repeated Leander Lost without any great enthusiasm and also somewhat formally. He seemed like the sort of guy who did everything by the book. A German.

From Faro, Graciana Rosado took the national road N125 east. She and Carlos lived in Fuseta, and after some back and forth, they had decided to quarter Leander Lost in the Villa Elias. It was a small house typical of the Portuguese countryside that had belonged to Graciana’s parents and had been empty for seven years.

Carlos sat at her side nibbling on a skewer of meat, Leander Lost sat in the back seat with his seat belt buckled, drinking in the landscape as it flashed past.

Most of the vehicles they passed would have never passed inspection in Germany. Both sides of the road were full of dust. The midday sun emphasized the color of the houses, the street signs and the plastic chairs in front of the bars, where old men sat smoking and drinking beer. Every few hundred meters were large, ribbed garbage cans on the side of the road. The plaster was peeling off the houses, which were mostly painted white with blue, red or yellow trimming. It was replaced by a dark dust that ate its way into the walls. Over everything was a sky of the deepest azure.

Leander Lost didn’t feel comfortable at all. He was a foreigner here. He didn’t know these people. He didn’t know this region. He didn’t know this country.

To calm himself, he counted corners. He’d discovered this miracle cure for unease when he was eleven, applying it to the wooden batons the other kids hit him with. Since then, he had become

quite professional in corner counting. A square room had eight corners. A door in its frame had twelve. The frame, if it wasn't sunken into the wall but rather mounted over the plaster also had twelve. Windows usually had eight, including those of the frame. Thus, an ordinary room with one door and one window and nothing else in it had more than forty corners. If it was tiled, things got really interesting.

Graciana Rosado took stock of their guest in the rear-view mirror. Her great advantage in her job and in life in general was her intuition. She could sense when someone was lying to her or when something wasn't right.

Her boyfriend João was all right. Carlos was, too, albeit in a different way.

Over the year's Graciana's intuition had become a voice only she could hear. It whispered in her ear when someone was lying. And when someone was telling the truth. Although her parents were religious, Graciana didn't attribute this talent to some miraculous divine gift but to what people today call emotional intelligence. It had spoken up about João and Carlos. But it remained silent with Leander Lost.

"Actually we rented an apartment for you directly in Fuseta, but unfortunately there was a change of plans," Carlos Esteves said in his school English, turning to face the German. "The block had problems with the water supply. So you're staying in Alfandanga instead. It's just around the corner from Fuseta, only two kilometers away. It's a house, but it's not that big. Normally it's for two people. Very idyllic."

"Great," said Leander, also in English.

"There's a restaurant across the street with huge portions."

Graciana dug her elbows into Carlos' side.

"We stocked the refrigerator for you," she added. "but if you want something special we can stop at the supermarket."

"Is there some cheese?"

"Yes."

"Then I don't need anything else."

"We also bought some beer," Carlos said. "*Sagres.*"

"Nice of you."

There was a moment of silence in the Volvo. Leander Lost had counted 57 corners when Carlos turned back to him.

"Do you like football?"

"Yes."

Carlos smiled. That was something at least.

“What do you think of Cristiano Ronaldo?”

“He’s a great player,” Leander Lost said. “The best in the world.”

Carlos turned to him again.

“You really think so? Or are you just being polite?”

Leander Lost thought for a moment.

“The two aren’t mutually exclusive. I meant that both seriously and politely.”

Carlos broke out into a broad grin of satisfaction

“It’s just a shame that he plays in Spain,” Leander added. “And it says something that the Portuguese national team was always second best until the European Championship final, when they had to play without him.”

Carlos pursed his lips and turned his gaze back to the road.

“Do you think he means what he says?” he asked Graciana in Portuguese.

“I dunno. Hard to say. He doesn’t look like he laughs much.”

“Yes,” Carlos agreed. “He looks like his face is full of Botox.”

Graciana nodded.

“Not many wrinkles.”

“He stares when he looks at you,” Carlos added between bites on his skewer.

“He has nice eyes,” said Graciana, passing a truck against oncoming traffic. By some miracle they avoided a fatal accident. She turned to Lost and said: “We were discussing internal business.”

Lost nodded. He was up to 121 corners.

The radio hissed. “Graciana?”

It was the voice of Luís Dias. He was radioing from somewhere where another noise joined the hiss of the airwaves.

Luís Dias and Ana Gomes were on the GNR day shift. Together with four other colleagues, they sat in a two-story, pink building with white latticed windows in Moncarapacho, around four kilometers north of Fuseta. Fuseta didn’t have a police station of its own. And the Polícia Judiciária only had one headquarters in the Algarve: in Faro.

Carlos picked up the radio.

“Graciana’s driving. What’s up, Luís?”



Luis Dias and Ana Gomes came from Moncarapacho. They'd never been to another country in their entire lives.

Like all of the "secondary locations" of the Algarve that weren't directly on the Atlantic, the 8000 residents of Moncarapacho were completely at the mercy of the brutal summer heat. Those who could afford it built their houses in the expansive hills on the northwestern edge of town. There, at least there was always a slight breeze, and people had everything they needed. The only tourists who came to Moncarapacho were the best ones: the ones who were interested in Portugal and its people.

"We've got a dead body."

"Where?"

"On the East Island. I'm here with Ana. *O Ohlo*. Looks like he collapsed."

"Cordon off the area," Carlos ordered.

Whereas the western part of the Algarve from Faro to Lagos had been beset by a plague of tourists who had swarmed in like locusts in the late twentieth century, leaving behind massive concrete vacation settlements and menus in English, Spanish, Dutch and German, the eastern Algarve from Faro to Tavira had largely remained untouched. A sixty-kilometer-long nature reserve, the *Ria Formosa* lagoon ran like a protective belt in front of the coastline. Anyone wanting to swim in the sea had to take one of the small ferries that ran in ten-minute intervals out to the islands. There were no hotels on Fuseta's coastline, no army of sun umbrellas, no ice cream salesmen, no boardwalk, no restaurants with a view of the Atlantic, no golf courses irrigated with precious water. No. Thanks to the *Ria Formosa*, aside from a camping grounds, there were none of these horrors. Instead, the area was home to more than 20,000 birds.

"I already did," Luís Dias shot back. "Capitão de Avis has already given three tourists their marching orders. There's no one here anymore."

Graciana and Carlos let out a simultaneous sigh.

De Avis was a captain in the Autoridade Marítima Nacional, the Portuguese coast guard. He showed up every day for work in the dark blue suit, white shirt and aquamarine tie that coast guard officers usually only wore to official ceremonies. He kept his thinning hair carefully concealed under a white cap.

De Avis was convinced that he was a direct descendant of Dom Henrique de Avis, Henry the Navigator, the very man under whom Portugal had become a colonial and global power. Of course the country hadn't enjoyed this status for four hundred years - a loss the Portuguese mourned with the same intensity as Capitão did his once full head of hair. De Avis left no doubt that he was called to something far greater and that he would only serve as coast guard captain in neighboring Olhão until the national parliament in Lisbon would inevitably realize it had made a grave mistake and would appoint him commander of the Portuguese Navy.

"We're on our way," Carlos said. "Don't touch anything. Has Doutora Oliveira been informed?"

“We weren’t sure,” Luís Dias answered. “It looks like an accident.”

Carlos sighed.

Graciana took the radio from his hand.

“Luís?”

“Yes?”

The rushing noise in the background was the Atlantic.

“Call Doutora Oliveira and tell her to get out there. Then get an umbrella and protect O Olho from the sun. We’ll see you in a few minutes.”

With a click, she replaced the radio’s microphone on its fork. Then she said in English: “We have to get down to the coast. A dead body has been found. We’ll drop you off. I’ll call by later, if that’s okay with you.”

“No need to do that,” Leander responded in Portuguese. “I’ll come with you. As of now, we’re working together anyway. I think it’s only fair to let you know I can understand you when you talk in your native language.”

Graciana and Carlos froze. The man spoke with a hard German accent, but aside from the odd mispronunciation, his Portuguese was impeccable. The two detectives felt their cheeks burn with shame.

“O Olho – the eye,” Lost continued, undisturbed. “That must be a man’s nickname.”

Carlos cleared his throat.

“You speak our language. That should make a lot of things...um...easier.”

“I thought it would optimize conversation. So I taught myself the basics, once it became clear that I fulfilled the criteria for an exchange.”

“How admirable,” said Graciana, gesturing to the left where a dirt road joined the street between a house with boarded-up windows and a gigantic cactus. “Down that road, maybe three hundred meters, is your new home.”

Lost nodded.

*The basics*, thought Carlos Esteves. For the basics the Alamo sure knew a lot of words.

Graciana Rosado briefly switched on the siren, and the traffic in front of her on the N125 pulled over to the left and right, as though Moses had parted the Red Sea. She sped through the middle and turned right toward Fuseta.

“We said something about your face.”

“A face full of Botox was what Senhor Esteves said,” Leander said. “Am I pronouncing Esteves correctly?”

“Perfectly,” said Carlos in a weak voice.

“We were admiring how young your face looked,” Graciana said.

“Aha. It was a kind of...joke?”

Carlos sighed with relief.

“Yeah, that’s right. A joke. A...comic remark.”

“Just being flippant,” added Graciana, smiling conspiratorially at the German.

Lost nodded and returned the smile, a strange one, since it was not reflected in his eyes.

“O Olho is in fact a nickname,” said Carlos in an attempt to get the conversation back on firmer footing. “A nickname for a man who worked as a private detective in the Algarve.”

Leander Lost leaned back. His inner unease had disappeared.

217 corners.

## 2.

On the way to Fuseta, they passed a school and some dried out fields baking in the midday sun. Then they crossed a train track and headed down the Rua General Humberto Delgado. Between white, two-story houses and paved sidewalks, on the other side of the broad green stretch of the Ria Formosa, everything was deep blue. The Atlantic.

For a brief, pleasant moment, Leander Lost allowed the image to work upon him.

Two cars blocked the way. Their female drivers showed no sign of interrupting their chat, so Graciana Rosado was forced to drive through the old city. The narrow street rose steep and straight. The white, blue or brown tiled facades of the houses were built so close to the road that the sidewalk was only wide enough for a single pedestrian.

Most of the houses were terraced, forming one long, varying wall with narrow entrances and small window, from which an occasional air conditioning unit or balcony protruded. With the square, decorated chimneys and flat roofs, almost all of which had cozy terraces with great views, there was no mistaking the street’s Moorish influences.

Low lying power lines and brightly colored ropes with people’s washing waving in the salty breeze criss-crossed above the street. Old men in rough suits and flat caps sat in front of the doors to their houses, smoking cigarettes. Children played on the sidewalk and toiled around on their bikes and skateboards in the street. Cats slept under cars, exploiting the shade. Later when the shadows grew longer, they’d go out on the hunt.

They passed a square, where residents of Fuseta were strolling around, eating ice cream in cafés and drinking *medronho* or white wine. In one corner, a couple of boys were kicking a football. The Portuguese took great care with their appearance, Leander Lost noted. The men were dressed in jeans or suit pants with precisely ironed shorts, while the women wore dresses or skirts and blouses.

All of them, with the older generation at the center, seemed to have enough spare time to enjoy life. Men with white hair told old stories and laughed. Older women swapped news from their windows. Young men in black track suits and white shorts, some with their hair slicked back, stood on the corner smoking and discussing matters of great importance, at least as far the expressions on their faces suggested. A short distance off, a couple of young women had congregated around a wooden bench challenging the young men, staring and then immediately looking down at the ground with a smile when their glances were returned.

Time here had stood still. That realization suddenly dawned on Leander Lost. There were no large department stores, mega-supermarkets, billboards, gigantic highways or anything like that. If you had been able to take Fusetá's pulse, it would have been steady and calm.

Graciana Rosado piloted the unmarked police car, which attracted no particular notice, with unconscious assurance and at a high speed through all of this. Using the orientation of a native who knew every curve and street corner since she was a child, she found the quickest path through the turmoil, until the houses disappeared and they could see the ferry landing and the canal.

The Farol Bar was across the street from the landing, where a launch with thirty tourists was departing. They parked and took a water taxi driven by a young woman. It had a powerful outboard motor that belched the stench of diesel every time she throttled back.

"This is Teresa," Graciana said by way of introductions. "And this is Senhor Lost."

"Olá," said Teresa smiling. "You're the Alemão who come to replace Rui."

"Yes," said Leander.

At the end of the canal, where it gave way into shallow ocean water, they overtook the launch headed right to the West Island.

"That's the Ria Formosa," Carlos Esteves shouted to be heard above the wind. "It a big nature preserve that protects us from the tourists."

He grinned. When Leander Lost didn't return the grin, he shrugged and motioned ahead to where bits of land rose from the open water.

"Those are sandbars. They break the waves, which is why the waters are so calm between there and Fusetá."

That was true. The surface of the water was almost as flat as a lake. Every few meters on the coast, there was someone fishing, and drivers in wet suits went after mussels. Teresa gunned the outboard, the bow of the boat rose, spray flew everywhere, and they all leaned forward to avoid getting wet.

The water taxi headed down a channel some thirty meters wide that separated the two islands and ploughed its way through the Atlantic waves. Teresa steered the boat through the surf with the same familiarity with which Graciana Rosado had navigated her car through Fusetá.

Leander Lost licked his lips. They tasted salty.

In the middle of their trip, a water taxi driven by a man crossed their path. The passenger was a guy around forty with long curly hair that flapped in the wind.

*"Porra! Que coincidência!"* Graciana called against the wind to Carlos, her tone making it clear that she considered this anything but a coincidence. *"Tobias Faria."*

The man had two cameras hung around his neck and wore a vest with pockets full of lenses. As the two taxis passed one another, he smiled and blew a kiss to Graciana Rosado and Carlos Esteves.

Graciana ignored the man, while Leander Lost had no idea what the gesture meant. Carlos' face darkened. *"Filho da puta!"* he screamed at the receding Faria. He turned to his colleague.

"Did you get a load of that?"

Graciana nodded.

"Of course. In thirty minutes at the latest, his article about the dead body will be on the *Correio da Manhã's* website."

"The next time I catch him at a crime scene..."

"The problem is: he always gets there first," Graciana said. "And we don't know yet that it is a crime scene."

Carlos nodded grudgingly. And felt someone staring at him from behind. He turned around. The Almão was in fact observing with great interest.

"Senhor Faria is from a daily newspaper?"

"Exactly."

"How old is he? He looks around forty."

"Good guess," Graciana said.

"Yes, why do you ask?" added Carlos.

Lost was silent for a moment, his brow knitted.

"And his mother is still in the trade?"

The two Portuguese detectives squinted, trying to ascertain whether this was a joke. Perhaps an example of the German sense of humor?

It wasn't.

"We use it as...um... an insult."

The creases in Lost's brow disappeared.

"Yes, I understand."

"I...forgot for a moment that you speak Portuguese. Senhor Faria works for a tabloid. If he had his way, he'd rather photograph a murder than prevent one. It would be an insult to birds to call him a vulture."

The German smiled.

Teresa throttled back the outboard, the bow descended, and the motor pattered along. The island was uninhabited and only had vegetation in its center, which was covered by thick dune grass.

Leander Lost and his new colleagues spotted a beached white boat lying almost parallel to the coastline with its underside facing the sea. The white speed boat of the Autoridade Marítima Nacional was already heading off toward the east. The figure of Capitão de Avis loomed at the rail and raised its arm in half-casual, half-official greeting.

The cabin of the stranded boat stretched up diagonally toward the sky, its right railing almost touching the sand. Green and white canvas spread out behind the cabin. Its edges quivered in the wind.

Next to the boat in the white sand were two officers wearing the uniform of the Guarda Nacional Republicana. One was a thin blonde woman, and the other was a stout fellow who had grown bald on the top of his head. Teresa let them out and then sped off. The thin blonde was Ana Gomes, and the semi-bald guy was Luís Dias.

Except for the police officers it was a desert island paradise. The beach ran for a good hundred meters before it hit the water, which shimmered green and blue as gentle waves lapped at the shoreline. Bright warm sand continued eastward for kilometers. A group of seagulls stood around a tideway, picking at the soft wet sand with their beaks.

Ana Gomes and Luís Dias from the GNR eyed Leander Lost with polite curiosity, although Gomes involuntarily made a face that seemed to say that Fuseta had gotten the worst part of the deal in the Aviola-Lost exchange.

The diagonal lurch of the boat had caused the body of the dead man to slide into the corner between the deck and the side wall, where it lay largely in the shade of the green-and-white umbrella. Luís and Ana said that they had confiscated the umbrella from the three tourists whom Capitão de Avis had sent back to the mainland after ordering Gomes to make note of their identity. They were a British family named Henderson.

De Avis had immediately disavowed responsibility for this case because the keel of the boat had run aground. Aground meant land, and land meant the GNR, and land meant that Capitão de Avis no longer had to worry about it.

Irritated, Carlos Esteves looked back and forth between Gomes and Dias.

"Haven't you forgotten something?" he asked, stretching his words as though he were talking to children.

"Forgotten?" repeated Dias, glancing at his partner who sought to offer support to his dilettantish performance of an innocent policeman by making a surprised face.

“Wasn’t Faria here a few minutes ago?” Carlos asked.

Graciana was less patient.

“He took pictures of the body – yes or no?”

“Yes,” Dias admitted.

“And how did he know that a body had washed up here?” Carlos continued. “A twinge in his big toe? Telepathy?”

“Police shortwave?” Ana Gomes was so pleased that this explanation had occurred to her that she burst out in a grin.

Carlos looked back and forth between the two for a moment.

“That must be the answer, Ana,” he said finally. “Police shortwave, of course. It would be terrible if people started saying that one of us was tipping off Tobias Faria in return for a small financial consideration.”

“That would be terrible,” Gomes said.

“Yes, horrible,” agreed Dias.

Carlos Esteves sighed and left the matter there.

Graciana Rosado climbed on board the boat to examine the body. A shadow fell over her, and she looked up to see Leander Lost leaning on the railing watching her.

“The Hendersons were a couple from Brighton with a small child,” Ana Gomes read from her notes, while Graciana put on plastic gloves, felt for a pulse, turned the deceased’s head and looked at his wound and the dark purple hematoma that stretched from the man’s hairline down to his left eye socket.

“O Olho,” Leander Lost said.

“Yes.”

Graciana put the contents of the man’s pockets in a see-through pouch Leander held open for her.

“Obrigada,” she said, thanking him.

“Who owns the boat?” Carlos Esteves asked.

Ana Gomes had apparently not thought to find out who the boat’s owner was. She looked over at Dias as if to say: He’s been on the force longer – that’s his job. Dias briefly shrugged.

Carlos nodded, thinking: Why doesn’t this surprise me?

Since he had first met Luís Dias, back when he was at the police academy, the man had constantly complained about being passed over for promotion. Dias was now 62, but he still wasn't capable of calling the coroner on his own when a dead body was found. Instead, he spent all day sitting at the station in front of a fan, wagering with Gomes about how many insects would get grilled by the bug zapper that day and putting on little performances for the clueless tourists outside. He would only receive a single promotion in his entire career. Directly before he was due to retire. It would be an act of pity designed to raise his pension to a level that would allow him to live decently in his old age.

If it had been up to Carlos, even though the letter of the law always took a back seat to his own sense of right and wrong, Dias would not get a promotion. But Graciana had a big heart, and a kind one too. Her kindness would mean that Luís Dias would receive the sort of financial reward which, objectively, he didn't deserve. It was usually the captain of the local GNR station who put officers up for promotion, but since there was no captain in Moncarapacho, Graciana would put in a good word.

As far as the hierarchy between Graciana and Carlos was concerned, she treated him as an equal, which was how she really felt, although if push came to shove, she was his commanding officer. Sometimes, Carlos had to admit to himself her support for Dias was okay. At least since he had been transferred back to Moncarapacho, he was no longer teaching academy students how to do slack police work.

"Okay," said Carlos. "Let's find out who owns this thing! If I remember correctly O Olho didn't have a boat."

Luís Dias nodded while Ana Gomes jotted down the order in her notebook.

"What then?"

Carlos sighed.

"Then we find out when he rented the boat. Where he wanted to go to. When he left. Isn't that sort of obvious?"

"Sure," Dias lied and set off with his partner to call a water taxi.

The two of them had developed a sense for when Carlos' patience was nearing an end. It was as though they had tiny feelers that vibrated when a storm was approaching. Gomes and Dias shooed away the roughly two dozen seagulls on the tideway as they went to call the water taxi.

When Carlos turned his attention back to the body, he saw the Alemão inspecting the boat.

"Isn't there a central registry in Portugal for boat owners?" he asked.

"No, not for this size of boat," answered Graciana.

"That would be useful."



Graciana and Carlos swallowed. Lost didn't mean his remark as a criticism, but it still sounded like one in their ears.

"We've had good results with it in Germany, for instance, in our efforts to track down smuggling networks."

"We could suggest it," said Graciana.

"Till now we've done well without one," said Carlos in a somewhat pressed voice.

"Sure, but with a central register, you could immediately find out who the boat's owner is," Leander Lost continued. "We'd know that right now, Sub-Inspector Esteves."

Carlos lowered his arms and faced the German.

"Here's a token," said Lost who had discovered a tiny metal sign near the boat's wheel. "Filipe Carvalho from Arroiteia...and a mobile phone number, I think."

Graciana approached, nodded and looked over at Carlos, who also gave a brief nod. Filipe Carvalho was well known. He lived in a shack next to a bare-bones restaurant on the shore of the lagoon, *Restaurante Ilhote*.

Just then, the water taxi sped up and Teresa let out three other passengers, two men and a woman, before she took Dias and Gomes on board for the trip back to Fuseta.

One of the men was wearing faded jeans, a shirt, a uniform jacket and sunglasses, while the other, shorter man had on a suit and looked as though he worked out a lot.

The woman accompanying them had tied her grey hair into a ponytail. It was the coroner Doutora Oliveira. Graciana Rosado introduced her to Leander Lost. She took stock of him with something like sympathetic curiosity, before getting on with her work and inspecting the body.

Her companion with the sunglasses was Inspector Raul da Silva, Graciana Rosados and Carlos Esteves' immediate superior. He was a congenial-seeming man in his mid-forties who politely removed his sunglasses when he shook the German's hand.

"I'm very happy that you are strengthening our team for a year," he said in English. "I hope we'll be able to learn a lot from one another."

He flashed the German a winning smile.

"*Sim,*" agreed Leander, "*estou com muito curiosidade de saber as diferenças entre Alemanha e Portugal.*"

Inspector da Silva was just as astonished as the detectives at Lost's Portuguese who had just informed him that he was looking forward to discovering the differences between Germany and Portugal.

The second man gave Leander Lost a very firm handshake. His dark hair was exactly parted, and he smelled of aftershave.

"I'm Miguel Duarte," he said, "a sub-inspector like Senhora Graciana and Senhor Esteves."

"Pleased to meet you," said Leander.

Carlos shot his colleagues a suspicious glance.

"What are you doing here? Do you want to take over the case?"

"Is it a case?" said Duarte with a smug smile.

"Would you be here if it weren't?"

"Hold your horses," said Da Silva raising his open palm in a gesture of pacification. "Duarte is here because he happened to be sitting in my car."

He turned to Leander Lost, jovially.

"As far as the differences between our two countries go, when we examine them closely, perhaps we'll find that there aren't all that many."

"It must rain more where you're from in any case," said Miguel Duarte.

"Yes. In Hamburg we have an annual average precipitation of 772.7 millimeters a year."

"I see."

"And 129.4 rainy days. Do you know how many rainy days there are here?"

"No," admitted da Silva. "30?"

"56," Lost corrected.

"Very interesting," da Silva lied. "But now I'd like to have a look at the body if I may."

"Of course."

It quickly emerged that O Olho had a broken neck. The wound between his eye and his hairline was caused by a blunt instrument.

"Wood, maybe metal, but without any sharp edges, it appears," Doutora Oliveira dictated with a surprisingly deep voice into her mobile phone, before adding to da Silva: "I can tell you more precisely when I've looked at this under a microscope."

Da Silva nodded.

"Accident or foul play?"

Graciana and Carlos had already asked themselves that very question.

"A neck doesn't break very easily," da Silva said.

"Senhor Conrad may have hit his head, for instance on the edge of the cabin, and then been unlucky enough to fall in a way that he snapped his second vertebra. Or maybe he slipped on the stairs, and both injuries happened simultaneously."

“Or someone hit him,” said Duarte.

“We’ll find out,” said Oliveira. “The boat needs to be cordoned off. You can tow it to the harbor, but someone needs to guard it until tomorrow morning.

“Dias!” Graciana and Carlos said simultaneously.

[END OF SAMPLE]