

# Introspection and Transformation on Ruskin Bond's "The Blue Umbrella"

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## Abstract

*This research paper aims to investigate the reasons behind the popularity of the story's titular object, "The Blue Umbrella". The story is set in Garhwal, a town in the Himalayas, where a little girl named Binya discovers a unique umbrella. "The Blue Umbrella" becomes a symbol of attraction and gains popularity in the village as nobody else has an umbrella like Binya's. The study examines the functions of the Blue Umbrella that trigger emotional changes and explores the thematic components and narrative devices used by Ruskin Bond to enhance its significance. This paper attempts to examine human characters, the value of material possessions, and the impact of small events on rural life. The article will cover several aspects of the Blue Umbrella's popularity.*

**Keywords: Materialism, Relationship, Selfishness, Desire, Blue Umbrella**

## Introduction

Ruskin Bond, a well-known and prolific writer, was born in Kasauli on May 19, 1934. Bond has captivated readers of all ages with his evocative narratives. He is well-known for his captivating storytelling and vivid portrayal of the Indian landscape. Over several decades, he has written a large number of novels, short stories, and essays, many of which explore the beauty and simplicity of rural life. Ruskin Bond's novel "The Blue Umbrella," which is a favorite of many, is an excellent representation of his skill at fusing magic into the everyday. This charming story, which was first published in 1980, centers on the life of a little child named Binya, who exchanges her necklace made of leopard claws for a striking blue umbrella.

The narrative takes place in a charming village in the Himalayas, where the umbrella causes curiosity and jealousy. Bond deftly examines themes of innocence, interpersonal relationships, and the beauty found in commonplace objects throughout this story. "The Blue Umbrella" exemplifies Bond's skill at writing stories that readers can relate to by perfectly encapsulating the spirit of the Indian countryside and the feelings that unite us all.

### **Transformation and Forgiveness**

“NEELU! Neelu!” cried Binya. She scrambled barefoot over the rocks,  
ran over the short summer grass, up and over the brow of the hill,  
all the time calling “Neelu, Neelu!” (Bond, 1992)

The interpretation of the prominent short story Indian writer Ruskin Bond’s *The Blue Umbrella* brings forth issues like Materialism, human nature, and how possession affects people’s lives. Bond creates a striking portrait of the straightforward difficulties and pleasures of living in a rural Indian environment through the lens of *The Blue Umbrella*. Binya a little child residing in a tiny Himalayan village is the major character in the work. Neelu Binya says this is how the narrative started by Neelu! One of the two cows is owned by Binya’s family, the other is Gori. They permitted the cows to roam freely around the pine forest. The cows occasionally stay away until Binya brings them back, but they usually return home on their own. Neelu refers to the color blue because the cow is blue-grey and Gori is fair. She purchases a stunning blue umbrella from a traveler, and because of its uncommon presence in the rural area and vivid color, it quickly becomes the talk of the town.

Binyatook her cows and went through the pine forest and both the cows went far. Then she can only hear the tinkling sounds of the bell. Then she stopped calling them and moved around the pine needles she heard the laughter sound on the hill. She moved towards the tree, and there she saw a picnicker enjoying their party. She moves forward and stands between the trees so no one can notice her. The tourist finds her and they ask her to come but Binya gets scared of them. She went to the Woman who noticed the leopard pendant on her neck. The Woman asked her to give the pendant at first Binya didn’t give it. Then the tourist offered her a Blue Umbrella then she gave the pendant to them. Binya was so excited because no one had an Umbrella like Binya.

Binya started roaming the village with her umbrella. The locals have a mixed reaction to the news of the blue umbrella, which is curiosity and envy. Without her knowledge, Binya suddenly becomes the target of everyone who wants to possess the umbrella. The children of the village quickly realize the beauty possessed by this blue umbrella. They envy Binya’s mystery thing and start wanting something like it for themselves. Likewise, among adults in the community, like Ram Bharosa, who is a local shopkeeper, they are also attracted to owning this blue umbrella. Their desire is driven by a need to possess anything that stands out from their simple rural lives.

“I have an idea,” said the shopkeeper. “It’s no use to you, that umbrella. Why not sell it to me? I’ll give you five rupees for it.” “It’s worth fifteen,” said Binya. “Well, then, I’ll give you ten.”

Binya laughed and shook her head (Bond, 1980)

Ram Bharosa is a local shopkeeper who knows the ways of people and he helps them in providing required services. He is portrayed as shrewd and opportunistic. As soon as he laid his eyes on the blue umbrella with Binya, it got him fascinated. The bright color and uniqueness of the umbrella attract him and make him feel like acquiring one at all costs. His relentless pursuit of the blue umbrella. In his attempts to purchase it, he approaches Binya many times, offering several valuable items from his shop in exchange for the desired object. In the village, he is a popular man, but his desire to possess a blue umbrella causes him to make decisions that are unethical and unprincipled. This shows how much materialism can corrupt one’s morality and judgment. Ram Bharosa and Binya are at loggerheads because of his envy. Their relationship has been strained and their pursuit of the blue umbrella disrupts peace in the neighborhood. He serves as an indicator of the community’s materialistic tendencies. His deeds show how wanting physical things can take precedence over moral thinking and hurt relationships with others.

His acts serve as a warning about the detrimental effects of unbridled material wants while also aiding in the disintegration of the village’s social dynamics. He has a moment of introspection

as the narrative goes on. The story's resolution offers him a chance at atonement, highlighting the possibility of continuing to develop and change even after giving in to covetousness. In "The Blue Umbrella," Ram Bharosa's selfishness deepens the examination of concepts like materialism, desire, and the fallout from unbridled ambition. His personality is a moving illustration of the difficulties presented by the desire for material belongings in a close-knit community.

Binya's decision to give away the blue umbrella marks a turning point in the story because it reveals its negative influence on her relationships and society at large. The village's dynamics are altered by this wise and selfless act, thus saving the community from the harmful effects of wanting more earthly possessions. Furthermore, this blue umbrella is not only an object but also symbolizes many aspects of this story. It demonstrates the impermanence of material things as well as the possibilities for great things happening when financial opulence is overlooked. Using a direct narrative like this, Ruskin Bond educates us on deeper issues about human nature and what we should do to help other people unconditionally, with compassion and empathy. Its unexpected turns which culminated in a touching and poignant ending are revealed without giving too much away. The timeless and unforgettable story "The Blue Umbrella" is a result of Ruskin Bond's storytelling style which is defined by warmth simplicity and an inherent understanding of the human spirit.

### Conclusion

Giving back and the teachings from the blue umbrella serve as a constant reminder of the transformative potential of selfless deeds in promoting good change. Ruskin Bond's "The Blue Umbrella" effectively combines themes of introspection and transformation, employing a straightforward yet impactful narrative to examine the depths of human nature and the possibility of good change through self-awareness and kindness. Within the framework of the village's social fabric, the blue umbrella. Once a source of jealousy and desire becomes an inspiration for reflection and a symbol of transforming the redemption of mankind.

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