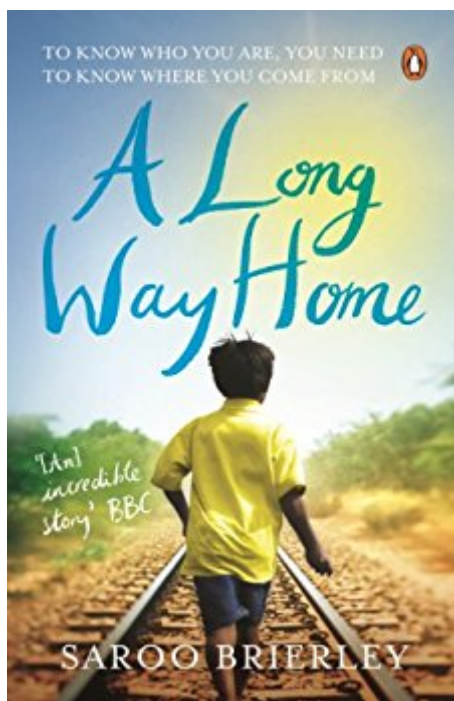


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# A Long Way Home



## Synopsis

Aged five, Saroo Brierley was separated from his older brother and ended up alone on the streets of Calcutta. After weeks surviving alone, he was taken into an orphanage and later adopted by an Australian couple. Although happy with his new family, Saroo couldn't help but think about the family he'd lost. Years later, he swapped the map of India on his wall for Google Earth, scouring it for landmarks he knew from his childhood. One day, he saw something he recognised. And he set off on a journey to find his mother, half a world away . . .

## Book Information

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## 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.

This was simply the most amazing story on so many levels. Back in 1986 five year old Saroo made a last minute decision to accompany his older brother on a short train trip to a nearby town in rural India. Although he was supposed to be babysitting his baby sister, Saroo risked his mother's wrath and left his humble home, not realising just what a journey he was about to make. Instructed to wait on the platform by his older brother, young Saroo was scared and confused when his older brother failed to return in the specified time. Deciding to make his own way home he hopped onto a waiting train - a train that would end up taking him half way across the country and far, far away from his family. Alone on the streets of Calcutta, Saroo lives by his wits for several weeks before being rescued by a caring woman who runs a nearby orphanage. Although attempts were made to locate Saroo's family, the task was basically impossible given that they were so far away and young Saroo had so little information to give them. Within weeks Saroo is adopted by an Australian couple and is soon on his way to a new life in Hobart. Although Saroo's life in Australia is a wonderful and fulfilling one, he cannot forget the family he left behind. Yet, he has so little to go on - just his own childish memories of the name of his own small village and the nearby town where he boarded the train. Then one day he comes across Google Earth and for the first time he realises he may just find his family after all. It is not an easy search though, it literally takes years of painstaking searching branching out from Calcutta and tracing every possible train route.

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