

## Such a Long Journey

*Such a Long Journey* is an intriguing international cinematic effort: it is an Indian story, a Canadian production, with funding from Great Britain, and directed by a Canadian born in Iceland! Based on the 1991 novel by Rohinton Mistry, the movie is set in Bombay in 1971 during the War of Independence of East Pakistan.

It follows bank clerk Gustad Noble (Roshan Seth) as he, through an appeal from an old friend, becomes sucked into an intrigue with the Indian Secret Service in East Pakistan. Meanwhile, he has struggles within his own family, as he disowns his oldest son and his little daughter becomes ill. Moreover, he and his family are of the minority Parsi sect in Hindu-dominated Bombay. The production insinuates you smoothly into the world of Gustad, but the political intrigue is by far the weaker element of this film; it works best as a modest family saga.

Seth, one of India's better known actors (he's familiar from *Passage to India*, *Mississippi Masala*, and as Nehru in *Gandhi*) turns in a well-rounded performance as the sympathetic, beleaguered Gustad. He is seconded nicely by the attractive, solid Soni Razdan as his wife Dilnavaz, by the great Om Puri as the mysterious Ghulam, by Kurush Deboo as Tehmul, the touching local idiot, and especially by Ranjit Chowdhry as a quirky pavement artist who comes to transform the befouled wall of the Noble's compound into a spiritual shrine.

The film's "long journey" could be seen as circular, and, after the numerous events of the film, not much is really changed (except that the Noble family is reconsolidated) but--you could say that about the sub-continent, too. (*This film is not rated.*)

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