

# ● High Hopes in Great Britain

*What opportunities do Indians have in Great Britain?*

## 1 Discovering Sheffield

A. Read part 1. Who is the main character? What do we learn about him (relationships, expectations)?

Where does the scene take place? Turn to **Worksheet n°10** for help.

B. Read part 2. What are the changes on the landscape?

C. Compare both parts and imagine the main character's feelings. Is the end positive? Turn to **Worksheet n°10** for help.

### Part 1

"If I find work for you there will you come?" Randeep asked. Avtar laughed. 'I'll come swimming in boiling waters if that's where the work is.' Massiji passed Randeep a food parcel for the journey and some money, which he tried to resist. 'Just take it,' she said. 'And if there are any problems you come straight back, acha?' He pushed against the turnstile<sup>1</sup> and onto the platform, waving from the door then stepping up into the carriage, walking through, lugging his shiny leather suitcase behind him, and, as Jimmy bhaji had advised, not staring at any of the other passengers. The train juddered<sup>2</sup> out of the station and into the mechanical sprawl of London: cranes<sup>3</sup>, pulleys, industrial lifts; then suburbs, the charmless wet platforms of one outpost after another. Only when they reached a station called Leicester did Randeep experience a change in his spirits. He was used to nice things, nice surroundings, and here were flat green fields, cows, palmsized<sup>4</sup> villages in the far distance.

The view grew more beautiful still when, some two hours from London, the landscape changed again: hills, tumbling clouds, a church with a strangely twisted spire<sup>5</sup>. He smiled. It was all so — he thought hard — so civilized. An image came to mind, of his father before the illness, still writing reports at his desk while the rest of the family slept. It was a time when he thought his father could withstand anything; an innocent time whose return he pined for<sup>6</sup>. He put Massiji's food parcel aside and by the time the train pulled into Sheffield, thirty-five minutes late, he still hadn't touched it. The station impressed him. It wasn't as draughty<sup>7</sup> as the London ones, and seemed cleaner, airier. This Sheffield must be a good city. He wondered why he'd never heard of it.

1 *tourniquet* • 2 *vibrer* • 3 *grues* • 4 *petits* • 5 *flèche (église)* • 6 *se languir* • 7 *windy*

### Part 2

As he studied the electronic departure boards, he saw someone by the payphone, holding a piece of cardboard bearing Randeep's name. He was a short man with a goatee, receding spiked-up hair, and a busy, impatient look about him. Randeep took up his suitcase. 'Virender bhaji?' The man stopped his whistling. 'Randeep?' He screwed up the cardboard and threw it over his shoulder. They shook hands. 'Good trip?' 'I'm really happy to be here. What a beautiful city you have.' Virender looked surprised. 'Hold that thought.' The van ride took them out of the city and onto elevated roads that wound through narrow, boarded-up, wretched<sup>8</sup>-looking streets. 'Mostly clearance at the moment,' Virender was saying. 'Decluttering<sup>9</sup> sites,

blah de blah. But I've got my eye on a new contract soon. A hotel, fingers crossed.' 'I have a friend who came with me if you need more help.' Virender bhaji ignored him. Perhaps he heard this a lot. 'You'll be all right digging up rocks and shit, yeah?' He reached over and shook Randeep's shoulder. 'Put some muscle on those bones! You're like a stick! Ronny the stick!'

8 *misérable* • 9 *désencombrer*

*The Year of the Runaways,*  
Sunjeev Sahota, 2015

