

Beads of sweat trickle down her scarlet cheeks as she bends down to position the ball upon the damp turf and adjusts her captain's armband. The whistle rings out, piercing. The hungry herd begin to charge towards her, leaping at the ball. Blurs of blue fall past her as she searches for a glimpse of the yellow cloth her teammates don.

Yet it is as if she were in an ocean of blue, the opposition waves crashing into her determined to knock her down, drowning out all the pandemonium of a sold-out stadium. The surge has grown and has become impossible to escape, blocking out any vision. They jostle, shove and strike her, pouncing, and sliding along the turf. Legs are flying from all directions as she zig-zags between them.

Looking up, a barely visible white post stands in front of her. But so does a mammoth of a defender. They lock eyes. The blue beast begins to charge towards her, sending seismic waves throughout the ground. The goalpost is so close. The captain looks down, looks up, drives her foot into the ball and the world tips as she falls hard onto her back with the defender crushing her. An eruption of cheers fills the stadium in a thundering applause of triumph and an echoing "Gooooalllll" rings out.