When football returned last month following the coronavirus lockdown, it appeared David Luiz did not quite get the memo.

The Brazilian endured a horror show of an evening as Arsenal met Manchester City at the Etihad Stadium, coming off the bench only to spill a Kevin De Bruyne pass into the path of Raheem Sterling, before later conceding a penalty and getting a straight red card.

Luiz's error-strewn half-hour in Manchester led many to believe his Arsenal days were done, with Sky Sports pundit Jamie Carragher suggesting the performance would be Luiz's last showing in an Arsenal shirt.

It was an evening of redemption of Luiz as this time he came up against City from the off, starting the match for the Gunners at Wembley and imposing himself from the opening minute.

Luiz threw himself in the way of wave after wave of City advances, while showing the confidence levels to stick to Arsenal's game plan and play expansive football out from the defensive line.

Yet despite the endless list of doubters, opposition manager Pep Guardiola had called it all along, and fully expected Luiz to shine.

Prior to the match Guardiola insisted he cannot be judged purely on the one calamitous evening at the Etihad in June.

'I have an incredible respect for him and for what he has done in his career,' said Guardiola in his pre-match press conference.

'He is an exceptional player and has an incredible mentality and especially personality.

'I laugh out loud when I hear the pundits. A lot of them were defenders and they believe they didn't make one mistake in their career even though they played for 15 or 20 years.

'I like that Luiz still plays football and I'm pretty sure he's going to make a lot of good actions, some more mistakes as that's part of the game. But he does it with dignity. I've a lot of respect for him.'

City faced Arsenal having beaten them in their last seven games and scoring at least three goals in six of those matches, but Luiz and Co ensured a new chapter was to be written. The Gunners have now made more FA Cup finals than any other team in English football history.

'There was a lot of criticism of me, I think you can say that,' Luiz told BT Sport after the Gunners' Wembley victory.

'That's part of football. I understood during my career that part of football is about surviving. Every day you're going to defend your team, and the other people are going to support different teams.'

'It's about surviving, so that's what I did. I was working hard every single day after my mistakes. I took the blame, I was mature enough to understand that. I was also humble [enough] to work more for the team.'

The win also marks a turning point for Luiz, and the opportunity to experience something which has always evaded him.

Despite his several years at Chelsea, when the club twice reached the final of football's oldest cup competition, Luiz did not play in either of the 2012 or 2018 finals, having been omitted from the squad on each occasion. Chelsea won both times.

Almost as if the stars have aligned, Luiz has been able to tend to this matter and earn himself a place in the showpiece final while defeating Guardiola and City along the way.

A new contract at the Emirates, to the surprise of many, appears to have served to boost the resolve and resilience of Luiz.

The Brazilian was also of utmost importance as the Gunners recently battened down the hatches against champions Liverpool to put on a defensive masterclass and take a crucial 2-1 victory.

The Gunners entered Saturday evening's match having lost just once in their last seven games. And now, following another impressive scalp, things certainly appear to be looking up.

Luiz's redemption journey is now taking shape but is, of course, far from over.

He has the trust of manager Mikel Arteta and the self-confidence to bounce back from the brink. The imposing Brazilian will get the FA Cup final appearance he has been craving, though the job is yet to be completed.

Luiz could yet face his former club Chelsea in this season's final, as they lock horns with Manchester United on Sunday.

The team who took away two chances for Luiz to play in an FA Cup final could well be defeated by him on the main stage. Given the way the stars appear to be aligning, you would be a brave individual to rule that out.