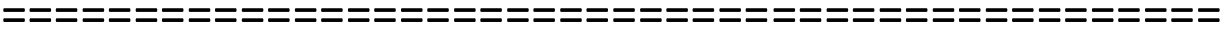




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## Ruskin Bond's Dust On The Mountains

### About The Autor

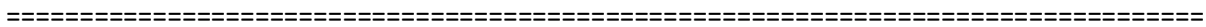
Ruskin Bond is an eminent contemporary Indian writer of British descent. He prolifically authored inspiring children's books and was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award to honor his work of literature.

Born on May 19, 1934, in Kasauli, India, he was the son of Edith Clarke and Aubrey Bond. His father served in the Royal Air Force and frequently moved from places to places along with his son. When he was eight, his parents separated and his mother left him. She married to a Punjabi-Hindu. Bond had a complicated relationship with his mother, who was rarely there to offer him affection and they eventually grew distant. His father's undivided attention helped him grow. He felt loved and secure but his tragic departure from his life left him lonely and broken. Following the sudden demise of his father, he moved to Dehradun where his grandmother raised him. He received his early education from Bishop Cotton School in Shimla. During his school years he won several writing competitions, including the Hailey Literature Prize and the Irwin Divinity Prize. In 1952, he completed his graduation and moved to England and stayed at his aunt's house for four years.

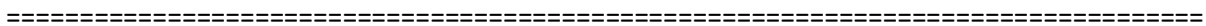
The first twenty years of his life groomed him to be a good writer as it developed his personality in such a way. Despite his suffering and lonely childhood, Bond developed an optimistic outlook on life. He chose the path of becoming an earnest writer that his father wished him to follow. Therefore, he found solace in reading books that habit was also inculcated in him by his father. Some of his favorite reads include T. E. Lawrence, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë and Rudyard Kipling.

At the age of 17 in London, he began to write his first novel, *The Room on the Roof*. The novel charts the life of an orphaned Anglo-Indian teenager. He runs away to live with his friends as he escapes the tyranny of his strict guardian. The book has a strong autobiographical element as it's based on his actual experiences living in a small rented room on the roof in Dehradun. It was not published until he was twenty-one. He was awarded John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial prize for his first novel. Its success gave him an impetus to write its sequel *Vagrants in the Valley*.

Subsequently, he returned to India and worked as a journalist in Delhi and Dehradun for a few years. Later, he relocated to a town in the Himalayan foothills,



**Sem-iv, Eng. GE-4. Paper- Environment and Literature**



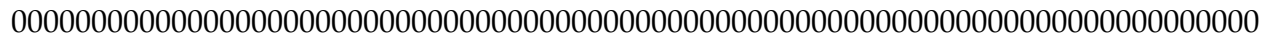


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Mussoorie, where he pursued freelance writing since 1963. His essays and articles were published in numerous magazines, such as *The Pioneer*, *The Leader*, *The Tribune* and *The Telegraph*. Till now he has written over three hundred short stories, essays and novels and over thirty children’s books. Additionally, he penned two autobiographical volumes; *Scenes from a Writer’s Life* and *The Lamp is Lit; Leaves from a Journal*. The first one details his formative years in India and the second one is based on journal entries, essay collection and episodes about his years making it as a freelance writer.

Some of other notable works of Ruskin Bond include *Blue Umbrella*, *A Flight of Pigeons* and *Funny Side Up*. His works have also been adapted for television and film. A BBC TV-series is based on his debut novel, short story “**Susanna’s Seven Husbands**” was adapted into a film as *7 Khoon Maaf* and film *Junoon* is inspired by his *A Flight of Pigeons*.



**The Story of The Dust on the Mountains in Brief**

**Dust on the Mountains** by *Ruskin Bond* subtly highlights the grim issues of deforestation on the mountains in the wake of modernisation.

Bisnu lives with his younger sister and mother in a very small village of Tehri Garhwal. Since the mountains have received scanty rainfall and bare minimum snowfall last year, as a result orchards of fruits and farming in the field have yielded minimum output. The streams and rivers that descend from the peaks are shallow and dry, so the villagers are facing the problems of inadequate ration and fail to obtain any income from the farming-related chores.

To save his family from starvation, Bisnu goes to Mussoorie much opposite to his family’s wish. Since summer is a happy time in Mussoorie and the place is full of tourists from the plain areas. After many attempts he finds a job in a cinema hall as a tea seller during the interval. There he meets two other boys Chittru and Bali. They all become friends and work as per the orders. However Chittru and Bisnu become close friends as they sleep in a corridor at night and brave the chill night breeze that comes from the mountains.





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best part of this book is the message it gives, loud and clear – a message that is a classic as well as the need of the time!

In *Dust On The Mountain*, the author tells the story of a young boy who lives in the hills, right in the lap of nature surrounded by oak, deodar, maple, pine and apricot trees, working hard on his farmland. But a certain year, the lack of monsoon forces him to look for work in a big city. He takes up odd jobs there in the city and works hard, but with dignity and honesty. He sleeps on the hard floor, subsists on cups of tea and snacks and sends money back home. As he moves from job to job though, meeting different people and making new friendships, he never loses his positive attitude and his true, inner voice.

Looking for a job once, he comes to a limestone quarry; and is appalled to see the destruction the mining industry has done to the lovely mountains! He feels for the trees that have been knocked down and the land that has been raided of its natural beauty as it is stripped of its treasures for human benefit. Eventually when he gets a chance to make a choice about staying on in the big city or going back home; he makes the wise decision to go back home and cultivate his land. When asked why he would prefer going back to his hills where he would hardly have a chance of getting any work; he answers “*It is better to grow things on the land than blast things out of it*”. And that, if you ask me, is the biggest takeaway of this beautiful story!

Apart from the fact that it is a humble story highlighting the importance of hard work and the basic goodness of human nature, *Dust On The Mountain* is also a colourful journey that the reader takes through the eyes of our young protagonist. The change from the boy’s homeland to the big city is beautifully portrayed; and so is the complexity of human nature – where on the one hand he meets kind hearted, good natured people, on the other hand he sees first hand, the dire consequences of man’s greed to take from Mother Nature whatever he can, in any which way he can!

For today’s urbanized and materialistic children, almost everything in this story, including the names of the trees, the lifestyle of our protagonist and his simple expectations from life; are things that are utterly new and fascinating; and that in itself, is reason enough to have them read this timeless classic.