

## Creature and creator

May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Camp Nou. Europe's biggest stadium was hosting the great duel between the home team Football Club Barcelona and the weary guest Bayern Munich for the semifinals of the UEFA Champions League.

Josep Guardiola, Bayern Munich's coach, was visiting the stadium where he had experienced the best moments of his life. He had coached Barcelona from 2009 to 2012, but in that moment he was willing to forget everything he had lived there so he could win the championship with his current team. Guardiola was about to face, for the first time, the monster that he had helped to create. A monster called Lionel Messi.

Messi was born in Rosario, Argentina. Without good health, the shy little boy, who had a growth hormone problem, knew that his dreams were too big to stay in Rosario. So he took a plane and landed in Barcelona, where he was taken care of. And the boy grew up...

Guardiola took care of him and helped Leo turn into the best soccer player in the world in 2009. That game would put them face to face. The world was looking forward to see them together again.

The German team had players who had won the World Cup in Brazil a year before, beating Messi's country, Argentina, in the Final.

The match looked like a strategic game in which any mistake could be the last one. The two teams created some chances in the first half, but none of them scored. Luis Suarez on one side, Robert Lewandowski on the other one, and time was passing by. It was a race against the clock.

Then, at the 31<sup>st</sup> minute of the second half, Daniel Alves won a loose ball, got rid of the defense and passed it to Leo, who kicked it strongly from outside of the penalty area, unreachable for Manuel Neuer, the German goalkeeper.

The opener was finally scored. But the fans knew that 1-0 was not good enough to celebrate. Then, Barcelona took advantage of the best moment in the game to score the second goal. It did not take too long. One minute later, midfielder Rakitic found Leo from the right side and

the Argentinean boy found himself in front of a giant German defender called Boateng who was way taller and stronger than Leo. However, Messi, with a brilliant move, put the giant down.

As David took Goliath down in the Bible story, Leo beat Boateng. Only this time, there were thousands of witnesses. Then, Leo saw Neuer. When they got face to face, Leo softly touched under the ball to beat the best goalkeeper in the world to score the second goal.

Neymar would score the third goal before end of the match. And the final score was 3-0. The fans were amazed! They could not believe it. Some of them cried and thanked God for soccer, for the tears, for that night and especially for Lionel Messi.

After the game, Guardiola said there was nothing he could do. Against talent, there was nothing to do. The creature had slayed the creator.

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