

It was a Sunday. After six days of the routine grind of Machiavellian bosses and the 8.40 am ladies' special, a day off was bliss. At siesta time, I snoozed off to Neverland, peacefully, serenely when—
Ding dong!
Who could it be at this unearthly hour?
Husbands think it is their birthright to let the wife get the door, even if she is on the potty.
Ding dong! Ding dong!
If I didn't get it soon, it would be broken down by whoever was at it.
"Okay, okay, I am coming!" I mumbled.

"Mrs Iyer!" I half yelled in mock pleasure as I opened the door and saw the bespectacled grizzled lady with hair reeking of coconut oil. "I am sorry to disturb you. But I urgently need some coriander to make chutney. Do you have some?"
The fridge opened. The coriander left its usual resting place and was donated to Mrs Iyer in her bowl. She thanked me profusely for my generous deed. Hope she

wouldn't give me an opportunity to do her favours like these, soon.

I rushed back to catch my forty winks, which I had left at 25, 26, 27, 28— Ding dong! "Ugh!"
Ding dong!
"Dahling, puhleasee get that!"
I shook my log of a husband.
Snore. He replies.
"Pleaseeee, sweetie!"
Snorrrree. SNORREEE!
I waited, just in case the person at the door got a nature call and rushed back. Ding dong!

I headed to the door and opened it, "Oh! Patel-Aunty!"
"Pleasure. Show some pleasure," I told my irritated self.
"Err, sorry to disturb you, Beta. But my grandson wants Theplas for supper. I have run out of curds. Do you have some I can borrow?"
I hate grandsons who crave for Theplas at 3.30 in the afternoon. "I will see if I have some, Aunty."
I opened the fridge, as Aunty stepped in for her own inspection. "Your sofas are very nice."
Her movements hinted that her behind was dying to try the plush seats. Danger! I quickly dumped all the curds in her bowl and politely led her to the door.
She expressed her gratitude, Patel-style, with highly accented *Eenglees*, and left.
I asked my husband, "Are neighbours always so irritating?"
Snore, he replied.
I switched off the doorbell and found my way to Neverland.

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LOVE



Thy Neighbour

Love sparks with the doorbell! A story by **Payal Shah-Karwa**