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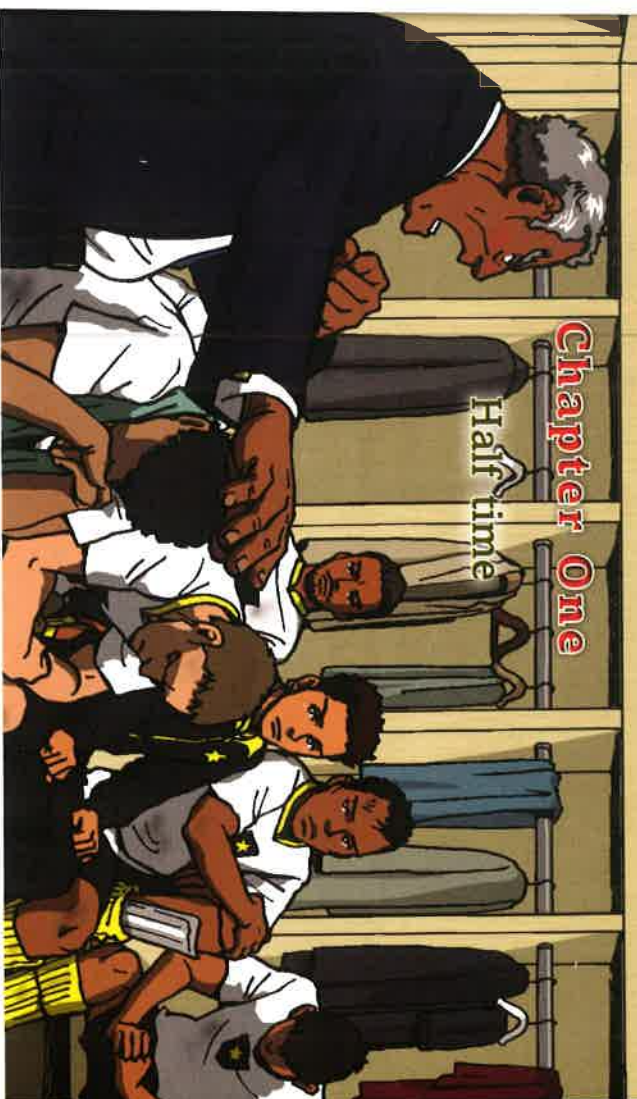


One

**DOMINOES**

# Football Forever

*Andrea Sarto*



'Badi Very badi' the **coach** says angrily.

It's the last **game** of the year. We need to **win** to get the **Cup**. 'We' is Stars, my new football **team**, and I'm Albertino, or Tino to my friends.

Our team are losing 2-0 to Stripes. They've got some good players and are playing well, but I know we can play better.

'Badi Very badi' the coach says again. They call him 'Zangado' - 'angry' in Portuguese. He looks **around** the changing room. His hair is white, his face is red.

'We must win this game! Do you want to win the Cup or not?'

We want to win, but nobody answers. The players are looking down - all but three of us. The first is my friend, Junior. He's nineteen and comes from my hometown. He's a good player and my best friend. I like him a lot. I remember we played *futsal* when we were children. *Futsal* is football with only five players in the team. It's a fast game!

**coach** a person who helps and teaches players

**game** something that you play

**win (past won)** to be the best in a game

**Cup** you get this when you win an important game

**team** a number of people who play together in a game

**around** all the way round

The second is Lenda. He's thirty and he comes from São Paulo. He's the **captain** of Stars and a very good player. He played for the Brazilian team when he was younger. I saw him play and I had a picture of him in my bedroom. But he doesn't like me because I'm new... and very young.

The third is me, Tino. I'm only sixteen, but I live football. In the day, I play football; at night, I sleep football. I eat and drink football! The beautiful game! Stars is my first big team and I'm very happy to be here. I know I'm young, but it doesn't matter. I've got two quick feet – I'm not tall, but I'm very fast, and **stronger** than other boys of sixteen. I can play **forever**.

I didn't play in the first half. I waited and watched, but I could do nothing, of course. We went 1–0 down after ten minutes, then 2–0 down five minutes before half time. Ouch!

'OK,' the coach says suddenly. 'I want much more from all of you in the second half. We must play better, so I'm going to make some changes.'

Now all the players look up.

'You and you,' the coach says to two players. 'You worked well, but I'm making two changes.'

'Nakano, are you ready?' he asks a different player.

'Yes, coach,' says Nakano.

'OK. You're on.' Then he looks around. Who's the next player? I feel my hands get hot. Coach Zangado looks past me. Then he looks back. 'Tino, are you ready?'

'Who – me?' I ask.

'Yes – you. You're the only Tino here.'

'Er, yes, coach. I'm ready.'

'OK. You're up front, with Lenda. We need a **goal** early in the second half. Understand?'



'Yes, coach.'

Junior looks at me and gives a big smile. Lenda looks at me, but he doesn't smile. He's thinking, 'Who is this boy? How good is he? Can he help us win?'

I can't answer these questions, but I feel very happy and excited. My shirt is white: number 20 with 'TINO' in big black letters on the back. On the front is a big star. I pull up my right **sock**, then my left. In my left sock there is something for good **luck**: a little star.

**sock** you wear this on your feet in your shoe  
**luck** when things happen to you that are very good or very bad



My mother gave the little star to me when I began to play *futsal*. 'Here, Thino – take this for luck. You're little now, but one day you're going to be a big star, an **amazing** player. I know it. You're going to play for a big team.' I love my mother. She's here today, with my younger brother,

Alex, and my little sister, Talita. My hometown is watching the game on TV, but my father isn't here today.

He doesn't want to come, he says.

'Sshh! Now listen to me,' says the coach. Everybody in the changing room is suddenly very quiet, and we can hear the big clock.

'It isn't finished. OK, we're 2–0 down. Not good. But we've got forty-five minutes. Anything can happen in football, you know that. Stars is a good team; Stripes is an OK team. They've got one good player: their **keeper**. He's a big man and he can stop a lot, but he's only one man. Let's play our game. Move the ball and work for the team. Don't stand and think. Play with your feet, and when you can, **shoot!** This is Brazilian football. It's easy!'

The players are looking at coach Zangado. 'He's right,' says Lenda. 'The game isn't finished. We can do it.'

'But do you want to win?' asks the coach.

'Yes,' some of the players say.

'I can't hear you,' says the coach. 'Do you want to win?'

This time all of the players **shout** 'Yes!'

'And can you do it?' asks the coach.

'Yes!' shout the players.

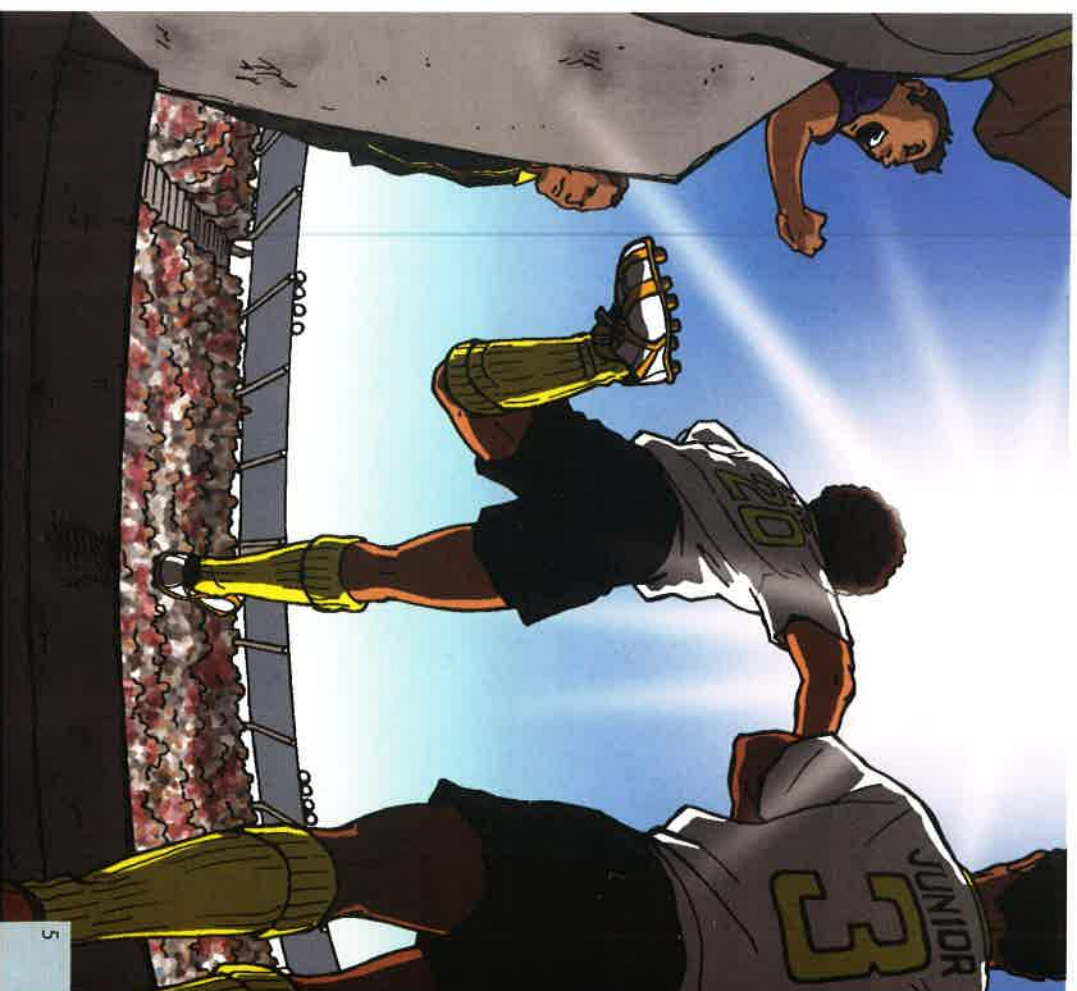
'Come on – we can do it!' the captain shouts. He looks in our eyes. 'OK, let's go!'

We all walk out of the changing room. I've got **butterflies** in me, but I feel good. Butterflies are OK in my first big game! The **fans** shout when we run onto the **pitch**. The noise is amazing. The pitch is very green and it suddenly feels very, very big. I look around. There are thousands and thousands of fans – some in white shirts, some in red shirts. White is our colour; red is the colour of Stripes. They're all watching the game, and watching me. 'Come on, Thino!' I say quietly. I know I can do it!

**butterflies** an excited feeling before doing something important

**fans** people who like football a lot

**pitch** where you play a game of football; usually green



## Chapter Two

### Second half

**forward** a player at the front of a team who usually gets goals

**midfielder** a player behind the forwards

**pass** to give the ball to a player when he needs it

**tackle** to take the ball off a player on the other team

**score** to get a goal

**defender** a player at the back of a team who tackles a lot

**shot** when you hit the ball with your foot at the goal

**mean** not nice

**kick** to hit the ball with your foot

My team is playing 3–5–2. I'm up front with Lenda, the captain. He's a **forward** with an amazing right foot.

Our five **midfielders** are all good, but the best one is Bruno. He's from Argentina and can **pass**, **tackle**, and **score** with his right or left foot. I usually shoot with my right foot, but my left is getting stronger.

Our three **defenders** are tall and strong. My friend Junior is a defender — he can tackle really well. He's good with his head and watches the ball carefully, too.

Right now, Stripes have got the ball. They pass it from player to player and then back to the keeper. He's their captain and he comes from the USA: 'Captain America', the fans call him. He's two metres tall, and his big hands and feet can easily stop a **shot**. He changed the colour of his hair for this game — now it's red. Wow! He looks **mean**. He **kicks** the ball eighty metres down the pitch, but our defenders get it and pass it to the midfielders.



I run fast, so no Stripes players are near me.

'I'm free!' I shout, but nobody hears me.

The midfielders pass the ball slowly. Bruno sees me, but doesn't pass it. The ball comes to Lenda, and I make a run through the Stripes defenders.

'Lenda — over here!'

He doesn't pass it. He doesn't want to pass it. I need to kick the ball or my butterflies aren't going to go. Fifteen minutes into the second half and nothing. Right. The ball isn't going to come to me, so... I run back into our half of the pitch. Now my friend Junior's got the ball. I put my hand up and he plays a nice pass to my feet. At last!

Suddenly somebody shouts, 'Man on!'

Oh no! I lose the ball to a Stripes midfielder. I run back and tackle him, but he **falls** over. The **whistle** goes. What? Free kick to Stripes — oh no! The first time I get the ball, and I give Stripes a free kick. The fans shout and I feel bad, but it's going to get worse. The **ref** is walking up to me with a yellow **card** in his hand.

'Bad tackle from behind,' he says.

It's my first game for my new team.

Lenda looks at me and he's thinking: 'This boy's no good. He can't help us win. He can only make us lose!'

'Come on, Tino!' shouts Junior. 'It doesn't matter.'

He's right — it's only a free kick. I run and stand next to the defenders. Our keeper's name is **Falcão** and he shouts: 'Four! I want four men in front. Move to the left, more, more!'



**fall** (or **fall**) to go down quickly

**whistle** a small thing that makes a noise to stop a game

**ref** (**referee**) the person in football who controls the game; he or she usually wears a black shirt

**card** the ref can show this for a foul; it is yellow or red

**Falcão** /fal'ka'o/

Then the whistle again. A Stripes forward hits the ball with his right foot – a good shot over our heads – but Falcão **saves** it. Yes! I run up to him.

'Good save!'

He smiles with his eyes. 'You give good luck, Tino!'

Five minutes later, I get the ball again, but this time the home fans whistle. Is it because I'm new... or because I gave away a free kick? They want me to go off. Why did I leave my hometown to play for Stars? My father was right. 'Don't go,' he said. 'You're not ready. Stars is a big team and you're very young.'

'But Dad, I said, 'I watched Stars play when I was six years old. Now I'm sixteen. It's time for me to go.'

'You think you're a man.'

'No, that's not it. I only want to be the best.'

'OK,' he said at last. 'You can go, Tino, but I don't want to watch you play.'

That's why my father isn't here today with my family.

**save** to stop the ball from going in the goal



Arg! Just then, a Stripes defender tackles me – a really mean tackle. He kicked my leg. Now he's got the ball and I'm sitting on the pitch.

'**Foul!**' I shout.

'No,' says the ref.

No whistle, no foul, and no free kick. And we're 2-0 down. What a game! But I'm not going to stop playing. It's time for me to start. 'Come on, Tino,' I think.

I get up and run after the defender. He passes it to another player, but it's not a strong pass. Can I get there before him? Yes! I've got the ball. I put my foot on it and look up. There are two defenders in front of me, and the keeper. I **dribble** past one defender and then kick the ball between the legs of the other. Now the keeper comes out to meet me – Captain America, with his mean red hair. How can I get past him? His arms and legs are long, and his hands are very big, too.

'Tino!' Lenda suddenly shouts. He's running into the **box** on my left. I look right, but kick the ball left: a 'no-look pass'. Captain America is big, but he can't move that fast. Lenda hits the ball – a strong shot... he scores! Goal!

Now we're only 2-1 down. The fans shout. All the players in my team run up to Lenda.

'Well done! Good goal!'

Then Lenda comes up to me and gives me a **high five**.

'Nice pass, Tino.' He smiles and I smile back. But then we look at the clock.

**foul** to tackle a player in the wrong way  
**dribble** to run with the ball at your feet  
**box** one of two small areas in front of the goal on a pitch  
**high five** when you hit a person's hand with your hand because you are happy



## Chapter Three

### Three minutes left

Three minutes... there are only three minutes left. Where did all the time go?

My team, Stars, are losing 2-1 to Stripes. The winner of this game gets the Cup. Usually the strongest and best teams win the Cup. I passed to our captain, Lenda, and he scored. But we need one more goal – an **equalizer** – to make the game 2-2.

Most of us are tired, but I didn't play in the first half, so I feel OK. I'm running after the Stripes defenders to get the ball. They take it to the **corner** of the pitch, and watch the clock go down. But I run after them and I don't stop moving. I learned to do this when I played *futsal* as a boy. There are only five players in a *futsal* team, so you run and tackle a lot – all the time.

**equalizer** the goal that makes the score 1-1, 2-2 etc

**corner** where the two sides of the pitch meet, when you kick the ball from here to the goal

**Ronaldinho** /ronaw'dʒɪnu/

Two minutes to go. Now I'm running fast and the pitch under my feet is green – a beautiful green. This was different when I was younger, of course. Before we moved to my hometown, I lived in a village. There were no green pitches. Only a dirty, orange pitch under a hot, hot sun. We played football for hours: me and my friends; me and my little brother, Alex. We were all the best players at once. And Kaká passes to Robinho, Robinho to **Ronaldinho**, Ronaldinho shoots... he scores!

I scored a lot of goals on that orange pitch, but today I only need to score one. And I need to score it now. There's one minute left to save the game. Sixty seconds.

The fans are shouting 'Stars! Stars!' Our fans are in white; the Stripes fans are in red. Then one of the Stripes



defenders quickly passes the ball to a midfielder. He dribbles the ball up the pitch and passes to a forward. This doesn't look good. The forward goes past a Stars midfielder... and then a defender. Oh no! This Stripes player is good – he gets near the goal and he's going to shoot. I must stop him. I can tackle him, but it's going to be **tough**. Earlier, I gave Stripes a free kick and I got a yellow card! This time, the forward is in the box, so I don't want to give away a **penalty**. Not with only one minute to go and my team 2-1 down!

I run fast and – yes! – I tackle him. No whistle. I've got the ball. Our keeper, Falcão, wants it. 'Tino, pass it to me. I'm going to kick it into their box.' But I don't listen. Something tells me to go, go, go! I dribble past a Stripes player and then do a **one-two** with Junior. I go past another player and then pass to Bruno. All the time I'm running fast. Bruno dribbles it and then passes it back to me. I can see Lenda is running thirty metres away, across the pitch. It's a tough pass, but I hit it first time and the ball goes to his feet.

**tough** not easy

**penalty** a shot from in front of the goal because of a foul

**one-two** when you pass the ball to a player and then that player passes it back to you

**halfway line** the long white mark between each half of the pitch

I run across the **halfway line**. Lenda has two defenders in front of him. He goes past one and then looks up. Nobody from Stars is there to help him. Only me. How many seconds are there on the clock?

**jump** to move quickly into the air

Lenda takes the ball into the corner. Why? OK, I know! The two defenders go after him. This leaves me free –

**miss** to go to get the ball, but not get it

there's nobody near me. Lenda dribbles around one of the defenders, he **crosses** the ball, and I run quickly into the box. Their keeper, Captain America, **jumps** but **misses** it!

**dive** to jump down near the pitch

Oh no – I'm not going to get there! I **dive** and head the ball. My eyes are open and then they close as I fall on the pitch.

**net** this stops the ball when there is a goal

Where did the ball go? The shout from the fans tells me where. In the back of the **net**! Gooaaal! The equalizer. I did it! We did it! I can't **believe** it. To score in my first game is

**believe** to think that something is true

amazing, but to score the equalizer is really amazing!



I hear the whistle and the Stars players run up to me. 'Tino – you did it! What a goal! Wow!' Everybody jumps on me.

I can hear the fans: 'Tino! Tino! Tino!'

I can't believe it. We've got a **chance** to win. The game's going to go to **extra time**.

Now the fans are singing: 'Tino! Tino! Tino!'

I get up as Lenda arrives. He's smiling and he puts his hand on my head.

'Tino, the fans know your name now, I think.'

Then he **claps** his hands and the fans clap with him.

**chance** if something can happen

**extra time** more time (usually thirty minutes) so one team can win

**clap** to hit your hands together to show that you like something





## Chapter Four

### Full time

We've got a chance. It's 2-2, so there's going to be extra time. Thirty minutes.

Coach Zangado comes onto the pitch and says to everybody: 'Well played! You got the two goals, but now the real game starts. It's going to be tough, but you can do it. I believe in you. The fans believe in you.'

He gives every player a high five. We're all drinking water and some of us are sitting down on the pitch.

'Get up!' Zangado shouts. 'You're tired. I know. But you're very **lucky** too. You're playing football – the game you love. When you were young boys, you wanted to be here in front of thousands of fans. It was your **dream**. wasn't it? Well, today the dream is true, so be strong and do your best. That's all I have to say. Now listen to Lenda.'

We stand around Lenda for the team talk. We put our arms on the **shoulders** of the players next to us. At first, Lenda is quiet. He looks down and then he looks up – into our faces. His eyes meet our eyes.

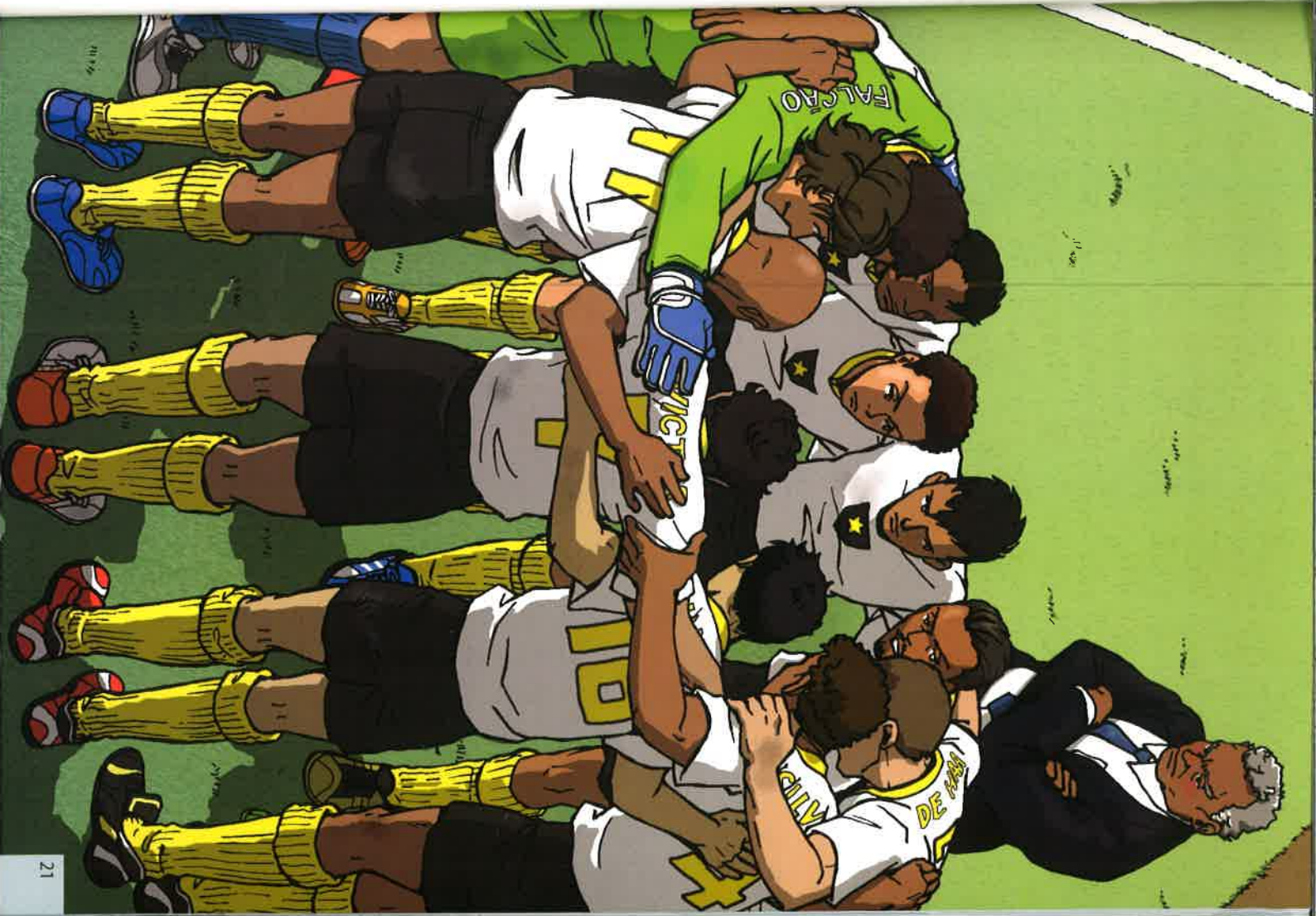
'Brothers,' he says, 'when I played for the Brazilian team, we won lots of games. It was easy. We had amazing players and they could do everything. They played for the team. Brazil is football: football is Brazil. Here at Stars, it's no different. Look at Tino. This is his first game for us. He's new, but he runs and runs. He gave away a free kick and got a yellow card, but he also made the pass for the first goal and scored the second.'

I feel my friend Junior's hand on my shoulder. He's smiling at me.

**lucky** when something happens that is good for you

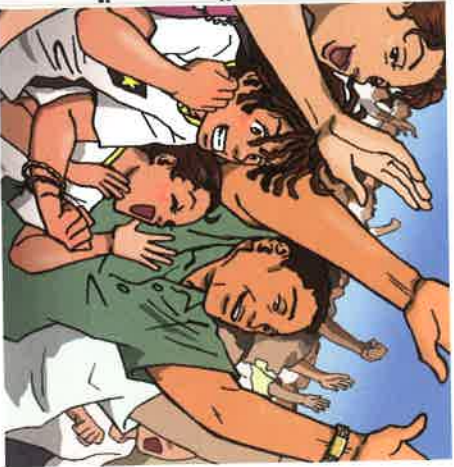
**dream** something you want to happen

**shoulder** this is between your neck and your arm



Then Lenda is talking again, 'Think of this as *your* first game for Stars, too. Work, work, work! Play your best football, but be happy. You're doing this for the team, for your friends and family, for the fans. Remember, we do everything with love – with our **hearts**. Now let's get out there and play! Stars! Stars!'

We jump up and down and sing: 'Stars! Stars!' Then we stand on the pitch and wait for the whistle. I look up at all the people. My family is sitting with the Stars fans. In the first half, I couldn't look at them because I wasn't playing. In the second half, I didn't look at them because I was on the pitch and I was working. I can see my mother – she's



**waving**. My younger brother, Alex, and my little sister, Talita, are jumping and shouting and singing. But who's that next to Talita? It's my father! My father is here – he came to see me. He smiles the biggest smile and waves at me. I see his mouth move, 'I love you, son. I'm here. I'm here to watch you. I'm sorry.'

'I love you, too,' I shout. Then I **point** to the star on the front of my shirt.

He smiles again and claps his hands.

For me, this is wonderful. For me, this is everything.

When I was younger, my dream was to play football. I wasn't different from any other boy, I thought. We all wanted to play football, but we weren't all lucky. I know that now. Some of my friends are at school, and some are working. There are two hundred million people in Brazil. They all love football, but not many can play it for money. There's a chance now for me to be a big star, so I must take it.

**heart** the centre of feeling in someone

**wave** to move your hand to say 'Hello or 'Goodbye'

**point** to show something with your hand

I'm only sixteen – so what? I'm from a strong family. The photo on my phone is of me, my parents, Alex, and Talita – when we were by the sea last month. The weather there was good and we had a really wonderful time. In the morning, we all played **keepy-uppy** – my mother, too! We had lunch, and then in the afternoon we went in the sea. The sun was very warm. By evening, we were tired, so we sang, or listened to stories. I was happy, but I also know that things change. I'm not a boy any more; I'm a young man.

What's going to happen tomorrow? I don't know. But what's happening today – here, around me – I can see that. This is a really big chance. No butterflies anymore! It's my time and I'm ready.

**keepy-uppy** a game where you kick the ball up lots of times



## Chapter Five

### Extra time

The first half of extra time finishes. The score is 2–2! No goals and not many chances, but now it's the second half and we've got a corner.

Most of the Stars team are in the Stripes box. Only Falcão – our keeper – and one defender aren't there for the corner.

I go to take it. All our players start to move – they want to get free. I put up my hand and then hit the ball with my right foot – a beautiful cross. That's when I see the Stars keeper, Captain America, kick our best player, Lenda. Lenda falls over and Captain America gets the ball easily.

'Penalty!' I shout to the ref.

Lenda gets up and shouts at Captain America: 'Animal!' But Captain America is two metres tall. He doesn't like it when players shout at him, so he moves his face near to Lenda and looks mean.

'Come on then, old man,' he says.

Lenda isn't afraid of the keeper or his red hair, but then he makes a big **mistake**. In football, you can play tough. You can give 110% and your heart can be hot, but your head must be cold. Lenda kicks Captain America's leg, and the keeper falls over. His hands go to his face. The fans shout noisily and the Stripes players all run to the ref.

It looks bad. Very bad. The ref speaks to his **assistant**, but we can't hear them. Then the ref walks up to Lenda. He's got a card in his hand. What colour? Yellow? Oh no!



It's red. We've only got ten men and there are five minutes left. What are we going to do without our captain?

Lenda gives the captain's **armband** to Bruno, then he walks off the pitch with his head down. He walks past coach Zangado, but Zangado doesn't speak to him. He's very angry. Lenda kicks over a water bottle and walks off.

'4–4–1!' shouts Zangado to the players on the pitch. 'Strong at the back.' There are five minutes to go. Only five minutes and then – penalties.

But five minutes is a long time with only ten players, and Stripes know it. They can win now, they think, and their players start to move the ball well. One pass, two, three, four – we can't get near it. I'm running fast, but going nowhere. Then a long ball goes to a Stripes forward. He dribbles past one of our defenders and shoots. It isn't a good shot, and it's not going to go into the goal, but then the ball hits Junior on the shoulder. No! Falcão dives, but the ball goes into the net. An **own goal**! I don't believe it. We're 2–3 down. The Stripes team run around the pitch, and their fans are jumping and singing – they're going to win, they think.



**armband** the captain of the team wears this on his or her arm

**own goal** when you hit the ball in your team's goal by mistake

**mistake** when you think or do something wrong

**assistant** the person who helps the ref



I go up to Junior. 'Listen – these things happen. There's time to score an equalizer. We did it before; we can do it again.'

'Why me?' says Junior.

'It's bad luck,' I say, 'and luck can change.'

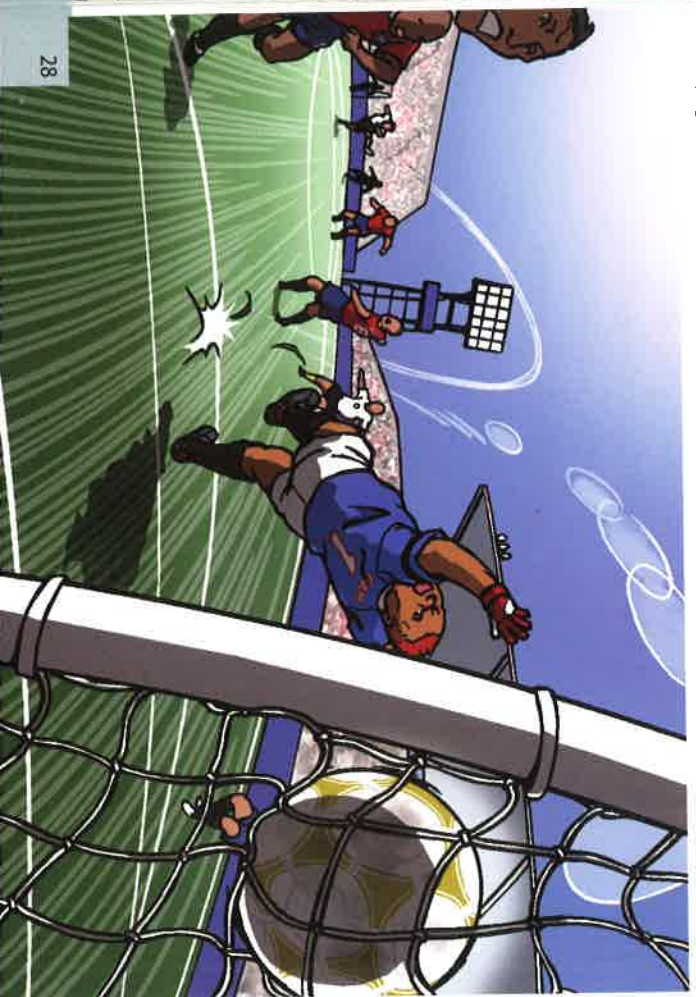
'With four minutes to go? I don't think so.'

'Let's see.'

The game starts again, but we lose the ball. The Stripes defenders are passing it around slowly. Their fans are clapping. Three minutes left. It's going to take something wonderful. Then we win a **throw-in**. One of our midfielders, Nakano, is going to take it. He can throw the ball twenty-five metres, so I put my hand up. I'm on the halfway line and the ball comes to me. It **bounces** once and I look up. There are five or six Stripes players in front of me and then the keeper, Captain America. He isn't standing on the goal line. He's ten metres in front of it, so I hit the ball first time. Why not?

**throw-in** to start the game again by passing the ball to a player with your hands

**bounce** to come down and then go up again



It's an **impossible** shot and it's not going to go in... is it? It bounces and Captain America jumps. His mouth is open in a big 'O'. No! Yes! It goes into the corner of the net. Gooooaaallll! My second goal. I can't believe it. 3–3! The score is 3–3 with only two minutes to go.

The fans go **crazy**; Junior and the players go crazy; Zangado goes crazy. Impossible! I run round the pitch and shout and jump. This is the most amazing game. But it's not finished.

Stripes start the game again quickly. Every Stars player is back in our half. We make tackle after tackle, but can't get the ball. We're very, very tired. One minute left. Then thirty seconds. We need to get to penalties for a fifty-fifty chance.

Suddenly, one of our defenders falls over – what a mistake! A Stripes forward is through on goal. He shoots. Where is the ball going to go? We can only watch and wait. Falcão dives... and misses it... but the ball hits the **bar**! It hits the bar and bounces back. A Stars defender kicks it over the halfway line and then – at last – the whistle goes. How lucky can you be? The answer is: *very*.

**impossible** what cannot be

**crazy** very excited

**bar** long metal piece of the goal



## Chapter Six

### Penalty shoot-out

All of the players are sitting on the pitch. We're very tired. Coach Zangado walks up to the players one by one.

'Well done! Well played! Amazing game!'

He walks up to me. 'Tino – your second goal was wonderful. Things are going to change for you, I think.'

'Thanks, coach.'

'OK, men,' he shouts. 'Let's look at the names.'

We stand around Zangado and he reads the names of five players for the penalties.

'One: Bruno. Two: Nakano. Three: Victor...'

Is he going to say my name?

'Four: Wesley. Five...'

I listen carefully; we all do. Who's going to take penalty number five, the last one?

'Five: Junior.'

Oh. Not me. But good for Junior! I'm happy for him. I give him a high five. 'You can do it. I know you can.'



We all go and stand on the halfway line, with our arms on the shoulders of the players next to us. I'm standing next to Junior. We wait. Stripes are going to take the first penalty. One of their forwards starts the long walk to the penalty **spot**. The fans are shouting noisily. He puts the ball on the spot and then walks back. Our keeper, Falcão, jumps up and down. He waves his arms. The fans go quiet. The Stripes forward looks **cool**. He waits for the ref's whistle, and then runs and kicks the ball. He scores. That's the first penalty, so it's 1-0. Now it's our **turn**.

Bruno walks up to the spot. He usually takes penalties for the team, so he looks very cool. He shoots. Goal! 1-1!

Now it's Stripes' turn again. This time, Falcão gets his hand to the ball, but it's moving very fast. 2-1.

Nakano walks up to the spot for Stars. He looks at the ball and then at the keeper. Captain America isn't moving; he's looking at Nakano and smiling. He looks very big in the goal. It's a tough question for Nakano – **blast** it or put it in the corner? He blasts it and the net jumps: 2-2.

Then Stripes score again: 3-2.

Then Victor scores the equalizer for Stars: 3-3!

Who's going to miss first – us or them? Not them. They score their fourth penalty. Not us. We score our fourth one, too! 4-4!

This is amazing. The fans can't believe it. Now I'm happy because I'm not taking a penalty!

It's the turn of a Stripes midfielder. He walks to the penalty spot slowly. Has he got butterflies? He puts the ball on the spot and then moves it again. He walks back with his head down. He doesn't want to look at the fans or Falcão. He runs up and hits the ball. Savel Falcão saves it with his legs! For the first time in the game, we've got

**spot** where you put the ball to take a penalty

**cool** not excited or angry

**turn** when it's your time to do something

**blast** to shoot very hard

a good chance to win. We only need to score the next penalty; and it's Junior's turn.

'Take your time', I say to Junior. 'And remember – don't suddenly change the shot at the last second.'

'OK, I know,' he says and walks up the pitch. We all watch him go. 'This is it,' I think. 'We can win! My friend's going to score this penalty and it's going to get us the Cup.'

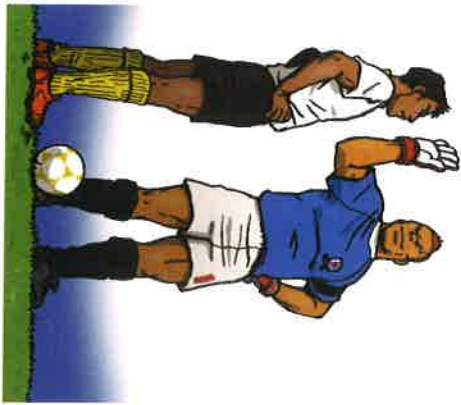
When we played *futsal*, Junior took the penalties. He usually put it right in the corner and no keeper could stop it. But what about Captain America?

When Junior arrives at the penalty spot, Captain America walks up and says something to him. Then he puts his hand out for a high five. Junior doesn't give him a high five. Captain America doesn't move, but why doesn't Junior walk away? The ref comes up and points to the goal line.

Captain America smiles and walks back. He opens his arms and stands there. He's looking at Junior, not the ball. His hair is very red. Behind the goal there's a sea of red shirts. The whistle goes. Junior runs up and hits the ball. Oh, no! He blasts it over the bar!

The Stripes players shout 'Yes!' and Captain America stands in front of the Stripes fans. 'Come on!' he shouts, 'Come on!' and the fans go crazy.

I feel really sorry for Junior. First he scored an own goal and now he misses a penalty. He walks back to the team on the halfway line. Is he crying? I put my hand on his shoulder. What do I say? In the end, I say nothing, and Junior can't speak or look at me.



The penalty shoot-out is now **sudden death**. If you miss and the other team scores, that's it. Finished. So who's going to take the next penalty for Stripes? What – the keeper? Captain America? Wow! Nobody can stop him, he thinks.

Captain America walks back to the box. Then he looks at the goal and waits. Our keeper, Falcão, looks little in front of him. Soon, there's the whistle. Captain America runs up and blasts the ball amazingly fast. Falcão doesn't jump – he hasn't got the time. But wait! It hits the **post**... and bounces back. Now the Stars players shout 'Yes!' and go crazy. Captain America can't believe it – he's standing there on the penalty spot.

**sudden death**  
when the first team to score one more penalty than the other team wins the game

**post** one of two tall metal pieces of the goal



Who's going to take the next penalty for Stars? Nobody knows. We look at coach Zangado. He makes a 'T' with his hands. Time out? No. Tino! It's me! He's pointing at me. I've got the chance to win the Cup for Stars in my very first game! And I have a chance to score my third goal! OK, I know that goals in penalty shoot-outs are different. But I'm sixteen years old and for me, that's a **hat-trick!**

**hat-trick** When you score three goals in one game  
**perfect** with nothing wrong

The Stars players say 'Good luck, Tino!' I want to look at my family, but there's no time. I start to walk to the penalty spot. It feels far, so I run slowly, with my eyes on the goal. Captain America gets bigger and bigger. I take the ball, put it on the penalty spot and walk away. Then I stop and look down at my socks. I move them up – first my right and then my left. When I do this, I put my hand on the little star in my left sock: the star from my mother.

Then I get a crazy idea. I usually hit the ball with

my right foot. Captain America is ready for that. But can I shoot with my left? I scored my second goal with my right foot, and my first goal with my head. I need to score this penalty with my left foot to get a **perfect** hat-trick. An amazing, wonderful, crazy idea! Captain America thinks I've got butterflies, but I haven't. I'm cool. I'm the coolest young man in Brazil and I know it's my time.

The fans go quiet. Then the whistle. I move to my right and then start to run. I kick the ball quickly with my left foot. A perfect shot! A perfect hat-trick! Goooooooooaaaaaallllll! I fall on the pitch and smile, then look at my family and wave.

Then my team jumps on me... and the fans and my family and friends and my village and hometown and all of Brazil go *crazy*.

