

Formula 1: The GOAT

#Chapter 43: Signing the Contract and Starting his Plan - Read Formula 1: The GOAT Chapter 43: Signing the Contract and Starting his Plan

Chapter 43: Signing the Contract and Starting his Plan

"I look forward to working with you for the season," Aslan said, his voice carrying a tone of finality as he shook hands with Rümeyssa. They had just finished signing the sponsorship contract in front of a small, private gathering of the key parties.

"Me too," Rümeyssa replied, a genuine smile on her face as she felt another significant weight lift from her shoulders.

The contract they signed was for a single year, with an option to extend it for two more years should Fatih meet certain performance metrics that were clearly defined within the agreement. A crucial clause, however, stipulated that the contract would automatically terminate the moment Fatih moved up to the next category of karting. At that point, the sponsorship would need to be renegotiated from scratch, allowing them to compete with any new offers that would inevitably come their way.

The obligations for Fatih were simple. He was required to wear a racing suit prominently featuring the branding of Aslan's business, "Adam's Karts," and to be photographed as much as possible—an outcome naturally achieved by consistently finishing on the podium. To incentivize his performance, the contract included a bonus of 250 Turkish Lira (approximately \$160 USD in 2009) for any podium finish, and a bonus of 500 Lira (approximately \$320 USD) for every race win. If he won the overall championship, Aslan's company would match the tournament's prize money as an additional bonus. In return, Adam's Karts would provide all of his racing equipment, which would be sponsor-branded, with the sole exception of his helmet. That was left to Rümeyssa's discretion, a point she had insisted on at Fatih's request, as he wanted it to remain empty and unbranded for now.

Fatih was smiling through the entire process. He had finally removed the second major financial burden from his mother. The academy handled everything related to the kart, training, and maintenance, while Adam's Karts now handled all his personal equipment. The only remaining expense was travel, which was more than manageable.

To sweeten the deal even further, the academy, seeing the new sponsorship and wanting to secure their star driver, had also increased their support. Rümeyssa had reached an agreement with them to match the bonus structure from Adam's Karts for podiums, wins, and the championship title, all in return for the immense exposure Fatih would provide by driving under their banner.

But Fatih's smile didn't last long. He met the gaze of Selçuk, who had also been present for the contract signing. Selçuk looked at him as if he had just swallowed a cockroach, his celebratory behavior from the previous day completely gone. Fatih wondered what was going on in his mind.

He didn't know that Selçuk was currently feeling a rage even more potent than when he had first seen his father laughing with Fatih. He had now *experienced* his father's happiness and excitement, a direct result of his own victory, only to see his father turn around the very next day and sign a major deal with Fatih, smiling at him again despite his P2 finish. It's one thing to hear about something good; it's another to taste it, which only makes you want it more. Selçuk was experiencing that firsthand, and his resentment for Fatih intensified. He saw Fatih enjoying the rewards that he, Selçuk, felt he had to work so hard for, rewards that Fatih seemed to get without meeting the same standards.

Fatih, however, didn't let it bother him. He returned his attention to his grandmother, who was sitting beside him, holding his hand with a proud smile covering her face as she looked at her daughter successfully securing her grandson's future.

With each party keeping a copy of the contract, they had a short, final conversation before bidding each other farewell. Rümeyisa, Fatih, and Güldane left to start their journey back to Istanbul. Rümeyisa had only taken Monday off from work, and considering the fatigue from the long weekend, they needed to get home as quickly as possible to rest and recover.

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Life returned to its usual routine once they arrived home. The first thing Fatih did was place his new trophies—Driver of the Weekend, Pole Position Award, and the P2 trophy—in the cabinet, which now held six awards in total.

As the days passed, he kept to his routine: daily missions, academy practice, and driving in the park on his free days. His sixth birthday continued to approach, and he couldn't help but look forward to it. Despite knowing what he was most likely going to get, he was still incredibly excited. The gift would finally give him the ability to do something with his memories, however limited they were when it came to matters of making money.

The days, which had felt like they were crawling by, finally led to his birthday. The party was attended by nearly all the friends he had made in the park, including Emir. Burak also attended at Rümeyisa's invitation, coming with a small, thoughtful gift.

After all the celebrations were done and the guests had left, leaving just the three of them at home, Fatih helped his mother clean up the mess. He was eager to both help her and accelerate the process so that she could finally give him his gift.

"Happy birthday, sweetie," Rümeysa said, carrying a large box from her room, with his grandmother following behind, carrying another one. Fatih wondered when they had managed to smuggle them into the house without him noticing.

He held his breath, his excitement barely contained, as he watched the desktop computer being set up on the table in his room, which was usually covered with his miscellaneous toys and action figures.

"Today, I will only teach you the basics. You can start using it properly tomorrow, okay?" Rümeysa said once she finished setting up the computer and was in the midst of powering it on.

'How cruel can you be, Mom?' he thought. 'Dangling this temptation in front of me and making me wait until tomorrow to use it.' But outwardly, he found himself jumping with joy. "Yes, yes, yes!" he exclaimed. What was one more night when he had already waited for months?

But that was all for show. That night, the only way he managed to get any sleep was by logging into the Simulation, forcefully disconnecting from the real world. Otherwise, he might have been caught using the computer in the middle of the night, risking losing all his new privileges on the very day he got them.

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"Grandma, can I borrow your phone?" Fatih asked the next morning. His grandmother was in the kitchen, washing the dishes left over from breakfast.

"It's on the table, dear," Güldane answered, not paying it much mind.

Fatih immediately took the phone and returned to his room, his plan already in motion. He began creating accounts on all the social media websites that were already available and that he knew would become massive in the future. He used his grandmother's number for the two-factor authentication, trying to make sure he got the handle he wanted. Thankfully, the username `TheConqueror` was still available on all the major sites. He chose it as it was a direct translation of his Turkish name, Fatih.

Once he was done setting up all of these accounts, he returned his grandmother's phone to where he had taken it from. Then, he went back to his room to begin the most important part of his plan, the primary reason he had wanted the computer ahead of time. As he sat down in the chair that was still too big for his small body, he watched as the computer downloaded Bitcoin-Qt, the original full-node client, from the Bitcointalk forum.

It was now mid-2009. Just in January of this year, the pseudonymous Satoshi Nakamoto had mined the Genesis Block. At this moment, mining Bitcoin was something only cypherpunks, cryptography enthusiasts, and a few forward-thinking hobbyists were

doing. It had yet to become something of mainstream value. The difficulty of mining was so low that a normal CPU could handle it, and the reward for mining a block was the highest it would ever be: 50 BTC.

Chapter 44: Playing the Long Game

The app setup was surprisingly simple. Once Fatih configured his Bitcoin wallet, he immediately set it to mine in the background. He planned to let it run for the rest of the year, fully aware that by 2010, mining difficulty would skyrocket. Back then, people would still mine from ordinary PCs, but soon enough, mining farms with rows of servers and thousands of GPUs would dominate the field. That wasn't something he wanted or even planned to get involved in.

This was just a side project, a passive effort working quietly behind the scenes. With that handled, he turned his focus back to his newly created Facebook and Twitter accounts.

It was time to craft his first post. The one that would mark the start of his social media journey.

@TheConqueror Monaco next week. Here's what I see coming: **Pole:** Button. Brawn's low-speed traction is unmatched on these streets. **Podium:** Expect a Ferrari surprise. Räikkönen's been quiet, but Monaco rewards precision. He's due. **Strategy Twist:** Super-softs will crumble early. Whoever dares a longer first stint on the softs could leapfrog the field. **Dark Horse:** Webber. If Red Bull nails the setup, he's podium material. Bookmark this.

He reread the post three times, making sure it had the right level of ambiguity. It needed to sound like an educated guess, not a clairvoyant's prediction. His English hadn't been used much since his rebirth, so he double-checked for grammar mistakes too. Satisfied, he hit *Post* on both platforms.

Then, as an extra precaution, he logged out and deleted the browser history. If his mother or grandmother stumbled upon any traces of this, explaining it would be... complicated.

The timing was perfect. Formula One was still under Bernie Ecclestone's leadership, a man notoriously conservative about media. To him, social platforms were distractions, not tools. This left F1's online sphere starved of engaging, reliable content. It would stay that way until Liberty Media's acquisition in 2017.

That gave Fatih a golden window, a chance to carve out his niche, build credibility, and become *the* source for fans deprived of information during Bernie's reign.

But he knew results wouldn't come overnight.

Even after posting, his work wasn't done. Though he wouldn't post again until a few days before the Monaco Grand Prix, he needed to prepare. Victory photos, podium graphics, stat tables... It required learning basic photo editing skills if he wanted to emulate the highly polished, emotionally engaging content strategy Liberty Media would bring years later.

His version, however, had a twist. He wasn't just going to post after events. Instead, he would publish predictions, then follow up with comparisons once races were done. If he could consistently get predictions right, his reputation would snowball.

He also created a YouTube channel but didn't rush into uploading videos. That would take time and effort to do properly.

For the next few days, life continued as usual. He kept his routine, only monitoring his social media accounts during idle hours, like when his grandmother was cooking and his mother was at work, to reduce the chance of being caught.

An hour before the 2009 Monaco Grand Prix qualifying session, he posted his **Top 5 Qualifiers Prediction** on Facebook and Twitter. His accounts had seen little to no engagement in the past weeks, but that didn't discourage him. He knew slow, steady growth was better. Viral overnight sensations often burned out just as fast.

When qualifying wrapped up, he struck while the iron was hot. He posted the official top 20 list, then a side-by-side comparison of his predictions against reality. Next came a celebratory pole-position photo of Jenson Button, drawn from previous races, but convincing enough for casual fans, and a few other pre-prepared posts.

Thanks to his efficiency and knowledge allowing him to finish all of the preparations before hand giving him an unbeatable first mover advantage, he beat most print media and blogs to the punch.

The same strategy carried over to race day. Half an hour before lights out, he posted:

"Congratulations to Jenson Button on yet another brilliant victory, and to Kimi Räikkönen for securing Ferrari's first podium of the championship."

He followed it up with another prediction post for the top eight finishers.

And this time... the algorithm finally noticed him.

Where his posts had barely reached ten people before, now hundreds were seeing them. Likes trickled in. Comments began appearing.

-"For someone posting 'nonsense predictions,' these graphics are way too professional. Why waste time guessing when you could just post after the race?"

—*"I agree, they're surprisingly informative and on point."*

—*"But he predicted the entire Top 5 in qualifying correctly. Go check his earlier posts, it's scary accurate."*

—*"Getting the top two right is easy; Brawn GP's dominance makes it a 50/50 between Button and Barrichello. But nailing the Top 5? That's interesting."*

—*"I don't care about all that. This guy just predicted Kimi on the podium. If it happens, I swear I'll become his lifelong fan."*

—*"Don't give me hope, man."*

-*"Should I bet on these predictions?"*

—*"Are you dumb? Why would you gamble on some random guy's post?"*

—*"He got it right the first time! Plus, if I lose, I can blame him instead of myself. If I win? Even better."*

—*"Did you accidentally post the congratulations before the race? Pretty sure there's still twenty minutes left..."*

—*"He nearly gave me a heart attack with that post. I thought I'd missed the race. F&%k you!"*

—*"If his prediction turns out to be true, then this will finally be my proof that Formula 1 is rigged and is set to follow a story, or no one will believe that Brawn GP a new team, is currently leading the championship."*

—*"The name is new, but the team members are the same Honda team members, and this car was designed last year before Honda decided to withdraw from Formula due to the financial crisis, you dumb mother....."*

Fatih grinned as he read the comments. Slowly but surely, he was making ripples. It wasn't much yet, but he knew that if he kept this up, it was only a matter of time before those ripples became waves.

Chapter 45: Starting to See the Results

As Jenson Button jogged towards the podium, having parked his car in the wrong place in his post-victory excitement, Fatih logged back into his Facebook and Twitter accounts. With practiced efficiency, he uploaded his prepared post-race content: a sleek victory graphic for Button, a detailed table with the final race results, and a side-by-side comparison of his pre-race predictions against the actual outcome.

The moment the posts went live, the small group of followers who had seen his predictions before the race returned, and the comment sections immediately lit up, each person having a different, more intense reaction than before.

@BetOnItBro: I WON MY BET! THANK YOU, WHOEVER YOU ARE! YOU FINALLY TURNED MY ADDICTION INTO SOMETHING I DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH, SINCE IT FINALLY BORE FRUIT!

@SensibleSusan: Sir, just because you won a single gamble doesn't mean you don't have to deal with your addiction. Please seek treatment.

@BetOnItBro: Why? I won money, and I didn't lose it this time, so it really isn't a problem so long as I keep winning.

@KimiFan4Life: The podium really happened for Ferrari, just as foretold by **@TheConqueror**! As promised, I will follow you on all of your social media and become your fan for life. Please keep up the good work. Damn, I should have betted.

@F1_Analyst92: Mr. **@TheConqueror**

, you are starting to collect gamblers. Please deal with this.

@JustSaying: How exactly is he going to deal with it? He just posted information. He's not responsible for what people do with it.

@F1_Analyst92: I don't know, really, but he is currently enabling them with these uncanny guesses. Maybe he's from a gambling company?

@LogicPrevails: Why would a gambling company give out free money by giving out correct results? Plus, how would they know the results of a race before it happens? Use your head.

@TruthSeekerX: I knew it. I KNEW IT. Formula 1 is scripted. He got everything right. Goddammit.

As more and more comments continued to pour in, the algorithm began to take notice. The posts were pushed to a wider audience, leading to a rapid increase in followers. Within an hour after the race, he had already surpassed 100 followers on Twitter and had 413 followers on his Facebook page. The numbers continued to climb with each passing minute. But Fatih didn't linger to watch the growth. He logged out, once again meticulously cleared his account and web history, and then turned off the computer screen. The Monaco Grand Prix had ended just before 17:00 Turkish time, which meant he still had about an hour to play with his friends in the park.

With his plan now in motion, his life once again returned to its usual routine. He would log into his accounts once a day to monitor their growth before posting the content he

had prepared for the upcoming race weekends. By the end of the month, his follower counts had grown steadily:

Facebook Page: **1,283 followers**

Twitter Account: **791 followers**

YouTube: **0 subscribers**

He had yet to post on YouTube. He knew he needed more time to learn how to properly edit videos, and he was still waiting for the camera he would get as a reward for winning the championship. That didn't stop him from preparing, however. He started an online Google document and began writing scripts for future videos. As someone who had watched thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of videos related to Formula 1 and motorsport in general, he had a nearly limitless well of ideas. He continued writing them down in his free time, saving them for the future, while he simultaneously taught himself the basics of video editing and animation. Thanks to his [Sponge Brain] ability, that process was also going ahead very smoothly.

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"Mom, please hurry up, or we are going to miss the bus and have to buy new tickets!" Rûmeysa called out, waiting at the door with Fatih. Their bags were already packed for the next round of the championship.

It was Friday, June 5th, and the third round was about to start tomorrow, just seventy-six kilometers away in İzmit, Kocaeli.

"I know, I know," Güldane said as she came out of her room, throwing a scarf over her shoulder and carrying her bag in her left hand. "But there are still two hours before the bus leaves. The distance is so short, we could have gone in our own car and we wouldn't have had to worry in the first place."

"I don't want to deal with the stress of parking and driving in race weekend traffic. It's better to leave it to the professionals," Rûmeysa replied as she turned and opened the door, leading the way out of the house.

"We have our very own capable driver right here, don't we?" Güldane answered with a mischievous smile, ruffling Fatih's hair.

"Don't even put that idea in his head," Rûmeysa said with a chuckle, tossing the keys to her mother to lock the door.

"I mean, he is already driving at very high speeds and is very good at overtaking, so what is there to worry about?" Güldane doubled down as they headed to the elevator. They once again made their way to the bus station and started their journey to Kocaeli.

The travel wasn't too long, taking only about three hours before they arrived at their destination, checked into their hotel, and began to rest for the busy day ahead.

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"And once again, Fatih tops the timing screens of both free practice sessions, showing everyone that last championship weekend's setback did nothing to his mentality as he forges forward!" Süleyman announced as the second and final practice session of Group C—Fatih's group for this weekend—was nearing its end.

"And from the look of the weather reports, there is a high chance of rain tomorrow," Zakir added. "So, we are going to see Fatih in his most natural state. We might even see a repeat of his level of performance from the first round, based on the gap he creates, provided he doesn't get interrupted by another penalty."

"Well, I can't say I'm not looking forward to it," Süleyman said as the timer hit zero and the drivers started returning to the pitlane. "This is going to be his first race after turning six in the past month, so he should be very eager to start his sixth year with a victory that would once again extend his lead on the championship board."

"Oh, that's right! I had even forgotten about that and kept thinking of him as the same age as everyone else," Zakir remarked. "That just goes to show the level of driving performance he has shown us. It's been enough that all the questions that would have been raised regarding his age were all forgotten. Plus, this week he is donning a new racing suit. It looks like a sponsor has already clinched him based on his performance in the first two championship rounds alone."

"I don't see him missing a podium at any time without force majeure being the reason," Süleyman agreed. "It seems like the sponsor jumped in fast before he became widely known and had people competing over the sponsorship. But still, it's good news. Racing is an expensive sport, after all, even at the entry-level if you want to be competitive, and having sponsors lessens that burden significantly."

Chapter 46: Race Weekend | Saturday | A New Contender

"With seven minutes left in the Group C qualifying round, there are only nineteen drivers remaining on the track, all attempting to set faster qualifying times in these final laps," Süleyman's voice echoed through the speakers at the İzmit circuit. "The group and overall championship leader, Fatih Yıldırım, returned to the pit lane several minutes ago and remains there, having already set the fastest lap time of qualifying overall. A strategic move to save his tires for the latter sessions."

"It is an exceptionally smart move from the championship leader," Zakir took over, his tone analytical as the screen showed Fatih sitting patiently in his kart in the pitlane, fully kitted out and ready to go at a moment's notice, his hands resting on the steering wheel. "Per the TOSFED regulations for this championship, drivers are only allowed 1.5 sets of

slick tires and 1 set of wet tires for an entire race weekend. Saving as much of that tire life as possible for the Final race is a crucial strategy. He's already set the fastest lap, ahead of both Selçuk and Jackson who set their times in the earlier groups, so he's benefiting from the track evolution caused by their running. That's the inherent fairness and challenge of the random group distribution each race weekend."

"I know it might sound like a normal talking point for us, Zakir, but what does '1.5 sets of slicks' even mean for someone attending for the first time?" Süleyman asked, voicing a question many new spectators might have.

"Oh, true. An excellent question," Zakir acknowledged. "It means that for the entire weekend, each driver has only six slick tires to use: three front tires and three rear tires. This rule is in place to limit costs for privateer teams and to prevent well-funded academies from simply bolting on new tires for every single session. It also teaches these young drivers the critical importance of tire management from an early age, leveling the field by giving everyone the same allocation. So, any driver who can save their tires now will have a significant advantage in the Final race."

As Zakir explained, the camera shifted back to the track. Drivers were completing their laps, and while none were coming close to Fatih's time, the times were steadily improving as more rubber was laid down on the circuit.

"And with two minutes and thirty seconds left on the clock, we have a driver on the charge of his life!" Süleyman's voice suddenly boomed with excitement. "As he comes out of the final corner, a right-hand hairpin, he's sliding for a moment, trying to get on the power as early as possible! He enters the final and longest straight of the circuit, barreling towards the start-finish line! Is it enough?! YEEEEESSSSSSS! HUZEYFA TAŞKIN GOES TO PROVISIONAL POLE POSITION! He drops Fatih down to P2 and is the first person to break the monopoly of the top three in any session across the previous championship rounds! There are only two minutes remaining on the clock, still enough time for one more lap! Will Fatih go out and respond, or will he remain content with P2 and fight for pole position during the qualifying heats? And it looks like we have an answer! Fatih is seen heading to the pit exit, raising his hand to indicate that he is rejoining the track!"

Fatih re-entered the circuit just before Turn 11, looking left to ensure a safe gap behind him. He immediately started weaving left and right, aggressively trying to put as much heat as possible back into his cooling tires. He took the **T12 left-hand hairpin** and went wide, setting himself up for the final corner, the **T13 right-hand hairpin**, before getting on the power and starting his charge towards the start-finish line. With a minute and a half still on the clock, he began what would most likely be his final, decisive lap. "If he doesn't make a mistake here, this will be it! Please, Zakir, take us through it!" Süleyman said, handing over the commentary.

"This is another high-speed track in this championship," Zakir began, his voice focused and intense. "If you drive it well, you will touch the brakes very few times. As Fatih takes

the **T1 left-hander**, he doesn't have to brake at all, just a slight lift as he hits the middle apex and goes wide on the exit. For the **T2 left-hander**, you can take it flat-out, and if you thread the needle perfectly, you can connect it with the **T3 slight right-hander** as if it doesn't even exist! And he manages to do it! He barrels towards the second widest turn of the track, the **T4 wide left-hander**, hugging the right-hand side of the track while remaining on power all the way through the corner! He brakes heavily before taking the **T5 right-hand hairpin**, gets on the power at the apex, and remains that way through the **T6 slight left-hander**

, connecting it to the widest turn on the track, the **T7 wide right-hander**! He hugs the left side of the track while remaining on full power throughout the turn and the straight that follows!"

Zakir paused for a quick breath before continuing, his voice filled with admiration as he described Fatih's flawless execution. "Now that the most technical part of the track is over, the more manageable part is coming next. All you have to do is brake in the right spots. You can flow through the **T8 slight right-hander** and the **T9 slight left-hander** before meeting the next heavy braking zone. You need to bleed all of the speed you've gathered before you take the **T10 left-hander** and the following **T11 left-hand hairpin**. Then, you connect it to the final **T12 hairpin** before entering the main straight, putting your foot on the accelerator and keeping it there until the end of the lap!" The moment he finished, Süleyman took over, his voice a roar.

(Image here)

"AND HE SHOWS WHY HE IS LEADING THE CHAMPIONSHIP! HE BREAKS THE LAP RECORD FOR HIS CATEGORY BY A WHOLE SECOND AND EXTENDS HIS POLE LAP TO THE SECOND-PLACE DRIVER BY MORE THAN 1.2 SECONDS! THAT IS THE MARK OF GREATNESS! HE SHOWS WHY HE DIDN'T HAVE TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE HIS LAP, WHEN HE CAN JUST COME OUT AT THE END OF THE SESSION, WHEN THE TRACK EVOLUTION IS THE HIGHEST IT WILL EVER BE, AND LOCK IN HIS POLE POSITION!" Süleyman shouted as the screen showed Fatih driving his cool-down lap, a mandatory requirement since the pitlane entry was at the end of the circuit.

"We need to congratulate Huzeyfa as well," Zakir said, his tone shifting to one of professional respect. "He managed to force Fatih back onto the track by becoming a new threat. He has been pretty consistent, and while the top three have kept the majority of the attention, he has quietly risen and maintained his fourth position in the championship standings. If the top three keep fighting and end up taking each other out of a race, he will be there to pick up the scraps. He might even rise into the top three if this intense fight at the front continues." Zakir's praise was validated as the camera showed Huzeyfa pumping his fist as if he had gotten pole himself, having realized he was now P2 on the combined qualifying list.

"I look forward to tomorrow," Süleyman concluded. "A new contender appearing means more entertainment for us neutral watchers. It's going to be a full-on push through the qualifying heats and the Final race."

"And with rain also being a possibility before or during the race tomorrow, it makes it even more interesting," Zakir added. "But for today, we are done with all the sessions. We'll see you tomorrow."

Chapter 47: Race Weekend | Sunday | Strategic Drive

"Hello and welcome, everyone, to the second round of the qualifying heats on the final day of the third championship round!" Süleyman's voice boomed across the circuit. "Group A and Group C are about to go head-to-head in just a few minutes. We can see the pole-sitter, Fatih Yıldırım, already in his position, looking remarkably calm as he prepares for his first race of the day. And beside him, his groupmate Huzeyfa Taşkin looks incredibly excited, as this is his first time starting on the front row in a race that includes both Fatih and Jackson." The grid was formed, and final checks were taking place before the start of the qualifying heat.

"Yes, this is a very good opportunity for Huzeyfa," Zakir added. "And thankfully for him, he is being chased by Jackson first and not Selçuk, as he will face Selçuk in the next heat round when Group C faces Group B. Jackson's clean racing style should be a good experience for him, but that doesn't mean it's going to be easy. Jackson managed to eke out a win in the first qualifying heat round between Group A and Group B, so using that momentum, Huzeyfa will need to be very careful after the race starts." The green flag was waved, and the karts began their formation lap to warm up their tires.

"So, you don't see Huzeyfa being a threat to Fatih?" Süleyman asked, noticing that Zakir hadn't mentioned Fatih at all in the context of a direct fight with Huzeyfa.

"He might cause a problem, but not in the way you think," Zakir clarified. "This is Fatih's first official race start since the unfair jump start penalty he received last race weekend, so that might cause him to be hesitant at the start. But that's like expecting a mistake from the most technically proficient driver on the circuit at the moment. It's not entirely impossible for Huzeyfa to pull off a miracle, but it's a long shot."

"Oooh, and as a reminder to our viewers," Süleyman interjected, "following last championship round's mishap, the relevant regulatory body has decided to modify the regulations. They now require manual video verification before any ruling related to a jump start or any other track sensor data is finalized. This is to prevent a situation like last week's from repeating itself."

"Unfortunately, the academy didn't try to have the penalty revoked, as that would have meant another of their academy racers, Selçuk, would have been demoted," Zakir added, providing some behind-the-scenes context. "In return, it most likely means that

the academy now owes Fatih a favor for him not going out of his way to have the penalty revoked."

"I would love to hear what that favor could be redeemed for, but we have to cut that short, as the boys and girls are already in their grid positions, waiting for the start of the race!" Süleyman's voice rose with anticipation. "And it's lights out and away we go! Fatih, not held back by last week's penalty, has a good start, getting ahead and immediately moving to cover both Huzeyfa and Jackson as they drag race towards the first corner! Who is he going to defend? Is it going to be Jackson or Huzeyfa? He can only block one of them as they approach the corner! AND HE COVERS JACKSON! HE MOVES TO THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE TRACK AND BRAKES SLIGHTLY, FORCING JACKSON TO DO THE SAME! HUZEYFA BENEFITS FROM THIS AND SECURES HIS SECOND POSITION, CREATING A GAP TO JACKSON, WHO LOST SOME TIME FROM FATİH'S DEFENSIVE BRAKING! THE RESULTING CONCERTINA EFFECT NOW PUTS JACKSON IN DANGER FROM THOSE BEHIND HIM! HE'S FORCED TO GO ON THE DEFENSIVE, BLOCKING AYŞE'S ATTEMPT TO USE THE SITUATION TO HER BENEFIT!" Süleyman shouted, his commentary a torrent of action before Zakir took over.

"This was a smart and strategic move from Fatih," Zakir analyzed, his voice calm and measured. "By choosing to defend against Jackson, he effectively helped Huzeyfa keep his P2 position. This means Jackson will now have to spend most of his time fighting his way back up to P2, giving Fatih additional time to create a gap at the front. That is very advanced strategic thinking, something you rarely see at this level. It was most likely his coach's advice. Now, I'm looking forward to the fight between the three of them and how Fatih is going to play this."

"I can't argue with that, as it looks like he is deliberately slowing down to make sure that Huzeyfa keeps up within his slipstream," Süleyman observed, his voice filled with intrigue. "He's wanting to keep him with him, most likely for the remainder of the race, to delay the inevitable fight between Huzeyfa and Jackson until the later stages, leaving little to no time for Jackson to be able to do anything to him." As he spoke, the camera showed Fatih, who had usually taken the wide T7 flat-out, lifting slightly to reduce the gap he had opened between himself and Huzeyfa, effectively continuing to pull him along.

"I don't think this is just about this race at all," Zakir mused, his mind piecing together the larger strategy. "This is about the Final race. By making sure Huzeyfa is with him and finishes in P2 in both of today's heats, paired with his P2 overall qualifying finish, it would place Huzeyfa on the front row for the Final. This would create a crucial buffer between Fatih and his two main championship contenders, Jackson and Selçuk."

For ten minutes of the fifteen-minute session, Fatih kept this up, slowing down when necessary, giving Huzeyfa a slipstream, and allowing the two of them to maintain a significant gap to the chasing pack. Then, with five minutes or roughly three and a half laps remaining on the clock, he started to open the gap for real.

"Reeling from last weekend's five-second penalty for a false jump start, he could have been timid on his first race start today, but he wasn't," Süleyman summarized as the race concluded. "It was as if that was not something in his consideration at all. He started today's session with a perfect start, leading every single lap while pulling his P2 teammate along with him. And Fatih wins the Group A and C qualifying heat! Huzeyfa, aided by Fatih's defense on the first lap and the continuous assistance from Fatih throughout the race, successfully keeps his place and finishes in P2! Jackson finishes very closely behind in P3, failing to close the gap in time to make an overtake!"

The screen showed Fatih, Huzeyfa, and Jackson crossing the line. Huzeyfa was frantically shaking his fists in the air, celebrating his first P2 finish in a group that contained both Fatih and Jackson at the same time.

Chapter 48: Race Weekend | Sunday | Through Goes Huzeyfa

"With the aggressive one right behind him, will he repeat what he did with Jackson, or will he focus on opening the gap?" Süleyman asked, his voice a mix of anticipation and intrigue. The karts from Group B and Group C had finished their formation lap and were now settled in their grid positions, waiting for the lights to signal the start of the final qualifying heat of the weekend.

"There is no need to speculate, as we will have our answer shortly!" Zakir replied.

"And it's lights out and away we go! Fatih and Selçuk both get a great start! But Huzeyfa, on the front row, gets a bit of wheelspin off the line! He's bogged down, losing his P2 position to Selçuk as they all barrel towards the first corner! What will Fatih do? With every meter they cover, the two of them are slowly opening a gap, reducing the number of options on his hand!"

As Süleyman commentated, Selçuk, with his better initial launch, moved to the outside of Fatih. He wasn't quite side-by-side yet, but he was close, forcing Huzeyfa, who was recovering from his poor start, to tuck in behind Fatih where Selçuk had been. Selçuk's body language screamed his intent: he was either taking the lead at Turn 1 or taking everyone out with him.

As they approached the corner, Fatih began to slowly drift towards the right side of the track, towards Selçuk, whose line was the optimal one for Turn 1. As he did, he kept his foot on the accelerator; their Bambino karts could take this corner flat-out. With half of his kart already ahead on the track, Fatih was slowly squeezing Selçuk more and more to the right. Just as they arrived at the apex of T1, Fatih lifted off the throttle for just a fraction of a second. This tiny deceleration forced Selçuk, who was slightly behind and now had half his kart alongside Fatih, into an impossible position. He couldn't change his line; he had to either lift as well or send himself into the escape zone, tumbling down the order and losing his chance for a good starting position in tomorrow's race.

"And through goes Huzeyfa!" Süleyman shouted, completely surprised by the turn of events. "He takes the lead of the race at Turn 1! Fatih, by focusing on keeping Selçuk at bay from the very start, left an opening that was easy for Huzeyfa to exploit after recovering from his initial mistake! As the top two have a slower exit speed from Turn 1, Huzeyfa manages to open a one-second gap to them as they head towards Turn 2! His speed advantage will remain with him until at least Turn 4 as the other two continue to chase him!" The two most favored contenders, who were expected to be fighting for the lead, were now both down a position, with Selçuk back in his original P3 spot.

"That is a very surprising outcome for Fatih," Zakir took over, reminding everyone of the context. "This is his first time ever being overtaken in any of the previous championship rounds, other than the shunt he received from Selçuk in the Final race of the first lap of round one. This makes Huzeyfa's overtake, gaining two positions at once to recover from his mistake and take the lead, all the more monumental."

"It looks like the position is something they don't even care about, as Selçuk is still attempting to overtake Fatih, returning to his usual aggressive style!" Süleyman announced as the two battled fiercely. "And Fatih continues to shut every door that Selçuk attempts to enter, with his usual preternatural calm! It seems Selçuk has finally overcome his surprise from Fatih's aggressive defense at Turn 1, but with their fighting, they are allowing Huzeyfa to extend his lead!" Fatih closed the door one last time while taking the final chicane on the track, entering the start-finish straight to complete the first lap. He tucked his head down, now chasing Huzeyfa, who had already opened a two-second gap.

Taking the first corner like it was supposed to be taken, Fatih had finally opened a small gap to Selçuk, allowing him to now focus on chasing down Huzeyfa. Selçuk, however, tucked in right behind him, trying to use the slipstream to close the gap and go for another attempt at the earliest opportunity.

As the two of them reached the highest possible speed on the track, preparing for the Turn 1 complex again, Fatih moved to the right side of the track, planning to take the turn on the optimal racing line. But just as he was in the middle of the corner... **BAM!** He received a heavy, jarring hit to his sidepod, sending his kart into a momentary, heart-stopping slide.

"OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOH! WHAT JUST HAPPENED?!" Süleyman shouted as the screen showed the hit Fatih received from Selçuk, the incident happening live and catching everyone completely off guard. "He manages to recover and continue racing, but it looks like Selçuk lost control for a moment! That was scary, oh my god!" Both Fatih and Selçuk, who had been sliding sideways for a moment, managed to wrestle their karts back under control and continue with their race, but they had lost a significant amount of time, and the group behind them had already caught up.

"Oh, finally, the replay is here. Let's see exactly what happened," Süleyman said as the replay logo appeared on the screen.

The replay showed Fatih on his usual racing line, at full power, pushing as he took Turn 1. But Selçuk, who wanted to attempt an overtake, hadn't gone to the outside line. He had taken the inside line, but in his haste, he had accidentally clipped the apex kerb too much. The impact unsettled his kart, and in his attempt to recover, he overcorrected, straightening his kart and plowing directly into Fatih, hitting him head-on in the sidepod. The impact sent both of them sliding before they miraculously recovered.

"That looks aggressive, but not deliberate," Zakir analyzed. "It was a mistake born from aggression. But Fatih's sidepod took a heavy brunt from that hit. I'm surprised it's still attached."

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'That's not good,' Fatih thought, his eyebrows furrowed. He had to lift off the throttle for a moment to adjust his steering input before getting back on the power almost immediately, trying to stabilize the now-unsteady kart.

He lowered his head, glancing at the point of impact. Having been on the receiving end of it, he knew better than anyone else how heavy the hit was. Unsurprisingly, he saw that the chassis frame had deformed where it was hit, despite the plastic sidepod designed to prevent exactly that from happening.

As he took the wide Turn 4 left-hander, he had to constantly apply micro-corrections to his steering. The kart's frame was now slightly bent, meaning the four tires were no longer perfectly aligned. But just as he completed the turn and connected it to the next corner, the T5 hairpin, he heard it. **TACK!** Followed by a loud, grating **KRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!** It was the sound of something dragging heavily on the asphalt. He didn't need to look to know what it was. His sidepod, its mounting bolt likely sheared off from the impact, had detached and was now dragging on the ground. The sudden instability of the kart's aerodynamics had already told him enough; he'd had to change his line mid-corner due to the sudden change in aero grip, the dragging sidepod creating a shower of sparks behind him.

Thanks to his highly sensitive body, a gift from his [Invictus] ability, he managed to react fast enough to keep the kart on the track as he took the widest turn on the circuit. He knew Selçuk would soon be breathing down his neck now that his speed and handling were severely compromised, but that was the least of his worries. As he exited Turn 7, still in the lead but with Selçuk and the rest of the pack closing in rapidly, he saw it. All around the track, at every marshal station, double yellow flags were being waved. A full course yellow had been issued, neutralizing the race immediately.

The moment he saw the yellow flags, a pit formed in his stomach. He knew it was most likely because of him. And without surprise, he saw his number, 213, displayed on the board at the marshal station ahead. A second flag was waved after that: a black flag with an orange circle at its center. The mechanical failure flag.

"Fuck," he said, feeling no relief at all from the situation. He was now required to oblige the flag that was being waved specifically at him.

Not wasting any time, he raised his hand to show that he had seen the flag and acknowledged it. He took Turn 8 and 9, lowered his hand, and caught up to the slowing Huzeyfa as the whole field bunched up behind the virtual safety car. As they approached Turn 10, Fatih detached himself from the train, entering the pitlane, while all the rest continued, taking Turn 11 and 12 before entering the final straight. The moment Fatih was clear, the green flag was waved again, resuming the race now that the dangerous kart with its dangling sidepod was off the track, no longer causing a hazard.

Chapter 49: Race Weekend | Sunday | Did Not Finish

The large TV in the commentary booth showed Fatih in the pit lane, his kart surrounded by two race officials. They were meticulously looking it over, inspecting the bent chassis and the damaged sidepod, taking notes on a clipboard. After only thirty seconds of inspection, they said something to Fatih. He lowered his head for a moment, a gesture of quiet resignation, before climbing out of the kart and walking with slumped shoulders towards the academy tent.

"Aaaaaaah, and that's the confirmation we were dreading," Süleyman said, his voice filled with genuine disappointment. "It looks like the damage was substantial enough that they couldn't repair it in time for him to rejoin. Unfortunately, he is going to retire from this qualifying heat. The most entertaining race of the day has come to a premature end just a few laps in."

"That is his first DNF of his career, and it was something that was not his fault at all," Zakir added, his tone somber. "From the replay, we can clearly see that he was entitled to the line. I just hope this doesn't cause him to be extra cautious in the Final race, assuming they can either repair the kart or prepare a new chassis in time." The screen once again showed the replay of the incident, pausing on the moment of impact. "The only positive thing we can take from this is that it's not the Final race. The only immediate effect will be on his starting position, not his championship points. Since he already had zero points from finishing first in the previous heat, there is still a possibility that he will be in the top thirty by the end of this one. But if not, that will be an additional emotional blow, as he will have to participate in the Pre-Final race just to earn a position on the main grid."

"From the look of it, the chassis is bent very badly and might need to be changed," Süleyman observed. "What are the rules if he has to change it for the next racing session?" He posed the question to give Zakir the opportunity to explain the regulations to the viewers.

"Unauthorized changes are an automatic disqualification," Zakir began. "However, if the academy's technicians inspect the chassis and deem it too dangerous to continue using, they can petition the officials for a change. If the officials approve it, he will be

allowed to use a new chassis, but it comes with a significant penalty. He will have to start the next race from the rear of the grid. This is because a new chassis provides an additional advantage over those who have used their chassis throughout all of the weekend's sessions. So, if the chassis is changed, he is going to have to start the Final race from the very back."

"If I were in his place, I would be feeling incredibly unhappy right now," Süleyman said, putting himself in Fatih's position. "Through no fault of his own, his championship weekend, which was going so well, has just been turned completely upside down. When it was expected for him to secure a front-row start, now it looks like he might have to fight his way through the Pre-Final just to have a chance to participate in the main event."

"I wouldn't want to be him for now," Zakir agreed. "But this is good news for both Selçuk and Jackson. It gives them the opportunity to finally take the lead in the championship, a lead that Fatih has held since the very first round."

"But Fatih already has a record of delivering a miracle recovery drive, as we saw in the first round of the championship in Istanbul," Süleyman reminded the viewers. "Do you see it as something he can pull off again in the Final race?"

"That was under rainy conditions, where the wet track acts as an equalizer, leaving talent as the main differentiator," Zakir cautioned. "For today, there is a risk of the rain not returning at all during the race. Mounting a similar comeback on a dry track is going to be exponentially more difficult, but not impossible, so long as he keeps it on the track and doesn't get impatient from the start. If it **does** rain, however, then that is a different matter entirely. When it comes to driving in the wet, he has already proven that he is the best of everyone currently on this track."

"And it looks like luck, for today, favors Huzeyfa!" Süleyman announced as a new graphic appeared on the screen. "Selçuk has received a ten-second time penalty for his driving! With only three laps to go, it looks like he is going to tumble all the way down, out of the top ten! So, he should be starting the Final race from at least below the P15 position! I don't think Fatih is going to feel that is justice at all."

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"They've approved our request to change to a new chassis after they finished inspecting it," Burak said as he entered the academy's tent. He found Fatih still in his full racing gear, helmet on, sitting silently in one of the child-sized chairs. "We need to start preparing as soon as possible for its potential use in a Pre-Final."

"Understood," Fatih replied, his voice calm and even.

"Accidents are a part of racing," Burak said, lowering himself to be face-to-face with Fatih, patting his shoulder comfortingly. "Even if you are not at fault, sometimes you will

be disadvantaged by the rules. Don't let it make you feel down for too long, or it might cause you to not be in your best form for the Final race."

"Yes," Fatih said, his answer again a single word.

"Since we will be using a new chassis, it's going to take some time for you to adapt to it, but we will try to have the setup as close to the old one as possible," Burak explained. "So, rest for a moment while we deal with that." Knowing that his words weren't going to be a game-changer for a young child dealing with such a setback, he decided to focus on having the car ready, giving Fatih some time to himself.

While Burak and the other academy mechanics, who had already started preparing the new kart chassis, thought Fatih was feeling down, he was, on the other hand, feeling a completely different set of emotions.

Although he was angry, his anger was controlled, a cold, focused thing, thanks to his [Invictus] ability, which allowed him to remain objective no matter the situation. But that anger was reduced even further by the screen that was hovering in his vision. If it hadn't been for the looming Pre-Final and the mountain he now had to climb, he might have even been happy.

[Recovery Mission]

Things out of your control happen all the time. Luck is also considered to be a part of a driver's skill, and today, you were unlucky. However, the greats do not buckle and complain about their position; they do their very best to salvage as much as is humanly possible. The same is expected of you, who looks to climb the summit of the mountain of greatness.

Objective: Recover from having to start at the end of the grid to the highest position possible for you, with the minimum being a points finish.

Reward: A 5X SP multiplier for P1, 3X for P2, and 2X for P3 on all System Points earned this weekend. A 10X SP multiplier applied to points earned during this race, should you recover to point-earning positions but not podium positions.

Punishment for failure: A random ability will be downgraded by one level for the next championship round.

Chapter 50: Race Weekend | Sunday | Plum Last

"Good afternoon, or good evening, to all the attendees of this championship weekend's final round!" Süleyman's voice boomed with energy. "We have been blessed with non-stop action and unexpected outcomes in every single session, making this a truly memorable championship weekend. And now, it is time for the main event."

"On pole position, we have Huzeyfa Taşkin! He finished second in his first qualifying heat and inherited the win in his second after Selçuk, who had overtaken him on the final lap, received a ten-second penalty. That penalty was for the overtaking attempt that damaged Fatih's kart, taking him out of the qualifying heat and condemning him to a Pre-Final race, which dropped his own starting position for this Final all the way down to P15. On the second front-row grid slot, we have Jackson Michael! He drove a very calm and controlled race in today's qualifying heats, and despite having a heat win, finishing behind Huzeyfa in the second heat condemned him to the P2 starting position. But if there is anything for him to be happy about, it's that there is no Selçuk, the aggressive one, on his rear or front, which should give him the peace of mind to follow his own race plan without having to constantly factor in Selçuk's aggression. And second, there is no Fatih in front of him, a position he has become all too familiar with. Fatih was a nightmare to fight against due to his technical driving and supreme control of the kart. He is starting today from plum last."

Süleyman paused for dramatic effect. "Despite a superb drive in the Pre-Finals that took him from P15 to P1, which should have earned him the P31 starting position, what is often called the 'poor man's pole position,' he was unfortunately required to change his chassis due to the damage from the earlier incident. That chassis change comes with a mandatory penalty, and so he is now starting from the very end of the grid. With the track still being dry, despite the heavy clouds covering the sky, it is going to be a near-impossible task for him to recover to a point-scoring position, let alone the top ten. But as he has shown us time and time again, he is a driver you can never count out of contention, no matter where he is on the grid. I'm sure everyone in front of him knows that as well and will be driving accordingly. On P3, we have Ayşe Yılmaz, who picks up the pieces from the chaos ahead..." Süleyman continued his pre-race commentary as, on the grid, the final minutes ticked down. Karts were already in position, with coaches and mechanics going through final discussions, reminders, and check-ups with their young drivers.

"From the look of it, rain is going to be falling anytime soon," Zakir took over, his voice adding a layer of strategic tension. "And I'm sure Fatih is praying that it does rain, and those on the front row are praying for the exact opposite. But 'anytime soon' could mean five minutes into the race, or two hours after it's over. With everyone making the sane choice of starting on slick tires, and no one gambling on wets, if it does rain, it is going to be very interesting. It will place everyone on the track in a dilemma: Is pitting and losing a massive amount of time to change to rain tires more beneficial than staying out and trying to drive with slicks on a wet surface? I don't think anyone has ever been in that dilemma in this year's championship, so it is going to be a fascinating watch."

"I can't argue with you on that," Süleyman agreed. "And I'm curious as to what decisions our top three in the championship are going to make, since they are all in different parts of the grid. The beneficial actions are all different for them. This race looks like it is going to be interesting whether it rains or not. And the time has hit zero! We start the formation lap, with Huzeyfa leading the pack around the track to warm their tires and ensure their karts are problem-free and ready for the race. Selçuk and Fatih, for the

moment, are hidden among the crowd of thirty karts they will have to overtake if they are eyeing the top positions by the end of this race."

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'Okay, you have to focus,' Fatih thought, his mind a sea of calm. 'A multiplier is on the line here if things go well and you finish on the podium.'

"How about you trigger [Zone], and I'll guarantee you a P1 finish?" Fatih asked in a teasing whisper in his mind.

"That's not something I have any control over, and the description says it's random," Apollo shot back, causing Fatih to have a hint of disappointment. He had been hoping for it to trigger before the start of the race, just as it had during the first championship round the moment he had accepted the mission after being shunted to the back. Apollo added, "Besides, why do you want to take the easy way out when the harder path is more fun to achieve anything on?"

"Fine, I just wanted to see if it would be triggered if we talked about it," Fatih rebutted, as he waved right and left on the track without any worry, as he was the last one.

"You've been starting at the front too much, so now it's time for you to increase your overtaking experience. Plus, if you play it well and have impressive overtakes, that means you will be earning five points for each one, compared to a normal one. The more of those you have, the more points you will have to be multiplied. So, look at it from the bright side." Apollo said, giving him a different point of view

"Talk to you later," Fatih said, ending the conversation. He didn't have to; Apollo was already fading from his perception as Fatih completed his formation lap and neared his grid position.

As usual, the moment he came to a stop, and since he was the last one to get into his grid position, he immediately once again pushed himself back, unsticking his tires before focusing back on the lights that had started to turn on.

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"It's lights out and away we go!" Süleyman roared. "Huzeyfa has a great start, keeping his position from the starting line, but Jackson is closing that distance as they near the corner! Huzeyfa, knowing this, is moving to cover him! Ayşe, behind them, has the best view of all! Into Turn 1, Huzeyfa's coverage of Jackson works as he manages to keep his position, followed by Jackson, then Ayşe in P3, Bora Demir in P4, and Can Öztürk in P5! And look at what we have here! Selçuk has already gained three positions from the start! But oh my god, Fatih seems to have had a superb start! He is already up to P34 by the time we are in the fourth corner! But he doesn't stop there! Make that P33 as he

finishes an overtake, taking the outside line of the T4 wide left-hander that turns into the inside line leading to the T5 hairpin! A perfect start for all three championship leaders!"