

### **Hin 3A13b 2012-13 Thème 3**

One night, after a late dinner at a nearby restaurant, I went for a walk through the bazaar. Most of the shops had downed their shutters. Music blared out of the few restaurants that were still open. It was hard to see how anyone could sleep in the vicinity until everything had closed for the night.

I fell in with two friends, Mahesh and Rajkumar, who owned a guesthouse in Pushkar. I was standing on one of the *ghats*, dark and deserted at this time, admiring the rather pretty reflection of white-washed houses in the still waters of the lake, when they approached me. We were the only people on the *ghat*. I couldn't at first hear what they said, and took them to be homosexuals – I had been solicited before in uncannily similar circumstances. But they only wanted to know if I was a tourist and, if yes, which hotel I was staying in.

I told them. We talked for a while. Their guest house had just opened a couple of months back. Business was slack at the moment, and not only because there hadn't been any advertising. In this kind of business, it took some time before a name established itself in tourist consciousness. It was important to get foreigners talking about your hotel; nothing counted so much as word-of-mouth publicity.

Pankaj Mishra, Butter Chicken in Ludhiana – Travels in small town India.