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World Literature-Honors

6 April 2022

### Futbol and a Dream

It was a hot sunny morning in the Kutupalong camp. We had just finished breakfast and we were heading down to the yard. Me and my friend Fazal started talking about how good life would be out of these gates on a field with a futbol. After that we went about our normal day sitting around talking, going to dinner, showering, then lights out. All I could think about all day was being able to play futbol. When lights out happened, I had an idea. A dangerous one, but an idea nonetheless. I would sneak out of the room and play futbol with a bin and a paper ball. I had got out free. I was so in the moment I didn't even realize what had happened. All I could imagine was being on the field dribbling past everyone. Getting closer and closer to the goal. I went for the shot. It was as if the shot was going in slow motion. Then all of the sudden, BOOM.

“What are you doing up Abul,” I heard from one of the workers. “You know no one is supposed to be out at this time of the night. Lights out was an hour ago.”

“I know. I'm so sorry ma'am,” I said to Mrs.Lindell. Mrs.Lindell was one of the only people keeping me sane in that place. No matter what I did she just let me off with a warning. All of the other guards were harsh or cruel. After she told me to go back to the room, I went to bed full of adrenaline from what felt like an actual game of futbol. I have always desired to play futbol. When I was a small boy me and my family got forced out of our country for being Rhyongia. When I was little I always remember playing futbol with my family in our yard. I

yearned to grow bigger and play on a field before being kicked out. Now as I live in this camp and sleep every night with the passion to play.

The next morning Mrs.Lindell woke me up. She never wakes me up. It is usually a different guard or another refugee. I knew something big was happening or already happened. Although, I thought it was going to be bad.

“Wake up Abul. There are people here to speak to you and the other refugees.”

I was very confused at the moment. No one had ever come to speak to us. When I walked into the yard everyone was there and there seemed to be an organization there. All I could think was, *Are they here to let us go? Are they here to find us a family?* Later I would find out it was something much bigger.

“We are here with the UNHCR to bring you goals and futballs. We have teamed with the well known team, Barcelona, to give young kids and teens the chance to play futbol.”

I could not believe what I was hearing. It seemed like a miracle to me. I zoned out and my hearing became muffled as the crowd cheered in what seemed to be slow motion. I soon came to my senses and cheered along too. As soon as the goals were set up I made sure to be one of the first ones to play. My dream was finally coming true.

Days and weeks passed and futbol was still my favorite thing to do. I loved futbol. Everything I did was about futbol. I instantly earned a reputation for my skills on the field. Everyone always wanted to be on my team. Everyone looked up to me just for what I could provide when it came to football. One day that seemed to be like every other day, we were playing and I had just scored the game winning goal. As I was walking off the field, I had got stopped by a random man I had never seen before.

“I am here with the Bangladesh National Football Team. We have been reached out too by a few of the guards here that said you are quite good with your feet. Are you interested in joining our team?”

I immediately said yes in a very excited tone. Although I had a dream of mine come true, I still had to stay in the camp. The first time I had left the camp in 4 years was to go to practices and games. I remember what it was like coming back from my first practice.

“What's it like outside these gates.”

“You're our hero Abul”

“What are the people like out there”

This was the first time I actually realized how horrible it was being inside the camp. We had no interaction with the outside world and people always dreamed of being free. Once you entered the camp, it took years to gain freedom.

I went to all my practices and got even better at the game. My teammates were very nice to me and showed me around everywhere we went. It was amazing to be outside the gates even if it was for just a few hours twice a week. I didn't get to play any games for the first season since I was new and still pretty young. The next season I got to play.

My first game was one I will never forget. It changed my life in so many ways. I was so anxious for my first game. I had never played in front of so many people before. I didn't get to start the first game, but someone soon got injured and I was put in. All the nerves were gone and now all I felt was adrenaline. I was in my favorite place to be. The field. I felt at home here. It was the most wonderful feeling. Soon I was a shining star. I was dribbling down the field past all the defenders. In the blink of an eye, I had a shot. I shot and hit the upper right corner of the net. The crowd went wild and I had the biggest grin on my face. Another dream had come true.

As the game went on I continued to shine. After the game I was a star. People were asking me for information about my life no one had ever asked. I couldn't say it all, but I was invited to a press conference by one of the most popular broadcasting networks on TV. At the press conference I told them my life story and what life was like. At this time in my life I had more support than I ever did. With the help of the people around me, I finally gained my freedom and an identity.

To this day I still think back on this time in my life and how much of a miracle it was. However, I also think about all the other people in the camp and what happened to them and the many more people that show up there every day. Those people weren't as lucky as me. Although I think that you can do anything if you put your mind to it, some people just aren't as lucky as others.