

A Long Way Home

Saroo Brierley

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Saroo Brierley is a five-year-old boy from a small town in India. He has two older brothers Guddu and Kallu, and a younger sister Shekila. The three live with their mother who works away from home most of the time. One day Saroo goes out with his brother Gudda who works in a nearby town to help support their family. While his brother is off to work, Saroo is left to rest on a train station bench. Upon awakening he looks for his brother who has not returned. He boards a train headed in the opposite direction from home. After days on the train Saroo finds himself on the other side of India in the busy city of Kolkata (Calcutta). Hungry, alone, and afraid Saroo manages to survive weeks on the streets before being taken to an orphanage. Saroo is considered lost by the court after not knowing his full name or where he came from. He is eventually adopted by a couple from Australia.

Saroo has a new loving family but never forgets the family he was separated from. As an adult he spends months searching Google Earth in search of his home. When he stumbles across the town his family was from, he decides to return to India. When he arrives and locates his old home, he finds out his mother does not live there anymore. He speaks with some locals and they recognize his mother's name. He is then led nearby where he is reunited with his mother for the first time in twenty-five years.

This is an astonishing true story based on two parts of Saroo Brierley life. The first is based on his memories as a young boy being lost and on his own, and the other is his reuniting with his family. The book is very emotional and puts an emphasis on family bonds. Reading about Saroo's time on the streets as a young boy is hard to fathom, but it also helps to understand the extent of poverty in that region and what poor children are challenged with. You will notice cultural differences like children caring for themselves, living on the streets, and working instead of attending school. It is an easy read with no explicit details, but there is an innuendo of child exploitation. The story has a strong message to never give up on the things you believe in. I would recommend you buy this book for the entire family ages 13+. This would be a terrific book to add to your home library.

Recommended Titles

I am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World, by Malala Yousafzai with Patricia McCormick (Young Readers Edition)

Bubonic Panic: When Plague Invades America, by Gail Garrow

Flowers in the Gutter, by K.R. Gaddy

