

Football 291

Chapter 291 291 Celebration

Carla Jacobs raised an eyebrow, clearly amused by his response but trying to maintain her professional demeanour. "Let's go with the honest answer," she said, flashing a knowing smile as she adjusted the mic in his direction. The crowd's cheers could still be heard in the background, and Rakim's grin widened as he absorbed the energy from the stands.

"Well, honestly," Rakim began, his voice still slightly breathless from the exertion, "The reason I play this game is for moments like these. The rush of excitement you feel when your face to face with a defender and proceed to outclass them, there is no feeling like its Carla" He laughed, tilting his head slightly as a bright smile appeared under his hood.

"When I received that pass, something just clicked, you know?" he told her feeling the need to explain his thought process as he was still riding the high from his earlier heroics. "We needed something big and the moment I received the ball, I felt... untouchable."

Carla's eyes lit up as she leaned in, captivated by his energy. "Untouchable is the right word for it, Rakim. You had the entire stadium on the edge of their seats. That run—it felt like it was straight out of a highlight reel. What was going through your mind as you weaved past those defenders? Was it instinct or were you calculating each move?"

Rakim chuckled, running a hand over his damp dreadlocks, the rain still falling lightly over the stadium. "Honestly, it was all instinct. When you're out there, you don't have time to think too much. You just have to react especially when the surface is as damp and slippery as it is today. Trust that the work you put in during the week will be enough, you can't overthink it. You just gotta go for it." He paused, soaking in the energy of the crowd still chanting his name from the stands. "But honestly, none of that happens without the team. It was their work getting me the ball in the first place."

Carla smiled, nodding. "You're being humble, but everyone saw the magic in that run. Speaking of the team, how does it feel to pull off something like that in a game as big as the Old Firm? With all that history, the intensity of the rivalry... this is the stuff of legends."

Rakim's expression softened as he thought about the match's significance. "It's surreal, Carla. I didn't grow up here, but the fever of the Old Firm infected me throughout the week. The fans, the rivalry, the pressure it all pushes you to be your best. Suril and you really felt it during training. Every player was doing their best not willing to let their supporters down. As for me, being able to put on a stunning display against your team's arch-rival is something every player dreams of and I'm glad I could deliver."

Carla nodded thoughtfully, sensing the weight of Rakim's words. "You certainly delivered. The fans will be talking about that goal for years to come. Now, I have to ask—how does it feel to not only be a key player in such a historic match but also to be named Man of the Match?"

"Validating, is the word I would use, any time a player is recognised for their efforts it's a special moment. For me especially since after the shooting a lot of people doubted whether I could ever reach the level I was playing at, well this should be all the validation of my skill any doubters need." Rakim responded with a much calmer tone genuinely grateful for how far he has come.

Carla's smile softened as she nodded, clearly understanding the significance of Rakim's words. From what she knew this was the first time he had actively talked about the shooting in an interview. "I think you've silenced any doubters with that performance, Rakim. It was electric. But I think I speak for every football fan in Scotland when I say we are thankful to be able to witness your magic on the field."

Rakim felt a warmth spread through him at Carla's words. He appreciated the recognition, not just for himself, but for everyone who had supported him through the tough times. "Thank you, Carla. It means a lot to hear that, but the biggest thanks goes to the Rex Nation who never stopped supporting me and of course my Family and friends."

"I'm sure their proud of how far you've come, again congratulation on your performance, but this is all the time we have for now," Carla stated before proceeding to end the interview as she spoke to the guys in the studio prompting Rakim to make his way towards the changing rooms not before sinning a few shirts from fans he passed.

As the celebration carried on at Celtic Park, Rakim walked through the tunnel, his heart still pounding from the intensity of the game and the interview. His teammates were already heading towards the changing rooms, some playfully shoving each other, while others threw their arms over each other's shoulders, still buzzing from the game. A couple of them called out to him, offering more congratulations, but Rakim waved them off with a smile, taking a moment to sign a few more shirts for fans standing near the tunnel's edge.

"Rakim! Over here!" one fan shouted, holding up a soaked jersey. Rakim, still high from the adrenaline, took the marker and scribbled his signature with a flourish, offering the fan a quick wink before moving on.

As he finally made his way inside the stadium, the noise from the pitch and the stands started to fade, replaced by the more muted clamour of voices and laughter from his teammates in the locker room. The contrasting quiet felt like a breath of fresh air as he slumped down onto the bench, taking in the scene around him. Forrest was already in the middle of telling an exaggerated version of his goal that even left him hooked.

He took it a step further by acting out some of the defender's actions whom he had left stupefied at his run. His arms flailing as he imitated the defenders' futile attempts to stop Rakim. "Man, they didn't stand a chance!" Forrest exclaimed, reenacting the final fake shot Rakim had pulled on the Rangers keeper. "He was diving to the side before the ball even left Rakim's foot!" Laughter filled the room, and Rakim couldn't help but grin as he unlaced his boots.

~~~

While the players held their own subdued celebrations the fans had different ideas as they left Celtic Park taking the streets by storm as the celebrations began. Both sets of fans seemed to have entered another battle of who could sing their songs the best or what team would have won if they had another 10 minutes. They walked in the middle of the streets marching like two armies as forcing traffic to halt to a snail's pace.

Police tried to stop them, but they couldn't arrest everyone, and the fans knew it, so they simply enjoyed the moment with their friends. Some police officers even joined in the celebrations just as long as the fans didn't cause trouble and broke off the occasional argument's that looked as if it would go out of hand. The majority of their arrest were those drunk to the point they didn't know what was going on. With the Scottish folks taste for hard liquor on social occasions resulted in quite a few being picked up for being too inebriated.

Meanwhile, while the streets of Glasgow were flooded with fans back at The Brazen Head, the celebration was in full swing. Boab, the pub's Owner and bartender, could barely keep up with the orders being thrown at him. Celtic fans were crowding the bar, laughing, and shouting over each other, reliving every moment of the match.

"Did ye see Rakim's run, though? Absolute magic!" one of the regulars, a burly man named Sean, shouted over the noise, slamming his empty pint glass onto the bar. "Man left five Rangers defenders in the dust like they were nothing!"