

BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM

Plot Summary

Eighteen-year-old Jesminder, "Jess", is a British Indian girl living in the western suburbs of London. Her love for football, and the famous football star David Beckham, play a huge role in her life. Jess' parents have big dreams for her. They want her to become successful and "a proper Indian girl." They want her to go to university and become a lawyer, and marry an Indian man. Jess, however, wants to become a professional football player. She plays football in the park with her best friend, Tony, and his friends. Her older sister, Pinky, on the other hand, is more interested in shopping and her future wedding. She is making her parents proud by planning to marry an Indian man. Jess' parents believe that she should not be playing football. She should be helping to prepare for the wedding. One day while playing in the park, Jess is spotted by Jules, who plays for a women's football team, the Hounslow Harriers. Like Jess' mother, Jules' mother does not understand her daughter's love for football. However, Jules' father encourages her to play football and is happy that her daughter enjoys a sport that he loves as well. Jess happily accepts Jules' invitation to join the club, even though she knows her parents will disagree. She becomes one of the best players on the team and becomes very close to the team's coach, Joe. Joe had to quit playing football when he became injured, so he became a coach. Although both Jules and Jess are secretly in love with him, Joe cannot date them because he is their coach. However, the relationship between Jess and Joe grows, and when he begins to show Jess more attention, Jules becomes jealous. 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. Jess is forced to quit the team. Her parents also discourage a relationship with Joe, because he is not an Indian man. Jess is very disappointed because the final game of the season will be on the same day as her sister's wedding. At the wedding Jess is very unhappy. Her father sees this, and allows Jess to play in the match. During the game, an American scout is watching Jess and Jules play. He is impressed with their

talent and offers them the opportunity to play on the Santa Clara University soccer team in the United States. Jess returns to the end of her sister's wedding party and tells Tony that she has the opportunity to play in America. She does not know how to tell her parents. Although Tony is gay (which only Jess knows), he asks her family if he can marry her. He offers to do this so that she can go to Santa Clara University to play football. Jess doesn't want to lie any more, and tells her family that she has been given 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. He gives permission to go. 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. Joe and Jess kiss, but they are interrupted by the sudden appearance of David Beckham. 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 Jess' father teaching Joe how to play cricket and the friendly relationship that has grown between them.

(from: <http://curriculumproject.org/wp-content/uploads/Bend%20it%20like%20Beckham.pdf>)

Answer the questions:

- 1. Who are these characters in the story?**
 - a. Jess -
 - b. Tony -
 - c. Pinky -
 - d. Jules -
 - e. Joe -
- 2. What is Jess's dream?**
- 3. What is Jess's parents' dream?**
- 4. What is Pinky into?**
- 5. What does Jess's mother and Jules's mother have in common?**
- 6. Who encourages Jules to play football?**
- 7. Who is in love with Joe? Why can't he date any of them?**

8. What happens when Jess's parents find out that she is secretly playing in the team?
9. What is going to happen on the same day as the final game of the season?
10. Who lets Jess go to the game?
11. Who watches Jess and Jules playing? What does he offer them?
12. What does Tony do to help Jess go to the USA?
13. What does Jess decide to do when they are talking to her parents?
14. How does her mother react? What about her father?
15. Why didn't Joe accept the invitation to coach the man's team?
16. Does Joe get along well with Jess's family in the end of the film?

Some important themes are treated in the film. What do you remember about it?

1. Women's role in the Brazilian society and in the Indian society.
2. Religion in the Brazilian culture and in the Indian culture.
3. Women in sports in Brazil and in India.
4. Homosexuality in Brazil and in India.

Choose one of the themes above and write a composition. Remember to mention parts of the film to support your arguments. (100 to 120 words) - in pairs.