

Full Circle

It was a beautiful day and the new sun sparkled gold across this cityscape of numerous buildings. The story I'm going to relate to you is my own story. Let me introduce myself first: I'm Mamadou, nicknamed Mamad in my neighbourhood. I'm from Herouville-aint-Clair, an ordinary suburb in the outskirts of Caen, a big city. It all began on 24 September 1997 when I was born, the prelude of a long life I hope.

I was born in an underprivileged neighbourhood even if my parents were working hard to give me a comfortable life. From an early age I was a daredevil. Every day I came home with something wrong: one day in ripped off clothes, another day with bruises. Hardships all the time till my passion for football made me forget it all making me feel good inside. My father, a football coach communicated this passion even if I was already a football fan when I was 5. It was just awesome... No one can feel all I felt at that time. It was like being over the moon and the moon was like a ball. I wasn't a good player though. I was just like the others. I was a little bit fat but my Mum didn't let go off anything and I'm grateful to her for that.

My father became a coach at the end of his career. He was a good player when he was 16 in Cameroon. He came to France soon after finishing his studies. Adaptation was a real challenge because being both a Muslim and a Cameroonian were strong downsides. We were inevitably stared at but we intelligently got past that no matter how hard it was. And I was 6 years old and I was good at school and everything was all right... I was healthy. What else could matter? "Collège" was a great turning point in my life. Being a successful student didn't save me from racist abuse. I kept this to myself till you, dear reader, has become my best confidant whatever the colour of your skin. They found fault with the colour of my skin, my culture and this gave them more ammunition every day. I was different for sure. So what? Football made people like me in all the neighbourhood. I was understood in the pitch and the pitch was the springboard. I felt better and even proud of myself. Currently, I am in High school and everyone loves me. I'm very popular and at football I'm the Captain of a good team. My Mum and Dad are proud of me and yet I'm no angel. In "Collège" I had a temporary exclusion for misbehaving but I passed my exams. I went on my summer holidays... Spain and Bayonne but with summer butterflies in my stomach thinking of what was in store for me. The spectre of high school... I'm in high school now. And there is a will so there is a way as round as a football. More freedom, more responsibility. The game is in process. The match is being played and will be played over and over again. And I'm 17 and the future is made of gold. But I don't need medals. I just need a life as beautiful as a football. There is a lot left to write about I guess. So long for a better score.

550 words

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