

Closed Doors

By Amman Kayla

1 EXT. BLACKFORD STREET - DAY

Bland and boring Britain. The cars of CHANNU and KAMAL (50), are found driving in at opposite sides of the road.

They pull in at the same time, get out at the same time, shut their doors at the same time, then make eye contact from either side. Channu sports a shirt and suit, whereas Kamal is wearing a doctor's uniform.

CHANNU  
(Broken Indian accent)  
Gidda! (Alright?)

KAMAL  
Sat Sri Akaal! (Sikh blessing.)

The two wave at each other, before turning away.

Channu rolls his eyes and mimes Kamal's 'Saat Sri Akaal', before saying-

CHANNU  
(under his breath)  
Bloody bastard.

Channu continues up his drive, walking towards a fairy light draped house.

Channu enters his house, the door harshly swinging shut behind him.

CUT TO TITLE

2 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Banga household. Paath plays in the background, incense burns on the mantelpiece.

Channu sits on the sofa, feet up on the coffee table. He hums along to the paath as he drinks a cup of tea and reads a newspaper.

SITO (50) is organising suits on the table, a large suitcase at her feet. Plastic wrapped Indian lengha of all colours, tightly packed and laid out on the table.

JOHNNY (30) is trying on his Indian suit. Sito begins pinning it and fitting it to his physique.

The sound of the door opening sparks Channu's interest.

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CHANNU

Ah koi time ar? (what time is this?)

In walks scrappy NIKHIL (16), a muddy school uniform with a ball under his arm, he has his hair tied in a patka. He scrunches his nose, standing in the doorway.

NIHKIL

Phwar. Smells like India in here.

Sito laughs to herself, whereas Channu slams his mug onto the table.

CHANNU

Son, when I talk to you in Punjabi, why don't you reply in Punjabi?

NIKHIL

Mennu ni putna. (I don't know.)

Nikhil shrugs. Channu rolls his eyes.

NIKHIL (CONT'D)

Is this all the wedding stuff then?

Nikhil notices a red box of Indian sweets beside Channu. He attempts to grab one, but Channu slaps his hand away.

CHANNU

Oi, pagal.

NIKHIL

Alright, alright, I get it, I'll go.

Nikhil begins walking back out the hallway.

NIKHIL (CONT'D)

By the way, dad, we put out the fairy lights yeah, to tell the street we're having a wedding?

CHANNU

Ah-hu.

NIKHIL

So why does Kamal have his fairy lights out?

Channu springs up like a meerkat, heading straight for the window. Nikhil has a cheeky smile. Channu scrunches his

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eyebrows in curiosity, as he peers behind the lace fabric draped over the window. His eyes widen intensely.

Through the window, we see Kamal and JAY (30) have just finished putting up their fairy lights, draping down the front of their house. They're standing proudly, staring up at it. They're inaudibly laughing, joking and smiling together.

Channu is fuming as he stares out the window, his face even more wrinkley than before.

Channu turns around, the fury still sculpting his brows.

CHANNU

They're having a bloody wedding, when  
we're having a bloody wedding!

Channu angrily backs away from the window. He looks around the living room - a man with a mission. He grabs a couple of the packages and a pair of scissors and walks through to the hallway. Nikhil pinches a barfi from the sweet box and heads to the hallway.

3 INT. HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Channu is struggling with a cardboard box labelled 'MAIYA DECORATIONS.' Nikhil runs past him and runs upstairs. Channu opens the door, attempting to get his large assortment of fabric and rolls out of the door.

Channu finally manages it out the door.

4 EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

Channu places a small radio on the wall. He clicks play. Indian music plays.

INTERCUT BETWEEN NIKHIL AND CHANNU:

Nikhil entering and shutting the bathroom door.

Channu begins by rolling a long red carpet down the driveway.

The shower turning on.

Channu has some wires in his mouth, intertwining them carefully with his fingers, determination and focus in his eyes.

Shower running.

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Channu rips one of the lengha fabrics with his knee.

The shower turning off.

Channu twirling something round the lights

Nikhil leaving the shower.

Channu begins pinning things to the wall, accidentally pinning his finger too. He lets out a load groan.

CHANNU

Ah, twaadi!

Channu sucks onto his finger.

SHANNON (50) walks down the street, in a black trench coat with some high heels. She walks past Channu's house and inspects the situation.

SHANNON

Gordon blimey Channa, what's going on here?

CHANNU

Oh. Hello Shannon.

Shannon walks into the drive of her house.

SHANNON

And could you turn that bloomin noise off, my kids are gonna be going to bed soon.

CHANNU

Alright Shannon, go watch Eastenders.

Shannon gives Channu a pissed off look before going into her house and shutting the door behind her.

Channu turns the music down.

5 INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

The sound of a hair dryer radiates from the floor above. It turns off. The noise is followed by loud footsteps down the stairs - Nikhil. Now out of his uniform, his long hair trails behind him as he approaches the large mirror that hangs in the hallway. He places a black fabric in front of him and begins tying his hair into a bun in the mirror.

Through the open door to the outside, we see Channu walking back and forth, juggling various items and decorations. He has a piece of pink fabric on his foot. He struggles to get it off, before walking out of frame.

Nikhil still continues to sort out his hair in the mirror, taking a black piece of fabric and wrapping it around his bun. He then takes another, large piece and begins putting his patka in place. It's a routine, second nature, the motions come easily to him.

Channu snaps him out of his trance as he pops his head through the front door-

CHANNU

Aja Nikhil.

-Before disappearing back to the outside.

6 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Nikhil steps out of the hallway. He looks up at the house. His face scrunches up a little.

CHANNU

So, what you think?

NIKHIL

It's a bit tacky...

Pink and red fabric are draped everywhere. Through the fairy lights, round the fences, a small arch standing at the end of the red carpet. Nikhil is shocked. Channu is over the moon.

CHANNU

You don't know what you're talking about, ah. This all the rage in India. Bot sonni.

The revving of a car is loud and obnoxious. Bright lights begin to drive down Blackford street. Suddenly slow motion. The pair turn to look, as well as Shannon and Johnny from their bedroom windows.

A white, expensive Mercedes drives down the road in slow motion. Cool music plays. The boys are entranced.

The car parks up at Kamal's house. Outstep Jay and Kamal. Kamal is wearing sunglasses, he takes them off and winks towards Nikhil and Channu, before grandly walking into his house.

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The music stops, the Indian music from Channu's small radio continues in its place.

Nikhil is starstruck. Johnny is gobsmacked. Channu is pissed off. Shannon rolls her eyes, stubs her cigarette and flicks it out the window as she exits back into her house.

Channu groans, before immediately turning around and entering his house. He notices Nikhil still staring.

CHANNU (CONT'D)

Oi, pagal, come eat your roti.

Snapping out of it, Nikhil runs into the house.

7 INT. CHANNU'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sito and Channu are lying in bed. Sito has her back turned, sleeping soundly. Channu however, has his arms crossed across his body, staring angrily at the ceiling above him. Something is on his mind. He looks at the time - 1am. He quickly gets out of the bed, throwing his side of the duvet away from him.

8 EXT. BLACKFORD STREET - MORNING

Channu leaves his house with a skip in his walk, Nikhil follows shortly behind in his school uniform.

Channu approaches his car. Nikhil walks behind him, but his jaw drops as he looks into the distance.

Kamal leaves his house, carrying a briefcase. He approaches the Mercedes, to see it's been COMPLETELY clingfilmed.

Kamal loses it, immediately looking up at Channu.

Channu smiles, entering the driver's side of his car.

Channu and Nikhil drive away, leaving Kamal to aggressively rip his car free, groaning angrily.

9 EXT. BLACKFORD STREET - EVENING

Kamal's car has disappeared, now leaving remnants of cling film on the street. The street is much quieter, slightly more eerie, as we approach the evening sky.

Nikhil is walking down the street, home from school. His patka is untied, his hair in a dishevelled bun on the top of his head, it looks messy, as if it had been handled aggressively.

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He fiddles with the fabric in between his fingers, torn into two ragged pieces. He looks extremely distressed, but trying his best to hide it.

Slowing down to Nikhil's walking speed, is Channu's car. Channu winds down the car window, a disgusted expression on his face.

CHANNU

Pagal! What are you doing? Your family are here. Go and get dressed, put your bloody patka back on.

Nikhil looks upset by the words but nods in respect, quickly walking down the road to avoid talking to his father anymore.

10 EXT. BACKGARDEN - EVENING

The chorus of women singing 'Giddah Boliyan' act as a backdrop to the ongoing practice of the maiyan. Johnny sits in the middle of the garden on a red stool, a red chunni above him, held by a group of young Indian women.

Nikhil and Channu are watching from the opposite end of the garden. Bored and dead in the eyes. Nikhil now is wearing a deep red coloured patka.

Sito is knelt beside Johnny, rubbing a yellow paste into his arms and legs. She feeds him some yellow sweet rice and they pose for a photo.

Shannon approaches her window and looks down at the party. She groans and rolls her eyes.

Channu and Nikhil are not really paying attention. Instead, Nikhil looks up at his father. Channu is staring at the ceremony. He's struggling to get his words out, stuttering a bit, until-

NIKHIL

Dad (beat) My friend Manjit, he doesn't wear a patka. His dad lets him cut his hair if he wants to.

Channu shakes his head.

CHANNU

KAMAL'S Manjit? That pagal from over the road?

Nikhil shrinks up.

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CHANNU (CONT'D)

That man has no clue about tradition and culture. You, Nikki, are the future - you have to make sure that we keep our legacy going-

NIKHIL

But- Manjit still goes to the gurdwara and-

CHANNU

Nope. It's not enough. I wore a patka, your baba wore a patka and so will you.

NIKHIL

Yeah but there was a point where you took it off.

CHANNU

I'm balding, Nikhil. There's a difference.

Pause.

CHANNU (CONT'D)

If your baba was still here Nikhil, he would have already slapped you back to India by now. You have it so lucky, you know. All you have to do is wear the bloody patka.

They pause, Nikhil staring at his father. Channu continues looking forward at the maiyan.

CHANNU (CONT'D)

When you're under my roof Nikhil, you do what I say. You do what I do and you do everything that I tell you to.

Still hurt from before, Nikhil tries to hide his sadness. Less anger and more frustration. He runs back into the house. Channu finally turns.

CHANNU (CONT'D)

Oi, Nikhil! (beat)

Channu sighs and reaches into his blazer pocket, pulling out a thick Cuban cigar. He gets up from his seat and also walks into the house.

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Sito is washing away the rangoli design that was on the floor. She begins to hop over the washed away design, with the chunni now scrunched up on her head.

Shannon is still watching with an incredibly confused look on her face.

SHANNON

What are they doing now? Playing  
bloody hopskotch?

CUT TO:

11 EXT. BLACKFORD STREET - EVENING

Channu walks down his drive to the brick wall at the end of the front garden. The sound from the house slowly quietens down the further he walks but the noise still lingers faintly. He lights his cigar as he perches on the wall at the front of the drive, he breathes it in and lets it out in a deep exhale.

At Kamal's house, Channu notices the front door opening - Kamal himself. He's letting in some YOUNG WOMEN (25-30) in colourful lengha. Kamal notices Channu looking and points over at him, beginning to wave.

Channu rolls his eyes.

CHANNU

Pagal.

Kamal begins dancing, miming to something. Channu mimes back, pointing at his ear.

CHANNU (CONT'D)

Can't hear you.

Kamal raises up a finger, symbolising '1 minute' and disappears into his house. The music from his house grows louder. Kamal begins dancing with some bhangra dance moves to his music.

Channu gets his phone out from his pocket and brings the phone to his ear.

CHANNU (CONT'D)

Johnny. Plug pawu, lighta lahe, music  
jaguo. (Put the lights plug in, turn  
up the music.)

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In a moment, behind Channu, the lights on his home begin to twinkle. His music grows louder. He nods towards Kamal. Kamal bows and disappears into his house.

Nikhil is hanging around on the street, more towards Shannon's side of the road. He has his ball with him, quietly kicking it around - a distraction.

Channu looks towards Kamal's door. The sound of a dhol is heard. Kamal leaves his house, playing the dhol loudly and attempting to continue his bhangra dance moves as he does.

Shannon pops her head out of the window. She looks somewhat disgusted. She grabs onto the window and slams the window shut.

Nikhil's attention converts to the dhol. He's also incredibly confused. He walks over to his dad.

NIKHIL

What the hell is going on?

Channu looks angry.

CHANNU

That man is trying to smart me. He thinks he can smart me? I'll smart him-

Channu leaves his seat, angrily throwing his cigar on the floor and stubbing it out with his incredibly smart shoe. Channu turns back around and heads up his drive, back into his home.

Nikhil continues kicking his ball around the street, Kamal puts his dhol down for a moment, as if he's ready to go back inside.

Channu leaves his house, opening his arms wide. Behind him, a group of women emerge from the door, beginning to sing 'Giddah Boliyan.' An Indian folk song, where they send numerous Punjabi slurs and insults towards Kamal. They dance into the street.

Kamal laughs and starts to play the dhol again, trying go along with the rhythm of the singing, joining the ladies in the street.

Nikhil is continuing to kick his ball around, heading towards the front of Shannon's house. He kicks it up and goes in for a header, scoring it into Shannon's window. Nikhil looks

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around Shannon's front garden for the ball. He spots it and walks over to it.

The women continue to sing. Kamal continues to play the dhol. Kamal approaches Channu and gets him to join in with the singing and dancing. Channu takes a £5 note from his pocket and twirls it round Kamal's head, as well as all of the singers.

Shannon storms out of her house, red faced, as Nikhil retrieves his ball from her garden.

SHANNON

This is my fucking property! Get off!  
Get off!

Nikhil jumps up, a scared look on his face.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

And tell your bloody paki family, to  
get off the street and shut the hell  
up before I call the police.

The group can't hear over the singing and dhol playing, Channu however catches from the corner of his eye. Shannon overpowering Nikhil, talking down on him.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

I don't care how you guys celebrate  
things in the village. But you're in  
England, alright? We don't act like  
prats here.

Channu looks to Kamal and back over to Nikhil. He shakes his head, an angry expression taking to his face. He barges his way over to the woman.

Kamal stops playing the dhol, as he realises what's happening. The group stop dancing and turn around to see.

CHANNU

Oi, oi! How dare you talk like that to  
my son.

Channu walks over to Shannon, a scrunch in his brow. He spits out his words.

SHANNON

You are grown adult, Channa, you  
should know better.

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NIHKIL

Dad-

CHANNU

No no, it's not the same. You have disrespected my family. You have disrespected my culture.

Kamal walks up behind Channu, backing him up, looking down at Shanon.

Shannon looks at Kamal.

SHANNON

I mean it.

Shannon storms into her house, Channu grabs Nikhil's shoulders.

CHANNU

You okay?

NIKHIL

Yeah, it was just Shannon.

CHANNU

Come on, let's go back.

The pair begin walking back.

NIKHIL

Does she really think your name is Channa?

They begin walking up the drive, the ensemble following behind. Channu looks at Kamal and Kamal nods, before walking towards his house.

12 INT. CHANNU'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Channu is laying in bed, Sito sleeping soundly beside him.

He's on his back, looking up at the ceiling, his hands crossed over his belly.

He takes a breath out, before turning on his side and closing his eyes.

13 INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Channu is tying up his tie in the big mirror in the hall, his

eyes dash towards the clock.

CHANNU

Nikhil! I'll leave without you.

Nikhil's footsteps walk slowly down the stairs.

His eyes meet with Channu's through the reflection of the mirror.

Nikhil's hair has been cut short.

Channu clears his throat and starts fiddling with his collar.

Nikhil looks terrified.

CHANNU (CONT'D)

Ah see, your ears are gonna get cold  
now stupid.

Nikhil and Channu share a slight smile together.

CHANNU (CONT'D)

You got everything? Homework books?

NIKHIL

Yeah yeah.

Nikhil leaves.

CHANNU

Don't yeah yeah me.

Channu grabs his briefcase and follows Nikhil out.

The door shuts.