CHAPATTIS OR FOOTBALL?

Jesse Bhamra lives with her parents in the suburbs of London. She is mad about football and would love to play regularly for a team, much to the dismay of her parents...

DAD  Jesse, now that your sister has got engaged, it’s different. You know how people talk.
JESSE  She’s the one getting married, not me!
MUM  I was married at your age. You don’t even want to learn how to cook dhal?
JESSE  Anyway, I’m not playing with boys any more.
MUM  Good. End of matter.
JESSE  I’m joining a girls’ team.
MUM  Eh?!?!!
JESSE  They want me to play in proper matches. The coach said I could go far.
MUM  Go far? Go far to where? Jesse, we let you play all you wanted when you were young, huh? You’ve played enough.
JESSE  That’s not fair. He’s selected me!
MUM  He? (to her husband) She said it was girls!
JESSE  The coach. Joe.
MUM  See how she lies. (to Jesse) I don’t want you running around half-naked in front of men, huh! Look how dark you’ve become, playing in the sun.
JESSE  But mum! I’m really good.
MUM  What family will want a daughter-in-law who can run around kicking football all day but can’t make round chapattis? Now exams are over, I want you to learn full Punjabi dinner, meat and vegetarian.
JESSE  (to her father) But, dad!
DAD  Well –
MUM  (interrupting him) Dad? Ah, no! This is where you spoil her. This is how it started with your niece, the way that girl would answer back, and then running off to become a model wearing small, small skirts…
JESSE  Mum, she’s a fashion designer!
MUM  She’s divorced, that’s what she is. Cast off after three years of being married to a white boy with blue hair... Oh, her poor mother! She hasn’t been able to set foot in that temple since. I don’t want the shame on my family. That’s it! No more football! (Mum leaves the room)
DAD  Jesse, your mother is right. It’s not nice. You must start behaving like a proper woman. OK?

Later that day, Jesse is talking with her friend Tony in the park. She is furious.

JESSE  It’s out of order! Anything I want is just not Indian enough for ’em. I mean I never skipped school like Pinky or Bubbly. I don’t wear make-up or tight clothes like them. They just don’t see all those things…
TONY  Parents never see the good things.
JESSE  Yeah, well, anyone can cook aloo-gobi but who can bend a ball like Beckham?
TONY  Why don’t you just play and not tell ’em, eh? Look, Pinky’s been sneaking off for years to see Teetus and now they’re getting married, nobody cares. What your parents don’t know won’t hurt.
JESSE  Well, why should I have to lie? It’s not as if I’m sleepin’ around with anyone…

Gurinder Chadha, Bend it like Beckham, 2002

1 chapattis : petites galettes plates qui font office de pain.
2 dhal : lentilles jaunes mélangées à des épices, plat populaire en Inde du Nord et au Tibet.
3 aloo : pomme de terre.
4 gobi : chou-fleur.
BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM

ON YOUR MARKS...

1. Using the title, anticipate what the situation is.
2. If you have seen the film, explain the problem. If not, say which two cultures are involved and why they might clash.

GET SET...

3. Watch the whole movie. Specify the major problem. Is any solution found?
4. Watch the beginning of the movie. Describe the tone and atmosphere.
5. Watch the second part of the movie. Which characters dominate the discussion? What role does the other character play?

GO...

6. Read the conversation between Jesse and her parents. Why is Jesse so motivated? What skills does Jesse’s mother expect her to have? Pick out three examples.
7. What aspects of Jesse’s “hobby” does her mother particularly disapprove of? What is she worried about? What about her father?
8. What example of “bad” behavior does Jesse’s mother give? What was the effect on the family?
9. Read Jesse’s chat with Tony. Explain her fury. What special talent does she have?
10. What is Tony’s advice? Do you agree with him? What do you think of Jesse’s reaction?
11. Find criticisms of both cultures mentioned in the text.

EXPRESSION

1. Jesse follows Tony’s advice. She becomes a star footballer and wins a scholarship at a top American university. She calls her mum from the USA. Using expressions from the text imagine their conversation.
2. Have you ever been prevented from doing something you really wanted to do? Explain both sides of the situation.

REPRIMAND AND ADVICE

a) “I don’t want you running around half-naked…”
b) “I want you to learn how to…”
c) “You must start behaving like a proper woman…”
d) “You’d better behave yourself, young lady!”
e) “Watch / Mind your Ps and Qs…”
f) “Why don’t you just play and not tell them?”
g) “Why not keep quiet about it?”
h) “I suggest that you say nothing…”
i) “I suggest saying nothing…”
j) “If I were you, I wouldn’t risk telling them…”
k) “Personally, I’d advise you to…”
l) “It would be wise not to say anything…”

5 When we call on somebody to mind their Ps and Qs, we are encouraging them to be careful about the detail of what they are doing, and generally behave in a gentlemanly or ladylike manner, as appropriate. This curious phrase does not come from a contraction of “pleases” and “thank-yous”. In the old days, any printed document would be printed using movable type. Each letter or character would be on a single piece of lead, and these would be removed from a case of letters. However, because they were inked and then pressed against paper, they were reversed. So that the piece of lead for “p” looked like a “q”, while the piece for a “q” looked like a “p”. So we should indeed mind our ps and qs. We should mind our bs and ds as well, but that phrase never caught on.
BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM

KEY WORDS

A. Match each key word from the text p. 1 with its correct translation.

| 1. athletics | a. athlètes
|             | b. athlétisme
|             | c. athlétique
| 2. deserve  | a. desservir
|             | b. mal servir
|             | c. mériter
| 3. outplay  | a. jouer mieux que
|             | b. jouer dehors
|             | c. jeu d’extérieur
| 4. practise | a. pratiquer
|             | b. s’entraîner
|             | c. pratique
| 5. prize    | a. prix (le coût)
|             | b. prix (la récompense)
|             | c. prise (de drogue)
| 6. referee  | a. arbitre
|             | b. jugement
|             | c. coup franc

B. For each one invent a sentence showing that you understand its meaning.

LINK WORDS

Complete, using one of the following: although, as, despite, for, since, until, upon, when, yet.

1. He hasn’t played ... he broke his leg.
2. They’ve kept on organizing tournaments ... the atmosphere of violent conflict in the area.
3. He met the kids ... he went back to Eritrea.
4. ... seeing their enthusiastic reaction, he knew he had done the right thing.
5. He won’t be happy ... they have proper equipment.
6. ... some think it is a violent sport, I find it creative.
7. Her mum arrived just ... she was leaving with her soccer bag.
8. They’ve been meeting secretly ... years.
9. Their parents haven’t ... realized what’s going on.

'SINCE' OR 'FOR'

Translate.

1. Depuis le divorce de sa fille, elle n’a pas pu se rendre au temple.
2. Elle joue au foot depuis son enfance, mais ça fait un an qu’elle lutte contre ses parents.
4. Pinky et Teetus sont mariés depuis Noël, mais ils se connaissent depuis dix ans déjà.

PAST CONDITIONALS

Rephrase, as in the example.

She probably got into trouble because she didn’t tell her parents about her love of football.

If he had told her parents about her love of football, she probably wouldn’t have got into trouble.

1. She got tanned because she was playing football every day.
2. She had problems because she told her parents.
3. She became a pro because an American coach visited her country.