

## RUSKIN BOND



Ruskin Bond was born in Kasauli, Punjab States Agency, British India (now in Solan district, Himachal Pradesh, India) on May 19, 1934, to British parents Edith Clarke and Aubrey Bond.

He attended Shimla's Bishop Cotton School, from which he matriculated in 1950. He enjoyed literature, and the works of T. E. Lawrence, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë and Rudyard Kipling had a significant impact on him. After completing high school, he moved to the United Kingdom in pursuit of better opportunities. In London, when he was 17 years old, he started writing his first novel, The Room on the Roof, the semi-autobiographical story of the orphaned Anglo-Indian boy named Rusty. It won the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize (1957), awarded to a British Commonwealth writer under 30.

After returning to India, he worked as a freelance writer for the next few years, penning short stories and poems for newspapers and periodicals. He moved to Mussoorie in 1963, where he furthered his writing career. The Blue Umbrella, one of his most popular novels, was published in 1980. Ruskin Bond has been writing for over seven decades and has established himself as one of the most prolific writers in India. He had written Vagrants in the Valley in 1956, as a sequel to The Room on the Roof. These two novels were published in one volume by Penguin India in 1993. His interest in supernatural fiction led him to write popular titles such as 'Ghost Stories from the Raj', 'A Season of Ghosts', 'A Face in the Dark and Other Hauntings'. Bond has been a great favourite with people across the country. His writings are suffused with a love of nature and an affinity for the simple things in life. While he is primarily known for his children's stories, Ruskin Bond's oeuvre also includes novels, essays and poetry. He has written over five hundred short stories, essays, novels and more than 50 books for children. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1992 for Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999 and Padma Bhushan in 2014.

In addition to giving us some cherished books, his work has also been the inspiration for some award-winning films. The Rusty stories have been adapted into a Doordarshan TV series, 'Ek Tha Rusty'. Several stories have been incorporated into the school curriculum in India, including 'The Night Train at Deoli', 'Time Stops at Shamli' and 'Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra'. In 2005, Bollywood director Vishal Bhardwaj made a film based on his popular novel for children, The Blue Umbrella. The movie won the National Film Award for Best Children's Film.

Asked what he likes the most about his life, he said, "That I have been able to write for so long. I started at the age of 17 or 18, and I am still writing. If I were not a professional writer who was getting published I would still write".