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A Long Way Home



Synopsis

At only five years old, Saroo Brierley got lost on a train in India. Unable to read or write or recall the name of his hometown or even his own last name, he survived alone for weeks on the rough streets of Calcutta before ultimately being transferred to an agency and adopted by a couple in Australia. Despite his gratitude, Brierley always wondered about his origins. Eventually, with the advent of Google Earth, he had the opportunity to look for the needle in a haystack he once called home and pore over satellite images for landmarks he might recognize or mathematical equations that might further narrow down the labyrinthine map of India. One day, after years of searching, he miraculously found what he was looking for and set off to find his family. *A Long Way Home* is a moving, poignant, and inspirational true story of survival and triumph against incredible odds. It celebrates the importance of never letting go of what drives the human spirit: Hope.

Book Information

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Travel

Customer Reviews

This book tells an amazing story. There is simply no other way to describe it. It is the real-life story of Saroo, a five-year-old child in a village in central India, who gets lost and finds himself transported all the way east to Calcutta, some 1800 kms away. Young Saroo, all of five, penniless and illiterate, does not even know the name of his village and knows little else about where he was from. He gets off at the bustling, crowded Howrah train station and survives for six weeks in the intimidating bad and mean streets of Calcutta by his instincts and luck. He ends up at a benevolent orphanage called ISSA, where the kindly Ms. Saroj Sood - tries to find his family and re-unite him. But all Saroo

can tell was that he was from Ginestlay, which is what he remembered as his village's name. He also mistakenly says that he travelled just overnight by train when in reality he had travelled almost 24 hours to get to Calcutta. After a couple of months' futile effort, Mrs. Sood pronounces him 'lost' and organizes him to be adopted by Sue and John Brierley, a young couple from Tasmania, Australia. Saroo is lovingly brought up by the Brierleys and he grows up into a happy and well-integrated Aussie over the next 20 years. However Saroo always wonders about his origins, with clear memories of his birth mother Kamala, his kid sister Shekila and elder brothers Kallu and Guddu, whom he looked up to as a child two decades before. He starts working on trying to find where he was from by using the feeble memories of his childhood. All he had to go by was that there was a train station whose name was something like 'Berampur', that it had a water tower, an overpass across the tracks and that the town had a fountain near a cinema. His village 'Ginestlay' was somewhere nearby and that they were all reachable overnight by train from Calcutta. Gradually, over five years, with incredible patience and perseverance, Saroo, at age 30, using Google Earth's satellite images and Facebook, miraculously locates the train station with the identifying features of his childhood. He notes that a nearby town is called Khandwa and that there is a Facebook group belonging to people from Khandwa. He contacts them and gets the key info that there is a nearby village called Ganesh Talai - the 'Ginestlay' of 5-year-old Saroo! Saroo soon goes to India and reconnects with his birth family to the great delight of his elderly mother Kamala and his siblings Shekila and Kallu, who are now married with children. Sadly, Guddu, his eldest brother whom he adored as a child, was killed in an accident just on the same day that Saroo got lost 25 years before. Otherwise, it is a happy resolution for Saroo. Not only Saroo, but his Aussie parents, Sue and John as well, come off as wonderful, loving and caring parents and individuals. Sue herself was a WWII refugee from Hungary and her story is also inspiring as told in the book. Saroo's birth mother Kamala is another remarkable woman, who never gave up hope that her son Sheru (which is his correct name!) would return one day. Hence she never moved from the shack where she lived so that she will be there when Saroo comes back! The other heroes in the book are the internet, Google Earth and Facebook! It is a great tribute to these wonderful technologies which make it possible for the adult Saroo to sit ten thousand miles away in Hobart, Australia and exactly locate the water tower and overpass of his childhood memory and find out the correct name of his village. Let no one denounce technology again!! found the book moving, inspirational and one of hope and the indomitable spirit of the humankind. It is a story of triumph against great odds. Going through the early chapters where Saroo survives for six weeks as a five-year-old in Calcutta, I had palpitations as I felt anxious that nothing terrible should befall young Saroo! The book also has a special appeal

for me since I grew up in India and lived for 13 years in wonderful Australia.

I wanted to read this before seeing the movie - very interesting and tugs on your heartstrings to hear how difficult life is for so many. How the author finds his family is truly amazing.

This was a very interesting story and I loved every minute of it. We were able to see the main character, Sarao, develop throughout the story. I have recently been reading books that are memoirs/true stories, and while this is a memoir, it didn't feel like a droning nonfiction book, instead, it felt like I was reading something worthwhile and true, yet feels like a quick, easy read (like many good fiction books do). Read this if you want to read about a child's meaningful, crazy journey

I enjoyed the book. The movie stuck very closely to the story the author told in the book.

This is a great human interest story and worth reading. Saroo is a wise and intelligent person and has been so throughout his life - even as a young child. However, he is very humble in his story telling and does not attribute his success, good fortune or blessing to himself. He recognizes that there are factors and forces bigger than him including the love and sacrifice of others who helped him along the way.

Easy to read, engaging story. If you are looking for new information outside of interviews and movies- not here. But a wonderful- amazing story!

Excellent story. It's so good to read about successes like this. It's amazing Saroo survived Calcutta on his own at such a young age. What a miracle he found his family or origin and how lucky he was to be adopted by such a loving family. The movie was very good too although details were left out.

Absolutely amazing story. If it were a fiction book I would have thought the story was a little out there to be possible. The book is well written. You want to get back to it often. It's an eye-opening glimpse into the culture of India. I mean real culture. I didn't see the movie and I probably won't. I think the descriptions in the book helped me to form a much better movie in my head than Hollywood could ever produce..

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