

BAGUETTE & BONTON # 5

# THE GAME -PART TWO-



(THE GAME! - PART 2)

-GO TO PART #1

## THE SURPRISE

**BONTON** HAD FINALLY DONE IT. NOW HE RAN, PUSHING THE BALL WITH HIS SNOUT; HIS TEAMMATES WERE TIGHTLY COVERED, AND TWO **HYENAS** WERE RUSHING TOWARD HIM. ONE OF THEM WAS **SNEER!** **BONTON** HAD NO TIME TO THINK, HE HAD TO TRY TO SHOOT AT THE NET, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS FAR AWAY. SO HE FLEXED HIS NECK MUSCLES, AIMED, AND SHOT! BUT OF COURSE, THE BALL FLEW IN A COMPLETELY WRONG DIRECTION. DARN.

BUT... WAIT A MINUTE, WHAT WAS HAPPENING?

THE TWO PLAYERS FROM THE OTHER TEAM HAD RUN INTO EACH OTHER TRYING TO BLOCK **BONTON'S** SHOT, AND NOW THEY WERE ON THE GROUND... ACTUALLY, THEY WERE GETTING BACK UP, BUT THEY WERE OUT OF SORTS.

**BONTON** COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THEY WERE GIVING HIM DIRTY LOOKS.



ESPECIALLY **SNEER**, WHOSE SNOUT HAD LOST THAT CHEEKY SMIRK OF HIS, NOW STARED AT HIM WITH FURIOUS RAGE.

IN ANY CASE, **BONTON**'S SHOT HAD GONE OUT OF BOUNDS. A **HYENA** PUT THE BALL BACK IN PLAY, AND THE GAME STARTED AGAIN.

AFTER A COUPLE OF MINUTES, THE BALL FELL BY CHANCE TO **BONTON**, WHO WAS RUNNING HIS HEART OUT... AND WASN'T COVERED BY ANYONE.

OUR FRIEND, HAPPY AS A CLAM, BOLTED WITH LIGHTNING SPEED TOWARD THE **HYENAS'** NET, LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO PASS TO. **SNEER** SIGNALLED A DEFENSEMAN TO HOLD BACK, PREFERRING TO TAKE CARE OF THE **BLOODHOUND** HIMSELF.

OH MY! **SNEER** THREW HIMSELF TOWARD **BONTON**, WITH CLEARLY VIOLENT THOUGHTS ON HIS MIND! THE PUP BECAME FRIGHTENED AS THE **HYENA** NEARED; HE DIDN'T WANT TO GET HURT... SO **BONTON** READIED ANOTHER SHOT AND STRUCK THE BALL.

**SNEER** WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE: WITH NO BALL TO AIM FOR, HE COULDN'T COMMIT A FOUL WITHOUT BEING EXPELLED... AND ON TOP OF THAT, THE UNPREDICTABLE DIRECTION THE SHOT HAD TAKEN ONCE AGAIN HAD MADE THE DEFENSEMAN STUMBLE. HE HAD EXPECTED THE BALL TO GO ONE WAY, ONLY TO FIND IT BEHIND HIM, AND IN TURNING AROUND QUICKLY, HE HAD TRIPPED ON HIS OWN FEET.

## STOPPAGE TIME



THE CROWD AT THE STADIUM (LET'S FACE IT, THEY WERE TEACHERS, PARENTS AND A FEW DOZENS OF OTHER WATCHERS, NOTHING MORE) CHEERED, AND THE BALL WAS AGAIN OUT OF BOUNDS.

ALL AT ONCE, **BONTON** UNDERSTOOD!

HE HAD NEVER BEFORE FACED SKILLED PLAYERS.

AT A CERTAIN LEVEL OF SKILL, THE IDEA IS NOT TO WATCH THE OTHER PLAYER'S MOVES, BUT TO GUESS AND PREVENT THEM INSTEAD! EVERY DEFENSEMAN WATCHED HIS MOVES THINKING HE WOULD DO ONE THING, ONLY TO FIND OUT HIS SHOTS ALWAYS DID SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY!

THE GAME STARTED AGAIN, AND SINCE HIS TEAMMATES HAD ALSO UNDERSTOOD THE SAME THING, THEY PASSED THE BALL AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO OUR YOUNG HERO.

THE **HYENAS** WERE STUNNED: THEY COULDN'T GRASP THAT THE **BLOODHOUNDS** WOULD



PUT A LESS SKILLED PLAYER ON THE FIELD, AND THEY WERE CONFOUNDED BY HIS SHOTS. **SNEER** WAS ESPECIALLY ANGRY. EVERY TIME HE GOT CLOSE TO **BONTON**, THE PUP WOULD PASS THE BALL AWAY, PREVENTING ANY POSSIBLE HITS AND SO PROTECTING HIMSELF FROM FOULS.

THEN **BONTON** RECEIVED THE BALL AGAIN, TOOK A SHOT, AND THIS TIME **SNEER** HIMSELF TRIED TO STOP IT AND... YES... HE'D BLOCKED IT!

NO, WAIT - THE SHOT TOOK A STRANGE BOUNCE AND... ROCKETED OFF **SNEER'S** SNOUT, SO THAT RATHER THAN GOING WHERE HE'D EXPECTED, IT WAS HEADING... STRAIGHT FOR HIS NET!



THE REBOUND FROM **BONTON'S** SHOT HAD MADE **SNEER** SCORE IN HIS OWN NET!!!

FOR AN INSTANT, THE FIELD WAS TOTALLY STILL. EVERYTHING WAS QUIET AND FROZEN IN PLACE. THEN, EVERYONE THERE WHO WAS CHEERING FOR THE

**BARKERSFIELD BLOODHOUNDS** BURST OUT WITH A DEAFENING CRY OF JOY!  
EVERYONE BUT **BONTON**, WHO WAS FLOORED.

**SNEER** WAS JUST AS SHOCKED... HIS MOUTH HUNG OPEN, AND HE COULDN'T TAKE HIS EYES AWAY FROM THE BALL, WHICH HAD COME TO REST IN HIS OWN TEAM'S NET.



## **THE FINAL WHISTLE**

AT THAT MOMENT, THE REFEREE WHISTLED TO SIGNAL THE END OF THE GAME, AND - WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT? - THE **BLOODHOUNDS** HAD WON!

ALL THE **BARKERSFIELD** FANS POURED ONTO THE FIELD TO REJOICE WITH THE **BLOODHOUNDS**, AND **BONTON** MOST OF ALL.

**BAGUETTE**, **MOMMY MELODY** AND **DADDY QUILL** RAN TO HUG HIM BETWEEN THEIR PAWS. **DADDY QUILL** PROMISED HE WOULD WRITE A WONDERFUL ARTICLE ABOUT THE GAME IN THE **BARKERSFIELD BUGLE** TO CELEBRATE THE VICTORY, AND...

QUITE THE OPPOSITE, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FIELD, THE **HYENAS** WERE STAMPEDING OVER TO BLAME **SNEER** FOR THE LOSS.

- IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!
- IF YOU HADN'T FOULED THEM ALL, WE WOULD HAVE PLAYED AGAINST THEIR REGULAR TEAM!

IT'S TRUE THAT IT NEVER PAYS TO PLAY DIRTY.  
STILL, **BONTON** WASN'T HAPPY. **SNEER** HADN'T PLAYED THE WAY THE GAME WAS MEANT TO BE PLAYED, BUT IT'S ALSO TRUE THAT IT'S EASY TO BLAME OTHERS! EVERYONE SAW WHAT HE DID, BUT THEY NEVER COMPLAINED WHILE THEY WERE WINNING!!!  
AND THAT WASN'T RIGHT EITHER!

**BONTON** FREED HIMSELF FROM THE HUGS, ASKED EVERYONE TO WAIT A MOMENT, AND TROTTED UP TO **SNEER**.

THE OTHER **HYENAS** WERE SO SURPRISED THEY MADE WAY FOR HIM.

**BONTON** HELD OUT HIS EAR TO SHAKE **SNEER'S** PAW.



- THANKS FOR THE GAME. NEXT YEAR, TRY TO PLAY WITHOUT USING DIRTY TRICKS, AND I'LL TRY TO BECOME A BETTER PLAYER. DEAL?

**SNEER** STARED AT HIM. THEN, INCREDIBLY, IT SEEMED THAT THERE WERE TEARS IN HIS EYES. HE SHOOK **BONTON'S** EAR WHILE DRYING HIS EYES WITH HIS OTHER PAW.

- SORRY, I HAVE SOME DUST IN MY EYE, YOUR SNOUTBALL FIELD IS TOO DRY! IT'S A DEAL! NEXT YEAR, YOU WON'T WIN... WE WILL!... BUT BY PLAYING FAIR!

*End*