

Lion: When Google Earth is the protagonist

RAFIDAH RAHMAN

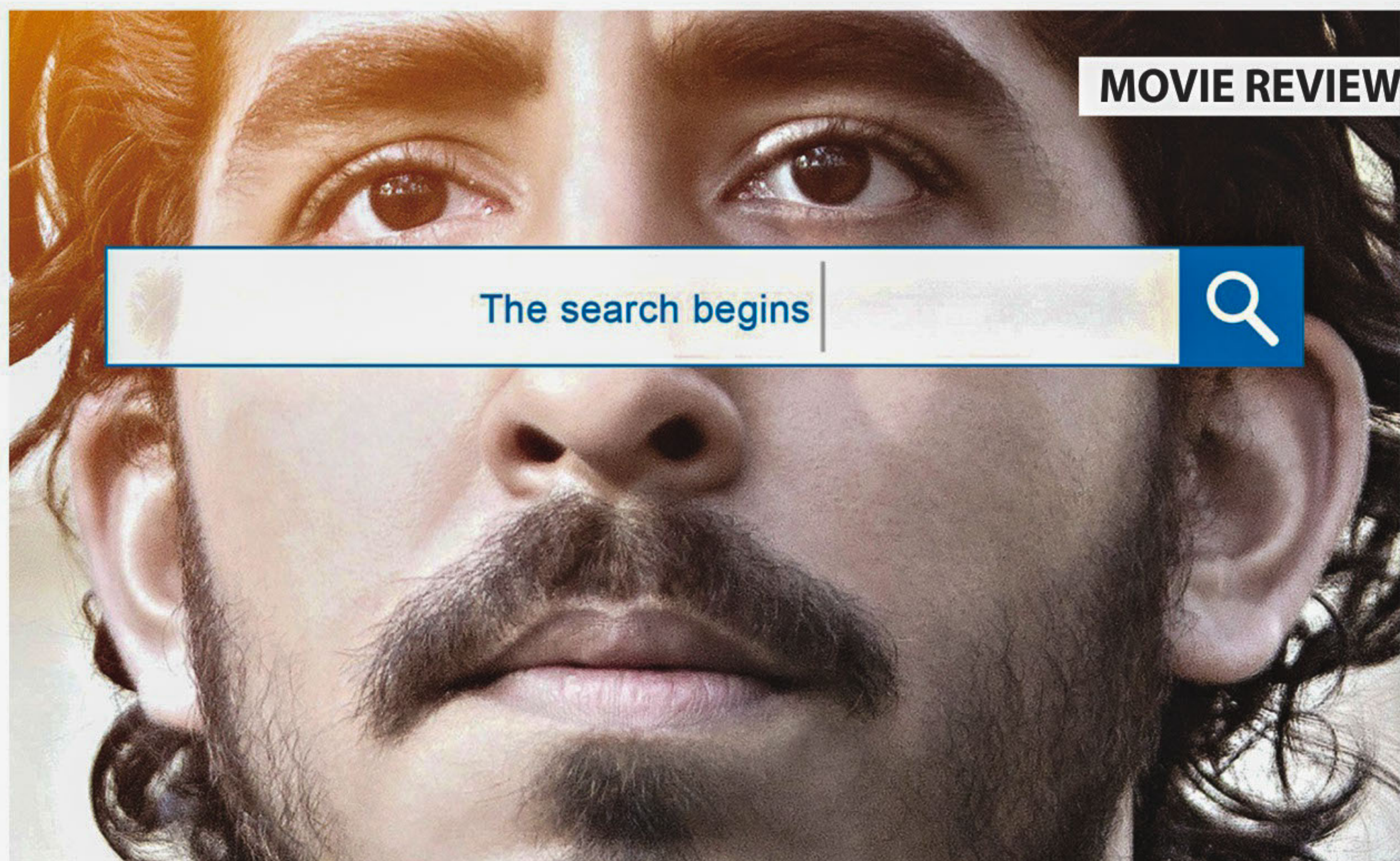
If you have been a child, raised a child, lost a child or met a child – any of the situations that involve a mother – this movie will leave a dent on you.

Spoiler-free synopsis: 25 years after getting lost and adopted, an Australian man wants to find his biological family in the heart of India. Will he succeed?

To be honest, I've been quite capricious lately. None of the recent movies has managed to really get under my skin. *Lion*, however, changed all that. The first half of the movie was bit of a slog as I thought it was just a *Slumdog Millionaire* sequel. But hang in there, because the second half is where *Lion* triumphs.

Lion works not just because of the story [Saroo Brierley's autobiographical account of his experiences, *A Long Way Home*] at the centre, but also for the brilliant adaptation and heart-wrenching performances. It's not particularly packed with twists but the protagonist's intense urge to reconnect with his roots keeps you at the edge of your seat. The amazingly talented Sunny Pawar gives a breakthrough performance as little Saroo. He is a vulnerable five-year-old, but is also quick on his feet and street smart. Even though he is exposed to cruelty and adversities, he emerges a survivor. Nicole Kidman shines in her understated role. She works her minimal dialogues and delivers a powerful performance that will surely stay with you. This is hands down Dev Patel's best performance to date. You dread for him, and also root for him, and mostly you are rapt by his story and the sophisticated simplicity of the narrative

Lion may not have punch-in-the-gut moments, but it's certainly high on humbling moments. When little Saroo – sitting on sidewalk – tries to emulate a man having soup inside a restaurant with a spoon he found in the



MOVIE REVIEW

The search begins



dumpster, it reminds us of our inherent privileges we often take for granted. The quiet conversation between Saroo and his adoptive mother demonstrate the power of devotion and sacrifice.

As I didn't do any background check, the heavy focus on Google Earth seemed a little irrational to me, but then I got to know it was based on a true story. *Lion* will

break your heart and restore your faith in humanity. Do yourself a favour, keep the tissues handy!

Rafidah Rahman is a teeny-tiny Hulk, she's always angry and she's always hungry. A cynical dreamer and a food enthusiast, she's your everyday entertainment. Correspond with her at rafidahrahman93@gmail.com

A Fortunately Unfortunate Treat

FATIMAH AKHTAR

It isn't everyday that a show goes out of its way to tell you to not watch it. In fact, even have its whole theme song dedicated to get you to look away from the show; yet, for the ones that stick around are in for an extremely depressing, surprisingly hilarious and often heart-warming experience.

A Series of Unfortunate Events started as a children's book series by Daniel Handler under the pen name Lemony Snicket. The books were renowned for the odd narrative style, and the depressing tone for a children's book. But only when the TV show came out did the books' tone carry over to the visual media.

The series centres around three children: Violet, Klaus, and Sunny Baudelaire, who have lost their parents in a house fire. They end up changing hands from guardian to guardian while also trying to escape the evil Count Olaf, who is after their fortune. The show stands out in its use of juxtaposition of the dark tones with often absurd jokes and humour. The acting and even the episodes themselves get better. Neil Patrick Harris as Count Olaf delivers a strong performance throughout. The screenplay is written by the writer himself, and shows that it not only works well as an adaptation but also a standalone TV show.

At this point it is not surprising for Netflix to be churning out one good television show after another. But A Series of Unfortunate Events is unique in the way that despite its themes seemingly not being for everyone, it does end up pleasing a larger audience. The whole series has always stuck to that child-like perspective of how adults do not understand anything, even going so far as to rarely show any competent adult in the show. And yet, it has remained a favourite even among adults. The sets



TV SHOW REVIEW

are also lovely, along with the costumes which fully encapsulate the odd reality that the story exists in. There is an air of mystery to the show, and an overarching storyline comes into play much sooner in the TV show than it did in the book.

The show also succeeds in the way it still has a lot to offer to the book readers. It's mostly difficult to impress the book readers with an adaptation, but A Series of

Unfortunate Events does that too. Handler writing the screenplay, and Barry Sonnenfeld in direction, really manage to create a world that's true to the book and exciting for anyone tuning in for the first time, ever.

Fatimah Akhtar studies Anthropology and wishes she lived with a puppy. Redirect all your complaints, queries, and feed-backs to her at fatimahaakhtar@gmail.com