

Theme: Film Analysis

Source: Extract from Narinder Dhama, *Bend it like Beckham*

"Mum, Dad, Tony's lying," I blurted out. "We're not getting married." Everyone stopped celebrating, and looked confused. "Tony only said that to help me," I went on shakily. "Look, I played in the final today - and we won."

"What?" Mum asked in a shocked voice. "How?"

5 "I wasn't going to go, but Dad let me," I told her.

For once, Mum was too stunned to say a word. She turned to Dad, who looked a bit shamefaced.

"And it was brilliant," I went on quickly before Mum could get started. "I played the best I ever have - because I wasn't sneaking off and lying to you. I didn't ask to be good at football -" I glanced at the picture on the wall "- Guru Nanak must have blessed me. Anyway, there was a scout from America there
10 who's offered me a place at a top university with a free scholarship and a chance to play football professionally. I really want to go ..." I was having to swallow hard now because I was on the edge of tears. "And if I can't tell you now what I really want, then I'll never be happy whatever I do."

I stole a glance at Mum and Dad. Dad looked stunned, but Mum was recovering fast. She glared at Dad.

"You mean you let her leave her sister's wedding to play football?"

15 Tears filled my eyes, and I slumped down in an armchair. Hadn't Mum heard a word I'd been saying?

"You might have been able to handle her long face, but I couldn't," Dad muttered uncomfortably. "I didn't have the heart to stop her."

"And that's why she's ready to go all the way to America now!" Mum snapped.

I huddled in my chair, feeling sick. I'd blown it. I'd really blown it.

20 There was a tense silence. Dad got up, went over to the bar in the corner and poured himself a large whisky.

"When those bloody English cricket players threw me out of their club like a dog, I never complained," he said quietly. "On the contrary, I vowed never to play again. And who suffered? Me."

I stared at him. Of all the things I'd expected him to say, this wasn't one of them.

25 "I don't want Jessie to suffer," Dad said. "I don't want her to make the same mistake her father made, just accepting the situation. I want her to fight, and I want her to win."

I sat up, my eyes fixed on him. A tiny seed of hope sprang up inside me and started to grow.

"I've seen Jessie play, and she's brilliant!" Dad went on passionately. I managed a smile. So he had seen me playing in the semi-final. "I don't think anyone has the right to stop her ..."

30 I gasped with relief, jumped up from my chair and ran to throw my arms round him. Mum might talk a lot, but if Dad had made up his mind about something, then that was it. I was so happy, I couldn't say a word, I just hugged him as tightly as I could.

"Two daughters made happy in one day," Dad said softly. "What more could any father want?"

"Well, at least I've taught her how to cook a full Indian dinner," Mum said, sounding upset but resigned.

35 "The rest is in God's hands!"

Assignments:

1) Point out the hurdles Jess has to overcome in this scene to reach her aim.

2) Analyse the "language" of film the director uses to highlight the dramatic development of this scene.

3) Here you are given a choice:

a) Compare Jessminder's (fictional) career with that of Sarfraz Manzoor (as described in the text *Asians in Britain*).

b) After this scene Biji attacks Mrs Bhamra for giving in so quickly to her husband. She still hopes for Jessminder to become her grandson's wife. Write this dialogue the way Narinder Dhama might have done it.