



# Ruskin Bond - A Literary Legend

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**Abstract** - Ruskin Bond is an Anglo-Indian author, who is regarded as a pioneer of children's literature in India for his inspirational and remarkable writings for children. Ruskin is one of the most prominent writers from India who is a novelist, short story writer, poet and essayist for children, young adults as well as adults. he is considered to be one of the finest storytellers of our times whose work is based on his own experiences in life as a child. his writing style can be categorized as the post-colonial style of writing with British influence. Bond's stories are simple, heart-warming, and often laced with elements of mystery and supernatural elements that fancy children. His writings offer a glimpse into the lives of ordinary people in small towns, especially in the north Indian culture where he grew up. Ruskin Bond's writing is categorized by its beautiful imagery, beautiful bonds in human relationships and the beauty of the magical landscapes of the Himalayas.

**Keywords** - Ruskin Bond, Children's Literature, Loneliness, Short Stories, Adventure, Solitude

Ruskin Bond was born on 19 May 1934 to a British family living in India. His father, Aubrey Alexander Bond was an officer in the Royal Air Force and served in India. His father also used to teach English to the princess of Jamnagar Palace. His father died when he was 10 years old and was studying at a boarding school in Shimla. Ruskin was devastated as he shared a deep bond with his father and considered the time spent with his father the most satisfying time of his life. When he was going through events such as loneliness, failure of family bonding, and the death of his






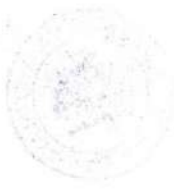
father, he took writing as his only way to express himself. He spent his childhood in north Indian cities such as Jamnagar, Dehradun, and Shimla which influenced the characters, and locations in his writings. He completed his graduation in Shimla and later went to the Channel Islands for better career opportunities. At first, he worked as a junior clerk at a solicitor's office and then left the job to join a travel agency. He was considered a clumsy worker because of his inexperience in those tasks. He also felt like he was wasting his time in those useless jobs and decided to work on his writing skills to work as a freelance writer for his livelihood. He wrote his first novel while doing those jobs at Channel Island and published it in London at the age of 21. After publication he used money, he received in advance to move back to India to settle in Dehradun. He has been living in Landour, near Mussoorie for the last 6 decades.

Ruskin Bond brought freshness, new voices, and narratives to the Indian writings, which were previously missing in children's literature. He also introduced simplicity and a voice to a regional, rural lifestyle by introducing characters and narratives of people who were living around him.

Ruskin participated in writing competitions when he was at school and college. One of his first short stories "Untouchables" was appreciated and won many prizes. This story is considered his entry into the literary world.

Ruskin Bond's first novel the room on the roof was based on a story of an orphaned 17-year-old Anglo-Indian boy living in a British colony in Dehradun. Rusky's miserable life while living at his guardian's place is highlighted in the novel when he was going through confusion of life in many aspects such as love, companionship, friendship, responsibilities, and the adolescent stage. This novel is considered a semi-biography because of the similarities between the main character Rusty from the novel and Ruskin himself. He won the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize in 1957 which is awarded for work in literature by an author from the commonwealth nations aged 35 or under. This helped him get recognition and fame in the





literature world. This novel was partly based on his experience while living in a rented room in Dehradun at the foothills of the Himalayas.

Most of his initial works were written for a broad readership. Later on the demand of publishers for children's stories, he focused on that category.

Ruskin Bond describes his childhood as alone and longing for happiness. This reflects in most of his works and he created many characters around this theme. Characters from his stories are kind-hearted, full of compassion and love often like the ones whom we find in our neighborhood. He often converts some of the dull and regular incidents or habits of people into something striking and fascinating for the common reader as well as for the literary world. He accepted the fact that his love for writing children's stories and novels wouldn't have existed if he had a pleasant and happy childhood. One with a regular happy and contented childhood will not remember about it and will never think about it, it is the one who lacked such life thinking about it.

He always spoke about the fact that how little focus children's works get where it is important to teach them how ever-changing the world is and how they should get new experiences and life lessons in their life. That's why his works focus on characters who long for adventurous experiences, which often shackle all the barriers, and their will to encounter human relationships and prove that they are not children anymore.

He is considered to be one of the most popular Indian authors of English-language fiction. He has written more than 100 short stories, essays, and novellas, as well as several novels. Bond's work reflects his Anglo-Indian experiences and the changing political, social and cultural aspects of India, having been through colonial, postcolonial and post-independence phases of India.

The room on the roof (1957), Delhi is not far (1994), A flight of pigeons (1978), The blue umbrella (1974), Adventures of Rusty (1992), The Night train at Deoli and other stories (1988), Angry River (1972) Time stops at Shamli



(1989), Rusty-the boy from the hills (2002), our trees still grow in Dehra (1991) are considered his finest of works. His Children's Fiction such as animal stories, the cherry tree, Dust on the mountain, and Lone fox dancing are adored all over the place. In Ruskin Bond's literary works, we can see the protagonist whether as a child or adult gets his individuality, a complete personality and their thinking and mind to take decisions according to the situation. A Song of India, Roads to Mussoorie (2005), with love from the Hills are the some of his remarkable memoirs.

Ruskin bond is well-known for his contribution to Children's literature, yet he also received critical acclamation for his works in other mainstream literary works. He did contribute to genres such as romance, fiction, and non-fiction. He won various prestigious awards in his life. Our trees still grow in Dehra won him the Sahitya Akademy Award in 1992. He was awarded Padma Shri in 1999 and Padma Bhushan in 2014 for his remarkable contribution to Indian literature focused on children's literature. His works have inspired several generations of writers as well as readers from all spheres of life. Many of his short stories and novels are part of the school curriculum at different states and universities of India.

#### **References -**

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