



Ruskin Bond's 'The Eye of the Eagle': A lesson in grand parenting

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Abstract

Ruskin Bond, an Indian of British descent, knows the value of a combined family in the lives of children, though he himself always lived in a nuclear family. Moreover, he knows the importance of grandparents in the upbringing and personality development of the children. He stresses this fact in many of his stories, one of which is analysed here. He started writing 'children's literature proper' in India and made it popular. He brought the Himalayan life and especially children from Kumaun alive through his children stories. This special feature makes him a 'True Indian English writer' and still, a universal writer.

Keywords: Ruskin Bond, shepherd boy, Himalayan ranges, Tung temple, eagle

1. Introduction: Brief about the story

Life in the Himalayan ranges for poor people is very hard. The Kumaun region may be beautiful for the people from the plains, but for the natives, the nature demands hard work and struggle at every moment in their life. Life of children in such odd environment is not carefree and without responsibilities. They have to help their elders in the household responsibilities as well as in their occupation. These children have to become mature before their childhood is over.

The story 'The Eye of the Eagle' from *Panther's Moon and Other Stories* by Ruskin Bond depicts the aforesaid fact of Kumaun life. Ruskin Bond is a well known Indian English writer of British descent. He started writing 'children's literature proper' in India and made it popular. He brought the Himalayan life and especially children from Kumaun alive through his children stories. This special feature makes him a 'True Indian English writer' and still, a universal writer.

Jai, a shepherd boy, comes to stay with his grandparents in the Himalayan ranges near Tung temple for the October holidays. He has to take up the responsibility of grazing the flock of his grandfather's sheep with a guard-dog, Motu. One day, a golden eagle picks up a lamb from the flock and flies away. Jai fears his grandpa's reaction, but grandpa takes it as a part of the game. The other day, the same eagle attacks the flock and Motu saves the lamb even though its leg is injured. Now, Jai has to accompany the flock alone when grandpa falls ill. Jai, however, has lost his courage and confidence which the grandfather restores by handing over his stick to Jai saying that the stick is special, given by a wandering scholar and will save Jai and the sheep. Jai regains his confidence and gives the eagle a blow with the stick and saves the sheep. When another eagle attacks them, he saves the sheep by creeping in a bush as he has lost the stick and shouting for help. Thus, he has learnt a lesson for life that there is no use fearing dangers. One has to face them, be resourceful when nothing is at hand and find out ways out of difficult situations. This

happens because of the confidence that his grandfather has boosted in him, Jai could fight with the eagle.

Thus, Bond's adults not only provide companionship but also guide and instruct children properly, of course never in a preachy manner. Children need love, care, protection and encouragement for their all-round development and upbringing. The end of the story is significant as it points out that, in order to boost his confidence; grandfather has given him an ordinary stick saying that it was given to him by a wandering scholar. As a wise old man grandfather knows well the needs of child's psyche, and hence, in most of children stories of Bond, grandparents play crucial roles. Grandfathers in Bond's stories are considerate and they expose children to new vista and a better perspective and emphasise the role of caregivers in the lives of children.

Being aware of the fact that immature minds of children need protection and guidance, Bond invokes the loving and nurturing relationship between children and adults, most often doting and caring grandparents. The thoughtful adults, by their positive attitude and loving approach, take care of the children, and guide them during trouble. They pass on their wisdom to children and enable them to gain confidence and assume responsibilities. The invigorating relationship of children with adults paves the way toward their happy selfhood. Especially, the grandparents in Ruskin Bond's stories are considerate, and they expose children to a new vista and a better perspective. 'Grandparents' is an 'institution' in the Indian families but it is increasingly becoming rare in the contemporary times. In the joint families of bygone days, grandparents, uncles and aunts, siblings and cousins lived together. Thus, the children of these families could adjust happily anywhere and with anybody and learn life skills easily which helped them to face life. Bond wants to press this point and hence show families with all the relatives, especially grandparents.

This feature becomes special as Ruskin Bond himself

belonged to a typically British family where there is an age old practice of nuclear family. It shows Ruskin Bond's Indianness. Besides, he never had any experience of a grandfather as his paternal grandfather died before Ruskin was born and his maternal grandfather died when Ruskin was only a year old. Still, he stresses the importance of grandparents in the family as knows their importance in the life of children.

2. Meaning of the story in brief

The Joint families in Indian villages had many advantages and it was main source of maintaining culture and love in family members. The Children need love, care, protection and encouragement for their all-round development and upbringing. The story is eye opener for the children who are not serious and are not helping and taking care of parents and grandparents. The end of the story is significant as it points out that, in order to boost his confidence; grandfather has given him an ordinary stick saying that it was given to him by a wandering scholar. As a wise old man grandfather knows well the needs of child's psyche, and hence, in most of children stories of Bond, grandparents play crucial roles. Grandfathers in Bond's stories are considerate and they expose children to new vista and a better perspective and emphasise the role of caregivers in the lives of children.

3. A lesson in grand parenting

1. Taking Responsibilities in Work.
2. Making Maximum Use of available Resources.
3. Mature Response to problems and being truthful.
4. Managing Stress.
5. Helping Grandparents in their tasks.
6. Being always Positive and helpful to all.
7. Keeping playful nature.

4. Acknowledgement

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5. Conclusion

The Story *Eye of the eagle* is very good in keeping the moral in the family and how the children should behave with their parents and grandparents. Ruskin Bond has written in very simple words the various experiences which he took in rural area. The children can learn a lot by his advice in the story. Grandfathers in Bond's stories are considerate and they expose children to new vista and a better perspective and emphasise the role of caregivers in the lives of children. The Present day nuclear families are having lot of pressure and tension which is directly affecting the health of the urban population. The Authors have done decent contribution by studying the story of the Ruskin Bond with respect to Grand Parenting.

6. References

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