

Name: Layla

Last Name: Mahmoud

Grade: 7th

Teacher: Ms. Sovine

School: Webber Middle School

I walked out onto the lush, green soccer pitch, my heart racing, my mind crowded with a thousand thoughts. *What if I fail???* *What if I don't make the team????* *How am I supposed to do this??????* My hands sweat profusely as more and more girls begin to arrive. Almost all of them seem to know each other, and I'm the only one standing alone. The strong breeze whips my try-out jersey around my goosebumped body and blows my curly hair around my face. *Might as well warm up* I think, pulling my soccer ball out of my bag. "Hey! Layla!" Someone yells my name, and I turn to see a girl from school, Jessie, jog over to me. "Do you want to pass?"

I nod, excited to finally have found a friend.

"So..." she says between passes. "What team are you hoping to get on?"

"Well, I guess I'd like to get onto Blue. Maybe Royal." I reply.

There are six teams in Arsenal's league, (going from lowest to highest), including Black, White, Blue, Royal, Gold, and Academy. For the boys, there's one more team, DA, which stands for Development Academy.

"Nice," she says.

"Jessie!!!!" another voice squeals.

"Gigi!!!!" she squeals back.

I look over my shoulder to see another girl from school, Gigi, run over. Of course. I knew it was coming anyway. Gigi and Jessie are the "popular" girls from school, so, obviously, the second they find each other, I'm left alone yet again. I sigh and start juggling the soccer ball. Suddenly, a whistle startles me from my sync.

"Ladies! Over here please!" the head of the league, Peter Marsh, calls.

"Welcome to Arsenal Competitive Soccer tryouts! Today, you will be tested on your speed. Your skill. And most of all, your talent and hard work. Good luck." he says walking away.

They put into many groups. The girls from the higher teams that are trying out again are put onto the better fields and the newbies like me are stuck on the bad fields with patches of old, dry grass.

“Tweet!” the whistle blows.

We jog onto the field and our scrimmage begins. I make a few good passes and a couple of great goals, and I even score one with my head! I go home that night feeling exhilarated, and positive that I made a high team. Well, pretty sure. Hopefully. Maybe. My doubts are taking over.

The next day at school, I sit through every period anxiously biting my nails and rubbing my sweaty hands on my shorts. In the fifth period, I can’t take it anymore. I pull out my phone, and silently text my mom, “*did they call you yet????*”

She replies with a no. I set my phone down, feeling dejected when my phone buzzes again. It’s my mom. “*They just called me!!!! You made the blue team!!!*” my mom texts. I can barely hold in my excitement.

When I get home, I practically sprint inside. My mom is sitting on the couch reading a book when I zoom in.

“There’s my little champion!” she says, wrapping me in a hug. I grin because, at the moment, I really *really* feel like one.