



## Lone Fox Dancing

*Ruskin Bond*

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## **Lone Fox Dancing** Ruskin Bond

Over sixty years, for numerous readers—of all ages; in big cities, small towns and little hamlets—Ruskin Bond has been the best kind of companion. He has entertained, charmed and occasionally spooked us with his books and stories and opened our eyes to the beauty of the everyday and the natural world. He has made us smile when our spirits are low and steadied us when we've stumbled. Now, in this brilliantly readable autobiography—his book of books—one of India's greatest writers shows us the roots of everything he has written. He begins with a dream and a gentle haunting, before taking us to an idyllic childhood in Jamnagar by the Arabian Sea—where he composed his first poem—and New Delhi in the early 1940s—where he found material for his first short story. It was a brief period of happiness that ended with his parents' separation and the untimely death of his beloved father. A search for companionship and security, undercut by a fierce independence and a tendency for risk-taking, would inform every choice he made for the rest of his life. With effortless intimacy and candour, Bond recalls his boarding school days in Shimla and winter holidays in Dehradun, when he tried to come to terms with a sense of abandonment, made friends, discovered great books and found his true calling. Determined to be a writer, he spent four difficult years in England, from 1951 to 1955 and he writes poignantly of his loneliness there, even as he kept his promise to himself and produced a book—the classic novel of adolescence, *The Room on the Roof*. It was born of his longing for 'the atmosphere that was India'—the home he would return to even before the novel was published, taking a gamble that would prove to be the best decision he made. In the final, glorious section of the autobiography, he writes about losing his restlessness and settling down in the hills of Mussoorie, surrounded by generous trees, mist and sunshine, birdsong, elusive big cats, new friends and eccentrics—and a family that grew around him and made him its own. Full of anecdote, warmth and gentle wit; often deeply moving and always with a magnificent sense of time and place—and containing over fifty photographs, some of them never seen before *Lone Fox Dancing* is a book of understated, enduring magic, like Ruskin Bond himself.

## **Lone Fox Dancing Details**

Date : Published June 2017 by Speaking Tiger

ISBN : 9789386338907

Author : Ruskin Bond

Format : Hardcover 277 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Biography, Autobiography, Memoir, Cultural, India, Literature

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## From Reader Review Lone Fox Dancing for online ebook

### **Em\*bedded-in-books\* says**

This book deserves full 5 stars and more - for its charming innocence, simplicity and matter of factness ( perhaps a self coined word... but I want to use it here).

I delved into the life and times of Ruskin Bond.

I longed for a house in Dehra/ Mussourie/ any other hilly valley with a cold climate and lots of solitude and space for oneself.

Ruskin Bond was one among my favourite authors.. but now he has become one of the most favourite- not necessarily for the stories he's written - I find most of them 3 or 4 star worthy... but for his warm and kind heart and the way he portrayed a few of his private feelings and moments...

I admired him for his simplicity and humanity ..

I know that one can easily reveal positive and mask negative aspects, especially while writing ones own story, but here every word rang true.. and I was able to make out a few areas where the author restrained from showing more of his feelings.

Somehow he gave me the impression of a passive aggressive attitude towards Khushwant Singh... other than that, he hasn't besmirched a single human being.

he seemed kind and large hearted ... and am glad that I read this book, even more glad that I succumbed to the temptation of buying a hard copy.

Will treasure this book... and will definitely read it again.

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### **Ritu Mantri says**

Ruskin Bond has been my childhood companion. He is among those versatile authors who has written short stories, ghost stories, novels, children stories. Basically something for all the age group readers. His stories are simple, relatable and captivating. And now, his autobiography is no different.

I was completely dumbstruck by the humility and integrity with which he wrote his life story. Ruskin Bond is the king of writing but he portrayed himself as a modest and humble man who did not hide his vulnerability.

In his autobiography, Ruskin Bond pens his journey as an author. He is a well loved author with massive fan following but all the fame came after a lot of struggle. It was not an easy journey and he barely managed to make end meet. But his heart was in writing. He remained stick to it. And success came late but it did come.

Ruskin Bond is a 'Pahari Boy" from heart. He loved mountains, trees, animals, fresh and cold breezes of hilly areas like Dehradun and Mussoorie. As a result he never liked crowded and polluted big metro city. Though as a writer there were better prospect for him in cities like Bombay, Delhi but his heart was their in mountains. And Bond is a man who listens to his heart.

Lone Fox Dancing is a lovely written autobiography. Simplicity and honesty could be seen and felt in every

line of the book. Bond's writing has a soothing effect and his autobiography is inspiring. It inspires you to follow your heart and to do what you believe in.

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## **Roma says**

Title: Lone Fox Dancing – My Autobiography

Author – Ruskin Bond

Length – 277 pages

Publisher – Speakingtiger

Genre – Non-fiction, Autobiography

My rating: 5/5

Summary:

The book is an autobiography of Padmashri and Padmabhushan Ruskin Bond. Book describes his growing up years, his love for reading and the inspiration for his books.

My take:

Ruskin Bond, the name brings to our mind so many amazing tales penned by him. I was elated to get this book as a part of my brunchbook hamper last year since I am fond of autobiographies and what would have been better than that of Ruskin Bond. The book is the most honest autobiography I've laid my hands on.

The book starts with his toddler days at Jamnagar where in flashback his parents love affair is described to be a very non traditional at that time. One would also love his Aayah who cuddled him and so with Osman and his stories. The book transports you in a completely different era. The differences in both the past and present too have been mentioned. The book has the reader transported to all the places author has been viz, Dehradoon, Mussurie, Delhi, Jamnagar, Shimla and London.

Book also mentions some peculiar habits of author most intriguing one be his ability to read upside down. The separation of his parents is a sad phase. The bonding of author with his Father is adorable. You are saddened when Ruskin Bond loses his father and he has to stay with his Mother and Stepfather. In the backdrop is the phase of World War II and Partition. Many more historical events are touched upon and how the world around him was changing.

You feel so glad when author realises he's an Indian by heart. It's interesting to read that author himself didn't know that his debut book was already published and he realised when he received a letter for serialisation of his book. Author also mentions to us the inspirations of his books. Since he was fond of reading, he has also mentioned various books he loved to read which I have taken as a recommendation.

The book also touches upon his crushes and his love whom he could not marry. His struggle to prove his metal in writing is worth an inspiration since he never accepted defeat after rejections. Would have loved to

read his feelings when he received the Padmashri and Padmabhushan which is not a part of this biography.

I totally enjoyed this book.

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### **Selva Subramanian says**

Among the best autobiographies that I have read. Written in the same simple and sweet style as his other books. He comes across as a honest, non-judgmental, and a warm person. No tall claims and is mostly peopled - though coming from diverse backgrounds - with simple people. I found many instances tugging at my heart strings and made me slightly misty, especially his relationship with his father. If you have read a lot of his non-fiction, maybe some their content might have found its way into this book. Because it had some stuff from a couple that I have read. But I feel that is only natural. Apparently, he didn't like Khushwant Singh. It is kind of understood by the reader as he doesn't get openly critical. I actually bought Mr. Singh's autobiography and I couldn't complete it as it was full of name dropping and wasn't interesting at all unless you belong to a certain vintage. Apart from that, this is peppered with words of wisdom that made a lot of sense to me but he doesn't go "you know what, life is a..." kind of mode. In short, loved it. Recommended to everyone.

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### **Vivek Tejuja says**

When you have grown up reading an author's work, then to suddenly read his autobiography is a pretty gratifying experience. Ruskin Bond is an author who is at it – from novels to short stories to ghost stories to children's books to novellas and now an autobiography wistfully titled "Lone Fox Dancing". I was a little apprehensive initially as I picked this book, but it most certainly grows on you. The book is also magical in a way given the time and place Mr. Bond was born and grew up in. He has truly seen it all and I was most certainly envious of the life has led till now (and continues to) as I turned the pages.

Most autobiographies tend to be a little long-drawn and tedious. But while reading "Lone Fox Dancing", I just wanted it to go on and on and on and never end. There is this sense of nostalgia (but obviously) that seeps deep into your bones as you read this book. Might I even call it magical to a large extent. Ruskin Bond makes his life seem very effortless and yet there is so much going on – from his birth in the 30s to his boarding school days in Shimla and the time spent in Dehradun, and of how he discovered some great books and the love of reading to finding his calling – writing.

I was most curious about his craft (he doesn't speak of it in detail but does to some extent) and how he weaves dreams through his books. The part of how The Room on the Roof came to be is most interesting. The book traverses his entire journey to where he is now – Mussoorie and how content he is amidst the nature and the family he has made his own. With every page, you can feel the years passing and how each phase of life of Mr. Bond's was different from the next. "Lone Fox Dancing" is full of anecdotes, and why shouldn't it be, given the rich life he has led. I am sure half of them had to go in the edits.

To me what also was intriguing was the time period – by default the book takes you through the 40s, the 50s, the 60s, so on and so forth till present time. The book oozes with honesty and truth – it has the ring of the whimsical and stark realities of living at times. "Lone Fox Dancing" is the kind of book that deserves to be reread. Well I won't get back to it immediately, but soon enough for sure.

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### **Tarinee Prasad says**

And why he writes and I read and I write for what he writes for all of you to read ?

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I don't know what I would do without a Bond book and may be these words would have never amalgated and remained in my head only to whisper in my ears , forever lost to the outside world.

His writings make me break the prison and my words bleed all colours of a rainbow.

And it's better than bleeding red.

So I trade a piece of my sea for a memoir of his mountains . I read , I cherished , I laughed and paused , vexed and perplexed and cried like a ten year old .

When I read him and I read me I know the mountains are always his and I only trespassed , a bit at times and a lot at others .

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### **Vikas Singh says**

Finally the Lone Fox found motivation to write his story. The book does not cover his entire life especially after his shift to Mussoorie but gives interesting glimpse into his life in his early childhood and adulthood. Though Ruskin Bond;s writings have generally been autobiographical, this book brings forth facets of his life he has generally not written about in past. A must read for all Ruskin Bond's fans

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## Nithyanand says

Achingly beautiful.

I haven't read much of Ruskin Bond, except a short story here and there. So I surprised myself by picking up this book after reading a wonderful extract in *Scroll.in*, and was suitably rewarded—the book is full of the enchantment he is renowned for, conjuring up startling images with an economy of words.

This autobiography is, ultimately, a memoir of loss and longing, and a meditation on impermanence.

Ruskin had a painful childhood, losing his father when he was ten or eleven, having already had to deal with his parents' separation and his mother's absence from his life because she was living with someone else (and more interested in *shikar* and parties). He loses all but one of the letters his father, a Royal Air Force officer, wrote to him, because the headmaster he had given it to for safekeeping lost it. He also loses friends in school, either through death or because they moved away. Yet, he dwells not on these losses but on the idyllic, magical times he had with them and his incessant search for it thereafter.

Much of the details in the book, I suppose, must have been gleaned from the journals he kept over the years of his daily life. He is a great observer of life as it happens around him, both of nature and of the everyday lives of everyday people, a wonderful gift. Throughout, he appears to have been in the "Being" mode (as opposed to the frantic "Doing" mode) of life—his full-time job wasn't writing; it was living. I could quote several passages; here's his description of how he came to choose his home upon his return to Mussoorie:

There were two large windows, and when I pushed the first of these open, the forest seemed to rush upon me. The maples, oaks, rhododendrons, and an old walnut, moved closer, out of curiosity perhaps. A branch tapped against the window-panes, while from below, from the depths of the ravine, like a sweet secret, rose the indescribably beautiful song of a whistling thrush.

Or this:

As a boy, loneliness. As a man, solitude. The loneliness was not of my seeking. The solitude I sought. And found.

I wish I could ask him some questions, though: How does he see the fact that his larger audience in today's India is because of an expanded middle class post-liberalisation, the very constituency that is defiling his beloved hills? If he had had no readers—if he got paid but wasn't published at all, crazy though such a publisher might be—would he still feel satisfied? In other words, what part of his sense of fulfillment in writing comes from the knowledge that people read it, and what part of it is from the act of writing?

Ruskin Bond took risks despite his early achievements—achievements that had he been someone else, and had today's toxic practice of CVs/resumes been commonplace, he could have gone to town with—and pursued his ambition, virtually without any encouragement or support. There are many lessons to learn, not least that of persistence. And I couldn't but feel a sense of greater freedom, of the future opening up.

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## **Gorab Jain says**

This is a must read for Ruskin Bond fans!

Like he mentions, there are not many interesting events to write about in his life. But the way he recollects and writes them is why we love him :)

Honestly he mentions that he's not going to write honestly about all the sentiments and important people. "For it is the 'uninteresting' people who have shaped me up as an individual and as a writer."

What I loved:

- This was my secret santa gift of 2017 :)
- Having read many of his 'semi-biographical' stories, expected common content for most part. I was stumped to my delight :D
- Inset pics handpicked by him.
- Narration style.
- Beautiful cover to grace your shelf - his smiling face as a toddler, young man and now :)

What I didn't like:

- From birth till 35 years of age comprises 90% of this book. Craved for more content of his latter years.

Recommended: All Ruskin Bond fans.

Not Recommended: If you seek autobiographies for an exceptional life.

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## **Kedar says**

Towards the end of Lone Fox Dancing (LFD), Mr. Bond writes about the severe storm that ravages his Ivy Cottage home. How the natural yet merciless powers shake up the house and sweep the roof away, and then the snow falls and freezes the fear. Mr. Bond finds beauty in the midst of this all. It is almost an analogy to his past with events that swept his life and carved his future, and all the while he hung on to the things he loved. The man whose pen rains wonderful words on paper and writes beautifully about the life that he has had, the different people he met and loved, and the immovable mountains that sheltered the writer in him.

I missed being among strangers without feeling like an outsider; I missed everything that made it all right to be sentimental and emotional.

This is only my second book by Mr. Bond. I haven't read any of his fiction, but I feel that when I pick up his other books to read, LFD will help me recall his memory-rich past life that might have triggered a particular anecdote, story, events, or characters in the books. As Mr. Bond himself explains so well:

I suppose most writers, to a greater or lesser extent, base their fictional characters upon real people. Mine come very close to the reality. It is my own response to them that varies. The most fictional of all my characters is myself.

I love his writing. It gave me a warm and cozy feeling. The journey from childhood to adulthood and further was sprinkled with giggles, smiles, a bit of sadness, hope, and continuously moving on to the next phase of life. It is evident in the writing how, as a child, he absorbed the happenings around him, let the most memorable things carry him forth, and recalled the quick flashes of history. Then the mountains took over and then the words became one with nature. Birds sing, trees rustle, raindrops pitter-patter, snowflakes mesmerize, the lone fox dances, and the brave leopard leaves with indigestion.

I was fortunate in that I ventured into the literary world with a certain wide-eyed innocence, and managed to maintain that innocence for most of my life.

On the "evening of Mr. Bond's long and fairly fulfilling life," I certainly think that I will be revisiting Dehra, Delhi, Mussoorie, the mountains and the valleys, the birds and their songs, the people and their stories through your writing, Mr. Bond.

I hope to learn a thing or two about "how much I still needed to learn about contentment."

So here I am, a young boy, an old writer, without regrets.

So long!

*It seems strange  
How we used to wait for letters to arrive  
But what's stranger still  
Is how something so small can keep you alive  
We used to wait  
We used to waste hours just walkin' around  
We used to wait  
All those wasted lives in the wilderness downtown*

We Used To Wait by Arcade Fire.

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### **Nirav says**

Ruskin Bond is warm, passionate, conversational and so humorous as he shares his insights and experiences.

This book gives us a wonderful insight of his difficult childhood, his love for nature and how he loved the hills and everything associated with it. The nostalgic trip down his memory lane is so profound and melancholic.

His sense of narration is so simple and gripping that makes the book unputdownable.

There were passages and anecdotes which made me smile and cry for all the different reasons.

In the middle of the book are over fifty pictures. Giving us a better understanding of his life and his loved ones. It will soak you in warmth and draw you a little closer to the person he actually is.

There are several passages from the book that touched my heart but this is my favourite.

Quote: As a boy, loneliness. As a man, solitude. The loneliness was not of my seeking. The solitude I sought. And found.

Unquote: Loneliness and Solitude are two different things. When solitude's soft power takes over, there is no room for loneliness.

There is so much to learn from this book. From his experiences to the struggles he faced. Loved this book, so quaint. Lastly, immense respect for the way he weaves magic with words.

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### **Srijan Kapoor says**

Ruskin and the deodars. I haven't failed to notice the mention of them in each of his books I have read. Beautifully written, Ruskin Bond almost makes me feel guilty of not living a life in the mountains.

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### **Bindu Madhav says**

A wry humour mixed with a sense of melancholy, Ruskin Bond's Autobiography is about how a confused child turned into an author who is popular and on demand.

Fifty years in the hills(since 1963) has made a great change from all those good and bad during boyhood and his youth. In his words

"it's good to be in once place for a certain length of time, in order to savour the passing seasons, the comings and goings of people, and above all, to watch the children grow up".

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### **Vrsh says**

The man is a master. Everytime I pick up any of his books, it is like a whole new experience all over again. He makes the mundane interesting. He makes biology fun. He concocts wild animals in the funniest of ways. Finally, his autobiography is out and all the questions about his childhood and early life is out in the open, well somewhat. Made me realise how close to the truth his books had always been. He rejuvenates my interest in reading. Been through a lot, the man has shown perseverance. He instils the confidence in us to give up everything and just go live in the hills, that everything is worth it. He ultimately has proven it to us life is all about wanting to do what you want to do. And being happy about it. No regrets. Salute to the man. As many of us, one of earnest desires has been to meet the man face to face and talk to him. Maybe I could. But then, I read somewhere in an interview that he doesn't like being disturbed by strangers. Well, that's what we are to him. Hence, when I did get a chance to pass by Ivy Cottage during my last trip to Mussoorie, I just paid my distant respects to the master writer who has retained the love for reading in young readers like me who have grown up reading him, like he were one of our very own.

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## Chitra says

Ruskin Bond is known to everyone in India. In fact, he is even well known to those who don't read much. So it is only natural that any book lover will want to know about India's favourite author, whether it be to gain inspiration to become a writer themselves or to gain insight into all the stories they grew up on.

I was, am, a pretty big fan of Mr. Bond and I find him way cooler than the other, more famous, James Bond. So this cannot be a review, it wouldn't be fair to make it a review. Instead, this is just a post on my thoughts and emotions while reading this. As with any Autobiography it must be taken with a grain of salt because not everyone is going to paint themselves as they truly are. But on the upside we do get to see the author's vulnerabilities and see him from a completely different, personal, point of view.

He starts off from his birth and takes us through his life in a chronological order, stopping at important events, those that he remembers, oftentimes dipping into his diaries or into letters that he has received to present a more accurate picture. I adored this because you don't have to assume that it is an ageing man's memory. I mean, hell even I have trouble remembering things and always have! Imagine an old person who has written so much and spun so many tales that they might blur things! I adored the way he presented his friendships, specifying that there was nothing more but innocent affection for each person. It was very tastefully done.

Another thing I liked was how he didn't make himself seem great. A lot of people, especially men, tend to make themselves seem larger than life when it comes to them writing about themselves but he doesn't do that. The entire book is peppered with self-deprecating jokes and honest portrayals of what others thought of him, what he thought they thought or what he himself thought of himself. It was refreshing to read and honestly, made the book so much more believable.

The book is divided into parts, each one, in his own words, about starting over and over again, new beginnings. And each one ends where he probably felt a chapter of his life ended. I was a little apprehensive about this because I thought it would be like a serialised book, "read more in the next issue" but of course there isn't a next issue and it is all presented to you in one book with an open heart. Naturally his life isn't as difficult as it would have been for a brown man writing in India but it isn't as easy as you might have imagined it would be. Just because he wasn't brown didn't mean he got royal treatment and welcome in every publishing house and that itself, makes this an interesting read.

My favourite portions were those pages he wrote in regards to his experiences as a writer. Especially the struggles he underwent with getting *Room Of The Roof* published. Seeing as it was the first book I read from him I expected a great story of a publisher reading the first page and falling head over heels in love with it but that wasn't what happened. It isn't a glamorous life and he doesn't have any qualms hiding that fact. He presents things as he sees them, grim, not commercially viable but also a little romantic. He is a romantic sort of guy, the kind who sees the beauty in everything, even in sleeping homeless on the street so you cannot possibly expect anything less from him but his autobiography was surprisingly realistic with a glossy wash of beauty that made you feel like you were watching a beautiful black and white film. I'm finding this book hard to review. But I will say that if you have grown up reading Ruskin Bond, then you must read this book.

full review on [booksandstrips.wordpress.com](http://booksandstrips.wordpress.com)

