



The Silent Strikers

The Thunderbolts were the most talented football team in their town. Every player was fast, strong, and skilled. Yaqub, the striker, could dribble past three defenders with ease. Leonardo, the midfielder, had a powerful shot. Maya, the winger, was the fastest player in the league. And Eli, the goalkeeper, had reflexes like a cat.

But there was one big problem—they never talked to each other on the field.

Whenever Yaqub got the ball, he tried to score all by himself. Leonardo would see a teammate running into space but hesitate, unsure if they even wanted the ball. The defenders crashed into each other going for the same tackle, and Eli, the goalkeeper, would yell—but only after the other team had scored.

Game after game, the Thunderbolts lost. Not because they weren't good enough, but because they played like eleven individuals instead of a team.

One evening, after another frustrating defeat, Coach Mateo gathered the team in the locker room. He didn't yell or sigh like he usually did. Instead, he rolled down a projector screen and pressed play.

"I want you to watch this," he said.

It was a highlight reel of the Brazil national team. The players moved like magic, passing the ball effortlessly, always seeming to know where their teammates were. They didn't just rely on their individual skill—they worked as one.

But something stood out even more.

"Look at how much they talk," said Leonardo.

"They don't just talk," added Maya. "They use hand signals, eye contact, everything."

The Brazilian players pointed to open spaces, clapped to signal they were ready, nodded in understanding, and used their eyes to show where they were going next. If someone lost the ball, their teammates didn't sigh or roll their eyes—they encouraged them to keep going.

Coach Mateo paused the video. "That's how they win," he said. "Not just with skill, but by communicating. That's what turns a group of players into a real team."

The Thunderbolts exchanged glances.

"We should try that," Yaqub said.

So, at their next practice, they did something different.

"Here!" Leonardo shouted, calling for a pass.

Maya pointed to open space, and Yaqub sent her a perfect through ball. The defenders started shouting each other's names to avoid crashing into each other. Eli, the goalkeeper, used hand signals to tell them where to stand. And when Leonardo missed a shot, instead of silence, his teammates clapped and shouted, "Unlucky! Try again!"

It felt strange at first, but soon, it became natural. The more they communicated, the more they understood each other's movements, strengths, and ideas.

Then came their next game. The team they faced was strong, but this time, the Thunderbolts had something new.

Yaqub didn't try to do everything alone—he called out and passed to Leonardo, who set up the perfect goal. The defenders shouted instructions, keeping their positions tight. Eli guided his teammates with gestures and quick words. Maya sprinted down the wing, looked at Yaqub, and nodded—he knew exactly what she meant.

He crossed the ball, and Maya volleyed it into the net. **GOAL!**

The final whistle blew—**they had won!**

As they cheered, Coach Mateo smiled. "You had the talent all along," he said. "You just needed to find your voices."

From that day on, the Thunderbolts never played in silence again. They learned that communication wasn't just about words—it was about connection, teamwork, and trust. And together, they became champions