

Bend it like beckham analysis essay



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Bend it Like Beckham uses the metaphor of football (soccer) to explore and discuss race, gender, and ethnicity in contemporary London.

18-year-old Jesminder “ Jess” Bhamra (Parminder Nagra) is a British Indian Punjabi Sikh living in the western suburbs of London. Her older sister, Pinky (Archie Panjabi), is preoccupied with fashion and her upcoming wedding to her boyfriend Teetu (Kulvinder Ghir), who operates a successful automobile business. Jess’ father (the noted actor, Anupam Kher) is a Kenyan Indian and both her mother (Shaheen Khan) and father are Punjabi immigrants in Britain who work at nearby Heathrow Airport. As Jess is the more studious of the two daughters, her parents push her towards academic achievement in the hope that she will achieve the financial success which evaded them.

Their goal is for her to attend university and become a Solicitor. In contrast, Jess only dreams of becoming a professional football player, inspired by the football star, David Beckham. She expresses her dreams in two ways: first by secretly confiding to a poster of David Beckham which hangs in her bedroom (these “ conversations” are contrasted in the film with her parent’s show of veneration to a portrait of Sikhism founder, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, reverently referred to as babaji); and secondly by playing football in the park with her best friend, Tony (Ameet Chana). As Pinky is getting married, Jess is deemed too old by her parents to continue playing football. Her mother tells her, “ What family will want a daughter-in-law who can run around kicking football all day but can’t make round chapatis? In response to her protests, her father also adds, “ Jesse, your mother is right.

It's not nice. You must start behaving like a proper woman. OK? " One day while playing in the park, Jess is spotted by Juliette " Jules" Paxton (Keira Knightley), a White British girl who is a player for the Hounslow Harriers (a local amateur women's football team), along with Mel (Shaznay Lewis), the captain of the team. Jules also struggles with her mother's (Juliet Stevenson) misplaced expectations.

While Mrs. Paxton only thinks of dating and marriage for her, Jules hopes to play football professionally, a move which her mother equates with lesbianism. Unlike Jess, however, Jules is actively encouraged to play football by her father (Frank Harper), who is thrilled that at this stage of her life she is not interested in boys. Jess happily accepts Jules' invitation to join the club, even though she knows her parents will disapprove.

She becomes a key member of the side and is also befriended by her coach, Joe (Jonathan Rhys Meyers). Joe is a White Irish Briton who was forced to quit playing football with the men's team after an injury. Although both Jules and Jess have a crush on him, Joe attempts to remain professional and distance himself. However, despite his best efforts, he and Jess are eventually drawn to each other due in part to their mutual marginalization from British society. When Joe reproaches her for fighting with a player from the opposing team, Jess tells him: " She called me a ' Paki,' but I guess that's something you wouldn't understand.

In response Joe states, " Jess, I'm Irish. Of course I understand! " As their relationship develops, a feud grows between Jess and Jules. After being told that she must stop playing football, Jess' parents discover that she has been

lying to them and secretly playing with the team. Despite Joe's pleas to them that she remain, Jess is forced to quit the team. Her parents also discourage a relationship with Joe, a decision encouraged by Pinky who tells her, " Look Jess, you can marry anyone you want.

It's fine at first when you're in love and all that but do you really want to be the one that everyone stares at, at every family do, because you married the English bloke? " During Pinky's wedding, however, her father (disturbed by the extent of her depression) allows Jess to leave a play in the finals. Pinky's happiness in marriage and Jess' in playing the game are juxtaposed through a detailed montage sequence. During the game, an American scout is impressed with their performance and offers Jess and Jules a place on the Santa Clara University soccer team in the United States. Jess returns to the wedding party (which was just finishing) and tells Tony what has happened, wondering how she will break the news to her parents.

Although Tony is gay (something only Jess knows), he takes her hand and leads her to the living room where he announces their engagement. His only condition is that Jess be allowed to attend the college of her choice. Unable to allow Tony to make this sacrifice, Jess tells her family that he is lying and that she has been offered the chance to play football in the United States. While her mother is horrified, her father supports the decision. He talks about the prejudice he faced as a young man who wanted to play Cricket, a past which will be vindicated by Jess' new opportunities. He thus grants her permission to go.

An elated Jess tells Joe that her parents are allowing her to go to the U. S. He attempts to kiss her, since he is no longer her coach and is therefore allowed to date her; however, she tells him that it's difficult for her parents to let her leave, and starting a relationship with Joe would be too much for them to handle. At the airport, Jess and Jules' families say goodbye. Joe arrives to say goodbye and to tell Jess that he was offered a job coaching the men's team, but turned it down to help the women's team turn professional.

He tells her that he told his estranged father about his new job, and she is pleased, since she had encouraged him throughout the film to reconnect with his father. Joe asks Jess if, despite the distance and her family, they might still have a chance for a relationship. They kiss, but are interrupted by the sudden appearance of David Beckham and his wife, Victoria (or Posh, one of the Spice Girls). Jess tells Joe that she will be back at Christmas and will try to explain her relationship with Joe to her parents at that time.

The final scene of the film shows Pinky, heavily pregnant and happy in her marriage, showing her mother-in-law some new baby clothes – her mother is now in a much better relationship with her; Jess' father is teaching Joe how to play cricket (a sport for which he shows little potential) and a genial relationship has developed between them.