

Lion – Review

Lion is the story of a lost boy: a five-year-old Indian called Saroo (Dev Patel), who grew up in the 1980s in the area around Khandwa. The film begins with him **pilfering** lumps of **coal** off a train with his older brother, Guddu, and selling them to buy food. By the end of the first **reel**, these two are thousands of miles apart, wholly by mistake.

Left sleeping one night on a railway station **bench**, Saroo woke up alone and scared, and stumbled onto a decommissioned passenger train. Before he knew it, he was speeding his way to Calcutta, with no one to help, no Bengali to explain, and a place name for his home town that no one at the other end recognised.



The excellent script, by the Australian writer Luke Davies, sticks **rigidly** to Saroo's own point of view as days, months, and eventually whole decades elapse with him effectively **orphaned** through freak circumstance.

With no paper **trail** or family name, he becomes a lost cause, **shunted** perilously for a while around India's barely-existent social welfare system, and eventually shipped off to a pair of **foster parents** in Tasmania, played by Nicole Kidman and David Wenham. Saroo's memories of his earlier life fade, but not completely and he starts remembering **landmarks** from his childhood, and so he sets about **scouring** Google Earth across a huge **radius** of his home country, with only a **rough** distance from Calcutta to go by.

Inescapably moving without going **overboard**, it's quite a film **debut** for director Garth Davis. British actor Patel brings his A-game to the leading role, newcomer Sunny Pawar is wonderful as his character's younger self and Kidman gives a very **decent** performance as the adoptive mother.

An **astonishing** true story that's treated with an **admirably** light and artistic touch, rather than an overly dramatic **heavy** hand. Be prepared to cry a lot at this wonderfully cast **tearjerker**.